



The University of
Nottingham

STRUGGLING FOR CHANGE:
PROVISION FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS OF YOUNG LEARNERS
IN BYDGOSZCZ, POLAND

Vol. 1

by

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Abstract

Due to economic and political changes in Poland the market for educational services has changed. A worldwide trend for an early start in foreign language (FL) instruction is reflected in the accelerated growth of numbers of younger children enrolled into various forms of FL learning in Poland. Recent changes in the new National Curriculum introduced the possibility of starting FL learning from the first grade of the elementary school. However, it seems that teacher training has not yet responded to the growing demand for qualified FL teachers of young learners (FLTYL).

This study presents the results of an evaluation of how the present TT provision meets the educational needs of teachers involved in teaching FL to young children and what changes should be made in order to address those needs in a better way. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to elicit information from different perspectives: current FLTYLs, prospective Early Years (EY) and FL teachers, and academic staff from the Higher Pedagogical School of Bydgoszcz, one of the institutions providing teacher training in Poland. Moreover, the findings were supported with the results of the surveys among the elementary and language school headteachers and parents of children from grades 1-3, which assessed the current and future needs in the area of FL teaching to young children.

The research findings suggest that the present TT is flawed in at least two aspects. First of all, it seems not to recognise how widespread early FL instruction has become and consequently fails to respond to a growing demand for a higher number of qualified FLTYLs. Secondly, neither FL teacher training nor Early Years Education teacher training appears to equip the teachers with the necessary competencies and qualifications. The two basic problems of acceptance and implementation of a new FLTYL training programme, or modifying the existing provision, are shortage of qualified teacher trainers and insufficient cooperation between the departments that traditionally work separately. As a result, arriving at a common policy regarding optimal FLTYL qualifications and competencies, course organisation, its content, and training methods to be used, is problematic. The study offers some solutions as to how the existing impasse might be overcome.

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List of abbreviations

CBI	content based instruction
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CCHE	Central Council of Higher Education
ES	elementary school
EY	Early Years
EYI	Early Years instruction
EY teacher/s	Early Years teacher/s
FL, FLs	foreign language/s
FLI	foreign language instruction
FLES	foreign language in the elementary school
FLEX	foreign language exploratory or experience
FL-non-P school/s	elementary school/s that do not provide foreign language instruction
FL-P school/s	elementary school/s providing foreign language instruction
FL teacher/s	foreign language teachers
FLTTC, FLTTCs	Foreign Language Teacher Training College/s
FLTYL, FLTYLs	foreign language teacher(s) of young learners
HE	Higher education
HEI, HEIs	Higher Education Institution/s
HPS, HPSs	Higher Pedagogical School/s
L1	first language
L2	second language
LS	language school
OS teacher/s	teachers with other (than EY and FL) specialisations
MoNE	the Ministry of National Education (of Poland)
SCC	Supreme Chamber of Control
SW	Sylvia Wiśniewska (reference to the author)
TEFL	teaching English as a foreign language
TESL	teaching English as a second language
TFLYL	teaching foreign languages to young learners
TPSD	Teacher Professional Specialisation Degrees
TTC, TTCs	Teacher Training College/s

Writing conventions

This study employs a modified version of the Harvard (author-date) referencing system as presented in the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* and Delaney (2004). Published references use surname only, and personal contacts use both names. For all Internet sources, the HTML link listed in the Reference section reflects as closely as possibly the page from which a quotation was taken. The information provided in the parenthesis lists the author's name (or the document title, if no author is identified) and a page reference, e.g. (Pawelec, 2000:3[@]). The 'et' (@) symbol indicates that a page number is only an approximation since printers' setups may differ. The documents in the PDF format are treated as printed documents and referenced accordingly. For e-mail discussion lists no page number is provided and this fact is indicated with *n.p.* (no page), e.g. Tillyer, 2000: *n.p.*).

All Polish parliamentary bills and acts are cited after the current version of the legal database *LEX Omega for Windows*, appended monthly either online or via upgrading CD-ROMs. Since these documents are not divided into pages, they are not provided in this thesis either and *n.p.* signals this fact again. The searching system in the database is either by the document name, publication date or the issue number of the parliamentary gazette (*Dziennik Urzędowy* or *Dziennik Urzędowy MEN*), in which the hardcopy of a document appeared. This information appears in the References section.

Unless stated otherwise, all quotations from Polish have been translated by the author of this thesis. English translation of the original titles is supplied in the reference section. Polish sources published in English are reproduced exactly as they appear in the original and the translator's name (if known) is listed in the references. For the matter of convenience, whenever possible, names of institutions, official titles and administrative positions, etc. have been given both in Polish and English, e.g. an LEA (*kuratorium*).

For the sake of clarity, all illustrations, graphs, and text and numbers in tables, which appear within the main body of the work are called 'figures'. Additional statistical data provided in Appendix D are referred to as 'tables'.

1.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The primary impetus for this work has grown out of a personal observation. In 1998, with accession to the European Union looming near, FL learning and teaching was a 'hot topic' of discussion in educational and political circles in Poland. 'Younger is better' was a frequently made claim. Not only did many elementary schools decide to include foreign language (FL) instruction as part of mainstream or extracurricular teaching in grades 1-3 (i.e. four years before the official starting age), but FL teaching also seemed to be a must in the so-called 'zero class' (i.e. the equivalent of the reception) in many kindergartens, especially the private ones. A growing number of children were involved in home FL instruction with private tutors. My general impression was that numerous children started to learn their first FL between the ages of 3-6 and by the time it became a compulsory subject in their timetable, they would already have a long-lasting experience of learning an FL. However, as none of the teacher training programmes in Poland, neither for FL teachers nor for Early Years (EY) educators, offered a specialist training in early FL pedagogy, I also started to ask some other questions: Who actually teaches FL to young children? What qualifications do they have? What qualifications and training should these teachers obtain? I believed that the answers to the questions above would diagnose the need for a specialist training, its optimal organisation, curriculum and the population it is purported to serve. The work was also an attempt to recognise the basic problems of acceptance and implementation of a new programme within current teacher training provision in Poland. Despite a considerable time lapse between data collection and publication (I am addressing this in section 5.4), the major problem discussed in this work have remained unsolved. Namely, teacher training institutions in Poland have not yet managed to respond to the growing demand for qualified FL teachers of young learners (FLTYLs). Thus I have reasons to believe that the study results are still valid, too.

As the title indicates, the first chapter of this thesis portrays the context in which the research was undertaken. The first section describes the key issues related to the system of education in Poland: the school system, FL teaching and learning, higher education and teacher training. To avoid misunderstanding, the situation is described as it was in the

school year 1998/99 (when the study was commenced), with a few footnote comments summarising what has happened since then. A more detailed description of the major changes implemented in the meantime is included at the end of the thesis (section 5.4).

Having set the scene, I then define the research problem, purpose and scope of the work undertaken, and subsequently provide a list of research questions in relation to these. Towards the end of the chapter I also recapitulate the essential terminology used in the study and narrow the focus. I conclude the chapter with a summary of the structure of the thesis as a whole.

1.1. Research context—the Polish educational system

No research happens in a vacuum and the present one is not unique. In fact, it portrays the time of some massive changes in the Polish educational system, when the new Constitution and several other laws have finally brought educational reform to life. The reform originated from a more general movement initiated in the first half of the 1990s. Since then, Poland, like other Central and Eastern European countries, has been undergoing the transition from a totalitarian towards a democratic social order that involved a chain of dramatic political, economic, demographic and social changes all of which have had an impact on education (cf. Savova, 1996). The characteristic feature of all countries in transition is abundance of new legislation being passed there. At the time of present research, an overall revision of the education system has taken place and included:

- Changes in school management and finances, involving gradual take over by the local authorities of the responsibilities for running schools;
- Changes in school systems—introduction of new school division, curricula and examination system;
- Changes in teacher training and professional development—the introduction of a new teacher appraisal and promotion system affecting a pay scheme.

Consequently, the sections below describe two overlapping systems—the pre-reform and post-reform—which to a large extent coexisted when the study was undertaken. They only offer a brief description of these parts of the educational system in Poland that are the most crucial for the research¹. Namely, I will provide an overview of the school system, foreign language (FL) teaching and learning, the system of higher education (including some issues related to academic staff within higher education institutions), and teacher

¹ A detailed description of the whole system of education is provided in OECD (1995) and Białecki (1996).

education. Evaluating and pinpointing the problems within the present system of education follows and leads the reader towards the research problem itself.

1.1.1. The school system

Prior to the education reforms of 1999 education in Poland comprised of four levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education. Each child was entitled (but not obliged) to a one-year school preparation programme, so-called *zerówka* (zero classes), run by kindergartens and some elementary schools. Education is compulsory for all children from their 7th to 17th birthday. As is visible from Figure 1-1 this period provided for an 8-year-long primary school and 2-year-long vocational school education².

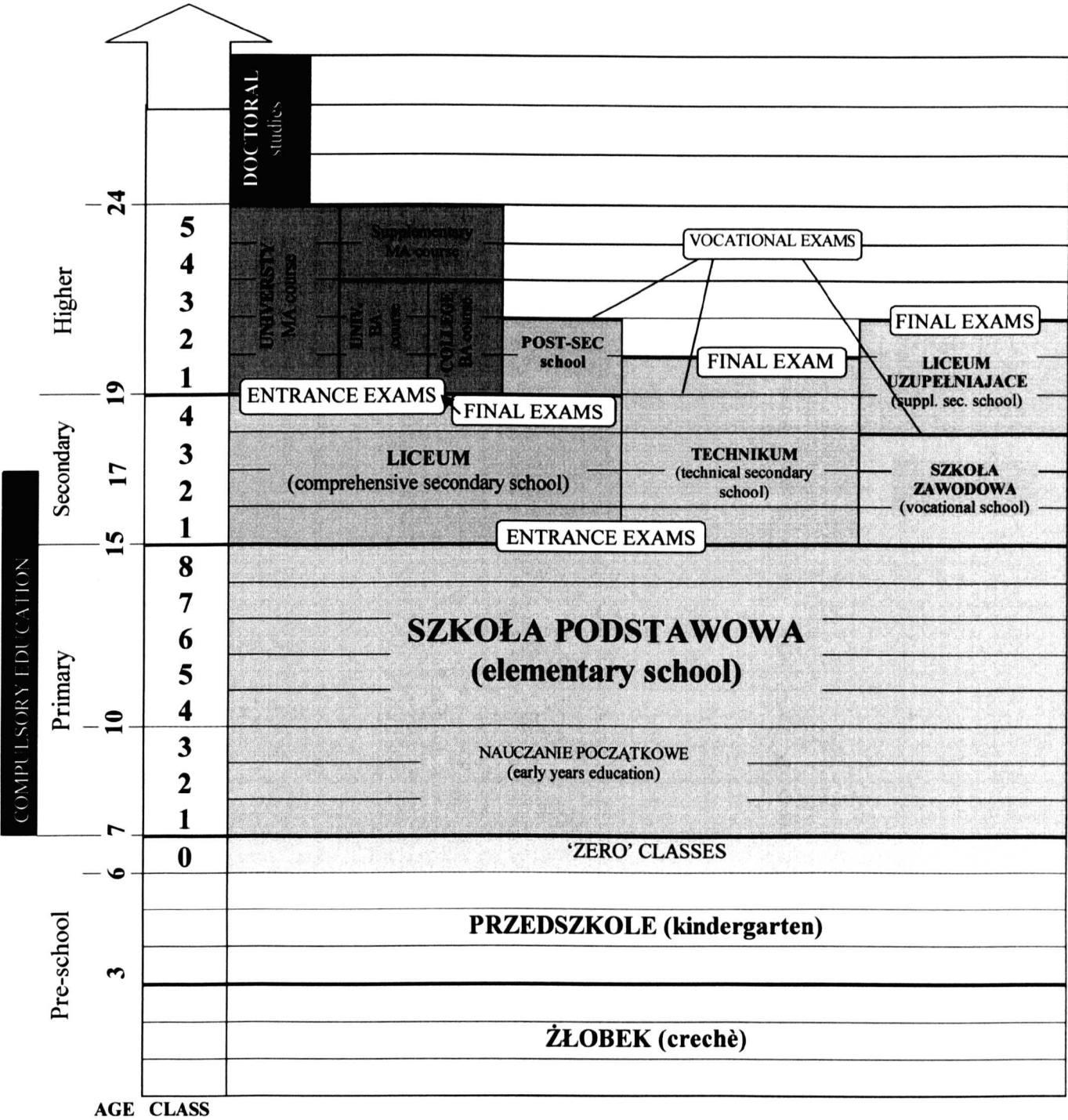
This school structure changed in September 1999 with the new 'Education System Act' (MoNE, 1998a, 1999a). The main changes as portrayed in Figure 1-2 were the introduction of the middle school and new examination system. Compulsory education has been extended till the age of 18 and divided into three didactic cycles (MoNE, 1998b, 1999b):

- **1st cycle**—comprising the first three forms (classes 1-3) of elementary school. The unique feature of this phase is that students are taught by one classroom teacher who follows the so-called integrated Early Years (EY) curriculum, i.e. the one designed as a set cross-curricular themes.
- **2nd cycle**—comprising classes 4-6 of elementary school. The curriculum is divided into ten areas (Polish Language Arts & Culture, History & Civic Education, Mathematics, Science³, Arts, Design & Technology, Information & Communication Technology, Foreign Language, Physical Education, Religious Education / Ethics) linked into blocks of related subjects, all of which are taught by separate teachers. In addition there are cross-curricular themes interwoven within all school subjects, such as citizenship, sex education, health education, and media education.
- **3rd cycle**—comprising the middle school. At this stage the curriculum is divided into sixteen subjects taught by separate specialists.

² These were work-based vocational schools run by some factories; at the beginning of the 90s most of them were replaced by full, three-year long vocational school training run by local educational authorities.

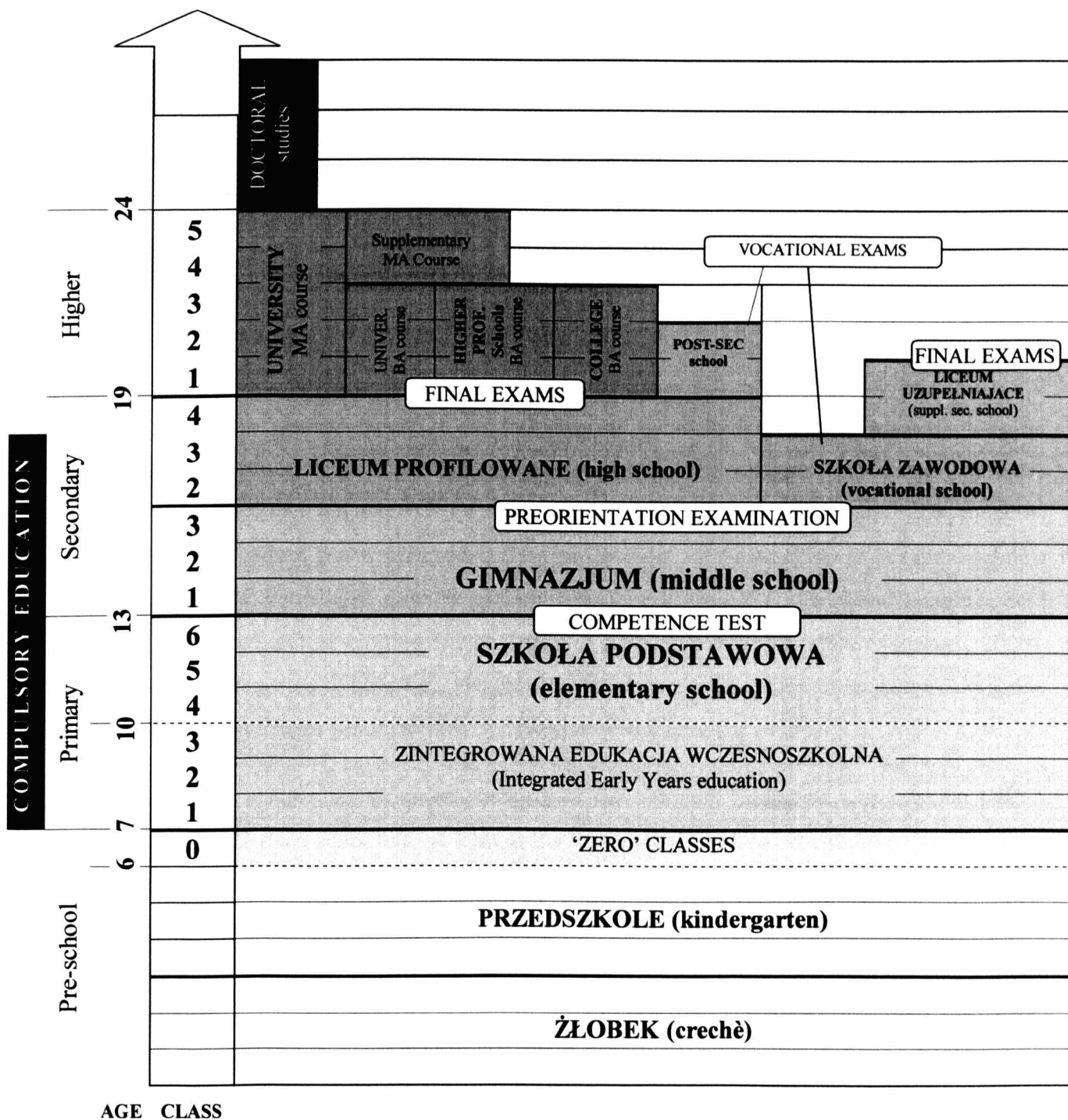
³ This includes biology, chemistry, physics and geography.

Figure 1-1 Pre-reform school system in Poland



Note: The diagram does not include artistic and special schools.

Figure 1-2 Post-reform school system in Poland (as since 1 September 1999)



Note: The diagram does not include artistic and special schools

The fourth phase of education consists of three years of study at the *liceum* (secondary school) offering different profiles of education. Alternatively, students can study at a two-year long vocational school followed by supplementary secondary school. Both types of schools eventually lead to the new *matura* (the secondary school leaving examinations), which from the school year 2001/2002 was also to replace university entrance examinations⁴.

1.1.2. Foreign language teaching and learning

Having presented an overview of the educational system I should now like to position FL teaching and learning within Poland.

Foreign language teaching in Poland—an overview

Until the 17th century, in Poland, as in most European countries, FL instruction and schooling in general remained the privilege of the rich. The strong emphasis was on learning Latin and Greek alongside French, which in the 16th and 17th century was the unofficial second language in Poland. The teaching of so-called ‘exotic’ (i.e. modern) foreign languages was first introduced in the Gymnasium Academicus (a grammar school) in Brzeg, where in 1617 a newly appointed teacher of French, Caspar Laudismannus, held his inaugural lecture entitled *Oratio latina et gallica* (Schroeder, 1980 in Strauss, 2000). English is reported to have been taught introduced as a second foreign language (alongside French) at the same school almost one hundred years later (in 1709).

In the 18th century the situation changed, as the National Education Commission (NEC) attempted to open schooling, at least at the elementary level, to all children. Thanks to the NEC new textbooks were published and new methods of instruction were promoted in the area of FL teaching, mostly Latin at that time. This changed completely in 1795 when Poland lost her independence and the occupants made the learning of German and Russian obligatory from the first form of the elementary school. Since 1863 the occupants’ educational policy significantly limited the time spent on learning Polish, which in some areas was eventually banned all together. This ‘enforced’ bilingual schooling had a very negative effect in Poland towards learning FLs in general. Yet, it has to be admitted that even though FL instruction was for a long time enforced, before World War II quite a large

⁴ In 2001, the MoNE postponed the introduction of the new *matura* examination until the school year 2004/2005. Since some of the final year students objected this decision calling upon *lex retro non agit* rule, they were allowed, only in May 2002, to choose between the old and the new *matura* formats.

proportion of the population could speak at least one foreign language. Moreover, it was not unusual for children from the border regions to learn one or two FLs at school and another language of a neighbouring country in the natural, multilingual environment.

Despite the fact that until recently the number of people able to speak English was relatively low, it is very interesting to note that the great popularity of English learning and teaching is not a recent phenomenon As Rusiecki (2000:2) reports:

In the interwar period, that is in the years 1918-1939, only two foreign languages were taught on a large scale: German and French. In secondary schools, in 1930, there were 106 500 boys and girls learning German, 76 900 learning French, and only 5 000 learning English. By 1934 the number of French and English declined, and the number of learners of German increased; the figures for that were respectively: 108 800, 53 000, and 2 900. Since English was not in great demand, the number of qualified teachers was small. (...) When World War Two ended, English became in Poland foreign language No. 1. Very soon it was to be supplanted by Russian; but in 1945 compulsory teaching of Russian had not yet been introduced, and English enjoyed great popularity.

At the end of 1948, however, FL educational priorities oriented towards teaching Russian at the primary (from the age of 11—5th form—onwards) and secondary level. Learning English, German or French, on the other hand, was limited to the last two years of primary school and to the secondary school, and suffered from an insufficient amount of time devoted to it and unrealistic curricula. It also was dependent on the availability of teachers and adequate materials (see Rusiecki, 2000 for details).

This meant that over half of student population had an exclusive contact with Russian (Janowski, 1992), which however should **not** be associated with the ability to speak Russian by the majority of Polish society. As pointed out by Janowski (1992:43-44), the deputy Minister of Education in the first democratic government, there are two interesting phenomena about the teaching of Russian in Poland:

First, it provided the rare chance of observing how educational efforts end in failure on a mass scale when they do not respond to social motivation. Despite forty years of such efforts, the number of Poles who have a good command of Russian is very small. That is the result of their low motivation to learn the language. Until *perestroika*, learners of Russian had few occasions to use the language in personal contacts, owing to their limited number, and they did not feel motivated to read Russian because the available texts were boring.

The other interesting thing is that the authorities did not seem bothered by this situation. The dogma of the system was to teach Moscow's language as sign of subordination and few cared about efficiency. The issue was always considered politically delicate; as late as in 1988 voices were heard to say that steps taken to reduce the scope of Russian language teaching would make 'big brother' angry.

Since the poor provision of languages other than Russian 'was not considered satisfactory by the society, hence much voting with the children's feet was going on in the form of

optional, parent paid courses organised at schools or in the form of private tuition thriving in spite of low living standards' (Komorowska 1994:113).

After 1989, FL teaching in Poland underwent enormous change. As the choice of FLs taught was free (though in the first few years heavily restricted due to the scarcity of teachers of West European languages), the position of German, French, Spanish, Italian, and most importantly of English has grown rapidly. Moreover, new opportunities for travel and commerce, extracurricular teaching and private tutoring of West European FLs at any level, including teaching to children, experienced a real boom throughout the 1990s.

Figure 1-3 Foreign languages teaching in primary and secondary schools (excluding special schools)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE	YEARS	GRAND TOTAL IN THOUS.	IN % OF GRAND TOTAL OF SCHOOL STUDENTS					
			ELEMEN TARY	SECONDARY				POST-SECOND ARY
				Total	Compre- hensive	technical & vocational		
						Total	of which vocational	
COMPULSORY TEACHING								
English	1993/94	1701.7	17.6	35.9	70.0	22.3	7.6	43.3
	1996/97	2194.9	22.3	47.1	81.3	31.1	10.2	44.7
	1998/99	2440.1	25.0	53.1	86.2	35.5	11.4	48.7
French	1993/94	275.2	1.8	8.3	19.6	3.8	1.4	5.4
	1996/97	291.3	1.8	8.8	17.9	4.5	1.8	5.4
	1998/99	281.4	1.6	8.8	16.7	4.5	2.0	4.7
German	1993/94	1381.5	11.3	37.0	55.5	29.6	15.6	24.0
	1996/97	1628.0	13.5	42.1	59.1	34.1	20.5	22.7
	1998/99	1783.4	15.1	45.7	61.2	37.5	24.6	22.5
Russian	1993/94	2031.3	20.5	45.7	45.6	45.6	69.6	8.7
	1996/97	1570.7	16.7	33.2	28.5	35.4	62.2	5.0
	1998/99	1282.8	13.5	28.1	23.7	30.4	57.1	4.3
Italian	1996/97	6.9	0.0	0.3	0.7	0.1	0.0	0.4
	1998/99	7.9	0.01	0.3	0.8	0.04	0.04	0.6
Spanish	1996/97	4.7	0.0	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.2
	1998/99	5.0	0.01	0.2	0.4	0.01	0.0	0.02
Other	1993/94	56.1	0.0	2.6	8.5	0.3	0.0	1.8
	1997/98	52.8	0.0	2.1	6.6	0.0	0.0	2.9
	1998/99	61.0	0.1	2.4	6.9	0.1	0.05	2.1
EXTRACURRICULAR TEACHING								
English	1993/94	312.8	5.8	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.0	3.0
	1996/97	329.7	6.3	0.6	0.4	0.7	0.2	4.2
	1998/99	436.4	9.0	0.5	0.2	0.6	0.1	5.3
French	1993/94	12.6	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.3
	1996/97	14.0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.01	0.8
	1998/99	14.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3
German	1993/94	78.1	1.3	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.1	1.1
	1996/97	82.5	1.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.0	1.9
	1998/99	97.3	1.9	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.1	1.2
Other	1993/94	49.4	0.6	0.8	1.7	0.4	0.0	1.2
	1996/97	60.3	0.8	0.8	1.7	0.4	0.1	2.2
	1998/99	57.0	0.9	0.7	1.2	0.3	0.01	1.1

SOURCE: CSO 1997:230; CSO, 1999:251

The interest in privately organised FL instruction was partly due to the fact that even though Russian ceased to be obligatory FL in 1989, 4,000 teachers of Western languages were hardly sufficient to cater for the needs of comprehensive secondary schools. It was very difficult to speak about any free choice, and for a couple of years Russian remained the main FL taught. The situation has gradually changed when the first wave of FL teacher training college graduates was employed in schools (see discussion in section 1.2.4.) and between 1993-99, English was gradually replacing Russian in both primary and secondary schools (Figure 1.3).

The fascinating phenomenon about FL teaching in Poland is that prior to the political changes in the 1990s most students learnt at least two FLs throughout their education: Russian and one of the 'Western' language such as German, English or French. Teaching Latin was also considered part of compulsory teaching in all secondary school classes with a humanistic or medical orientation. Yet with the political changes and a massive turn to learning English, the FL education market appears to have lost its diversity. While French and especially Russian has lost on popularity, interest in learning languages such as Italian and Spanish has increased minimally. Moreover, when Russian was not regarded as an option and teacher supply of other languages is still a problem, the introduction of a second FL in 7th grade of elementary school in the pre-reform system remained largely on paper. Thus, it often happens that many students are exposed to one FL only as part of their compulsory education.

Alongside these changes, the Ministry has continually been working on a more complex reforms in the educational system. Since 1989, membership of the European Union (EU) has been the strategic objective of Polish policy and integration with European structures has been regarded as integral to Poland's national interest. These aspirations became clearly visible in 1991 when the so-called the *Europe Agreement* established an association between the Republic of Poland and the European Communities and their Member States. The Agreement became effective in 1994 and provided the legal framework for supporting the further integration of Poland with European structures. Article 76 of the *Europe Agreement* determines the grounds for technical and financial assistance by the Communities in the area of education and training, including teaching and learning of the Community languages in Poland (Przyborowska-Klimczak and Skrzydło-Tefelska, 1996:343-44).

Further priorities and objectives in the area of FL teaching were formulated in the European Commission's *White Paper on Education and Training. Teaching and learning—Towards the learning society* (European Commission, 1995; see also discussion in section 2.1.2). The fourth general objective of the White Paper states it is desirable that 'upon completing initial training everyone should be proficient in two Community foreign languages' (European Commission, 1995:47). In order to enable proficiency in three Community languages, the Commission suggests that the teaching of the first Community language should start at pre-school level and be followed by a systematic instruction in primary education, while the learning of a second Community foreign language should start in secondary school.

Emphasising the need for preserving the identity and uniqueness of the national education system, Polish educational authorities have nevertheless frequently emphasised the necessity for setting Poland's educational objectives close to those pursued elsewhere in Europe. The *Optimal Model of the National Curriculum* prepared in 1995 by the committee of experts for the Polish Ministry of Education (see Komorowska, 1996c) mirrors the guidelines for action designed by the Council of Europe and the European Commission. The recommendations were to encourage an early start to FL learning and to develop proficiency in at least two FLs. Komorowska (1995a) suggested that teaching four languages (English, German, French, and Russian) should be promoted on a national scale, at the same time popularising some lesser-used languages (Spanish, Italian, Swedish, Hungarian, Japanese, Czech, Slovak, Byelorussian, and Ukrainian). The first FL should be introduced at the outset of the elementary school, while the second FL should be introduced around the age 11-12, and the third FL in middle or secondary school. At the same time it was emphasised that the quality of FL teaching should increase, both by supplying good teachers and improving conditions of FL learning in schools (increase allocation of hours devoted to FL study in the National Curriculum, modernisation of curricula, supplying better resources and teaching materials, etc.). The strategic, long-term goal of FL education in Poland was to enable each schoolchild to master at least two FL during the period of compulsory education, especially in rural areas.

Since the changes initiated by the educational reform in 1999 are closely connected with early FL teaching, let's now focus on this problem.

Teaching foreign languages to young learners in Poland

The opinions of Polish researchers on the benefits of an early start to FL learning have also evolved. Zabrocki (1966) for example warns against teaching children below 8, since presumably the native and the FL can be easily confused. Along the same line, Kaczmarek (1977:229) claims that ‘simultaneous teaching of a foreign language and a mother tongue to children below 4-5 has a permanent, negative impact on pronunciation and acquisition of grammar [one’s mother tongue]’.

On the other hand, Krzeszowski (1979), Arabski, (1985, 1997), Brzeziński (1987) and more recently, Komorowska (1992, 1995a, 1996a, 1996b) emphasise a favourable effect of an early start to FL learning⁵.

Throughout the 1990s, Poland was an active participant of a series of ‘new-style workshops’ organised by the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, including some with a particular interest in teaching FLs to young learners (see discussion in Chapter 2.2). Reports and implications from the workshops provided a benchmark for policy and practice in Poland (see for example, Szulc-Kurpaska, 1998). Following the publication of *The White Paper on education and training—Towards the learning society* (European Commission, 1995) and its Polish translation in 1997, the recommendations were to encourage an early start to FL learning and to develop proficiency in at least two FLs throughout compulsory education.

All the same, one has the impression that in 1998 when such research commenced most of these recommendations remained largely on paper. There were few schools in which an FL was taught as part of EY curriculum, even fewer taught it as part of integrated-day teaching in grades 1-3. No guidelines concerning the aims and objectives of FL teaching in kindergarten and lower grades of elementary school were specified or indeed how teaching at these stages should be integrated (articulated) with higher levels. Neither professional nor organisational and financial support was given for any teacher training programme aimed at younger learners.

This is the official picture, but of course there is another picture. Though no official statistics are available, a common observation is that recent years have seen a rapid growth in the number of young children that are taught FLs. Parental pressure has resulted in some

⁵ The arguments provided are discussed in chapter 2.4.

kindergartens and elementary schools organising extracurricular FL instruction. Private FL tuition of young learners seems to flourish. Numerous language schools, clubs and youth centres, quick to see a new market, also run courses for children. Yet, left on the outskirts of public and private sector, frequently suffering from the lack of qualified teachers, adequate teaching materials and funding, and most importantly, virtually deprived of any sort of quality assessment, it seems unclear as to whether early FL experiences were beneficial for the numerous children involved.

Foreign language teaching post 1999 educational reforms

Despite much publicity that on the verge of Poland's entry into the European Union improvements in quality and range of FL provision were an educational priority, my impression was that the reform of 1999 treated FL learning and teaching somewhat 'coily'. The overall objective of the reform was to make the first necessary adjustments of the Polish educational system towards European standards. Certainly, an FL has been a compulsory component of a *matura* examination for a long time, and the revised 'Matura 2000'⁶ examination with its very high demands in FL proficiency seems to confirm the shared belief of the Polish educational authorities and decision makers that any educated Pole should be competent in at least one FL. Yet how one is to achieve this, remains a mystery (Paciorek, 1998).

As mentioned earlier, the guidelines stated prior to the reforms were to follow the European Commission's objectives 'to start [FL learning] at pre-school level ... (and place) ... on a systematic footing in primary education (European Commission, 1995: 47). Quite unexpectedly the start to FL learning has been lowered by one year only (i.e. 4th grade of elementary school, pupils aged 10/11). In fact, some critiques have also argued that a new system is a backwards step since the introduction of the second language is postponed until the secondary education while under the previous system it was at least possible (though in fact not widespread outside the private school sector) to introduce an FL in the higher grades of primary school. Besides, one cannot claim great results when students learn according to the following schedule:

- Grades 4, 5 and 6 of elementary schools – three (45-minute) lessons per week
- Middle school—three lessons per week

⁶ This is now called 'Matura 2005' as the introduction of the new format of secondary school leaving examination has been postponed.

- Secondary school—first FL: three lessons; second FL: two lessons per week

Of course, the reformers have opened the possibility of the so-called ‘hours left to the headteacher’s discretion’, which can be allocated to FL teaching at any level of schooling, including classes 1-3, provided a school has teachers and resources. Yet, how does a headteacher make the decision about what students need more: an FL, remedial education, or more hours devoted to mainstream subject all of which come out of this ‘stake’—a three hours per week allocation?

Thus, the ministerial recommendations for an early start to FL learning remains on paper in all but private elementary schools. In some schools, despite the wish to introduce FL instruction, limited resources and the shortage of FL teachers will potentially hinder it, too. In others some teachers will possibly find other reasons for not including early FL instruction, like for example saying that apart from these very broad recommendations nothing else follows: there is no early FL curriculum, there are no guidelines how to adjust 4-6 curriculum when FL study started below this age, not to mention the most important: lack of guidelines regarding teacher qualifications or providing training for them⁷. As a result, some elementary schools will include FL and some will not. Since many parents will possibly opt for private early FL teaching of their children, this will potentially lead to numerous problems in the 4th grade when FL learning officially starts.

Yet, refusal to lower the starting age of FL instruction is not the only problem. It seems that the whole system of FL teaching is suffering from many difficulties. Namely:

- Due to shortage of teachers and/or finances, many schools have been unable to comply with Ministerial guidelines to divide classes over 25 into smaller groups. Consequently the conditions for FL learning are very problematic.
- The quality of teachers is dubious. Faced with shortage of c30,000 FL teachers (Paciorek, 2001), many headteachers employ unqualified staff. In 1997, one in four English teachers and one in six German teachers has no qualifications to teach at all (Paciorek, 1997a). In addition, such as a substantial number of former Russian teachers

⁷ As to my knowledge prior 1998 there were only two FLTYLs training programmes. The first one was set up at the Higher Pedagogical School of Olsztyn, as part of the Tempus project, summarised in Appendix A (see also Suświłło, 1998; Tempus Duet Project, 1999). The second one was set up at the University of Gdańsk as a joint initiative of the Institute of Education, the Foreign Language Teacher Training College in Gdańsk, the British Council and the Goethe Institut. The programmes they provided aimed at teacher training of pre-school and early school education, supplemented with specialisation in teaching of English or German.

who were retrained via various fast track courses, are qualified only 'on paper'. Now a similar situation is doomed to be repeated with EY teachers (see more in section 1.1.4).

- It appears to be 'an open secret' that an average 'life span' of fully-qualified FL specialist is two years. Not only do the teachers change very often in schools but so, too, does the language learnt by the students. A dramatic consequence of this situation, especially in rural areas is evident from the fact that some desperate LEAs, like the ones in Inowrocław or Grudziądz, two towns in the Bydgoszcz region (the research site) decided to deploy English teachers from Belarus or Ukraine (BK, 1999).

Therefore, despite much discussion and official statistics conforming 'good dynamics of changes in FL provision' (Zarębska, 2001:1[@]), the true picture is that the situation of FL teaching in schools has not changed, and in many of them it has even deteriorated. Articles with very telling titles 'Foreign languages still foreign' (Paciorek, 1997a), 'Well known only to elites' (Paciorek, 1997b) or 'Russian known best' (AST, 2000) seem to confirm this critical situation in FL teaching and learning. A recent opinion poll has revealed that more than a half (58%) of Poles have faced a situation in which they regretted not being able to speak any FL (AST, 2000). The poll also suggests that parents recognise how vital the knowledge of FLs is for their children's future and at the same time are convinced that state education will not equip them with such skills. Thus, according to the 1997 survey of the Central Public Opinion Polling (CBOS—*Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej*) as many as 40% of parents decided to send their child or children to fee-based FL courses (Paciorek, 1997a). My belief here would be that private FL instruction not only makes up for the poor quality of compulsory education, but also gives many children an opportunity to start FL learning much earlier than the prescribed age of 10/11.

To conclude, FL teaching and learning has been undergoing many changes throughout the last decade. The biggest change is, of course, a massive turn from the compulsory teaching of Russian to a free choice of an FL learnt. Yet, the last ten years have proved how difficult it is to replace highly qualified teachers of Russian with teachers of other FLs, and consequently, the quality of FL teaching still remains in question. The lack of qualified staff is also the main stumbling block to putting into practice various changes advocated by the reformers, such as lowering the starting age for FL learning, introduction of a second FL in the higher grades of elementary school and increasing the time allocated for FL learning in the core curriculum.

1.1.3. Higher education

The next key area of interest for the present study is the organisation of higher education (HE) in Poland with the special reference to the institutions involved, courses offered, and the role of academic staff⁸.

Institutions

There are five types of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Poland: universities, polytechnics, academies, higher pedagogical schools (HPSs), and colleges, which operate within parallel legal and administrative systems. Some of them are so-called autonomous HEIs, which denotes the right to pass their own statutes, open and close particular programmes of study, the right to open, close and reorganise faculties or parts of an institution; the right to determine the principles and practice of admission procedures, the form of entrance examinations, and regulations for students (Białecki, 1996:127ff). For a HEI to be regarded as autonomous it must employ at least 60 academics who have the degree of professor, and at least half of its faculties must have the right to award the post-doctoral degree *of doktor habilitowany*. As a consequence, only around 40% of HEIs, few of which are private ones, have the status of an autonomous institution (Białecki, 1996).

From an administrative point of view HEIs in Poland are either run by state or by religious social or private bodies. Teacher training colleges (TTC) and foreign language teacher training colleges (FLTTC), on the other hand, have their programme of studies set down by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and are either run by private bodies, *kuratoria* (local educational authorities—LEAs) or universities. Colleges are not independent schools and obliged to seek assistance and supervision of an autonomous HEI, which officially award college students the *licencjat* degree. Otherwise, after three years of study, college graduates are awarded a diploma.

All HEIs are externally supervised by the MoNE and its three bodies: the Central Council of Higher Education (CCHE), the State Accreditation Commission, and the Committee for Scientific Research. However, in the case of academies: such as medical, maritime, arts and music, theology, economics, physical education, etc. they are run and supervised

⁸ The section describes the situation up till 2000; for changes implemented as a result of the Bologna Declaration, see MoNE (2002a). Terminology and information after Białecki (1996) and MoNE (1990a, 1990b).

jointly by the MoNE and appropriate Ministries, for example all Medical Academies act under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

Courses

As far as HE courses are concerned they are twofold:

- Five-year long leading to a Master's degree (*magister, inżynier*)
- Three-year long leading to a Bachelor's degree (*licencjat, inżynier*)

The courses are offered in three modes: daily, evening and extramural⁹, depending on the part of the day/week in which lectures and seminars are delivered. There have been some attempts recently to offer some courses on distance and modular bases (Ochmański, 1995). A prerequisite to be admitted to any HE course is to hold a secondary school matriculation certificate. Most of the universities also organise competitive entrance examinations or have special admission criteria. Students may enrol on as many courses as they wish, for example to daily and extramural courses in two different HEIs, as long as they comply with the course requirements.

According to the Higher Education Act (MoNE, 1990a) daily education offered in state institutions is free of charge provided students complete their studies in the allocated time. In most institutions, students repeating a year have to pay a fee. Evening, extramural, distance and non-degree students are charged for their studies. All private institutions, colleges and universities charge fees for all forms of education.

Evening and extramural courses, due to the time constraints, typically comprise half of the amount of a daily course's contact hours and rely heavily on students' independent study. Even though the CCHE (1998a) states clearly that all courses awarding the same degree are equivalent, and therefore have to guarantee the same quality of teaching and learning, and impose the same requirements on students in terms of coursework and examinations, yet in reality it is rarely a case. The very policy that an extramural course comprises half a daily course's contact hours makes these standards dubious. Also the fact that in the majority of HEIs it is possible for students to switch from daily to extramural study, but not vice versa seems to confirm a common opinion that extramural and evening courses are

⁹ There is also a special mode in which a student can undertake his/her course. In exceptional circumstances, a student can be permitted to study in so-called individual mode of study, under which s/he is not obliged to attend the classes and can make individual arrangements with each of the teachers how and when the course assignments are to be completed.

of lower quality. Even though the HEIs are recommended to spread the training over a longer period if the time available at evening and extramural courses is too short to meet the minimum programme requirements (*ibid.*), the institutions are reluctant to do so since a longer period of study would inevitably mean for students a prolonged period of paying fees. The students' argument that the universities should charge them lower fees but over a longer period of time because the number of courses would remain the same and the classes would only be scheduled differently, is rarely taken into consideration by universities' financial bodies. And thus, the HE institutions themselves seem to be interested in preserving the current state of affairs and keep maintaining that all courses are equivalent. So it seems hardly surprising when some experts, such as Professor K. Denek of the University of Poznań, express an opinion that extramural courses are 'a caricature of university studies' (Denek, 2001:14)¹⁰.

A great deal of extensiveness in education can be observed. It finds expression in a very lenient student selection and admission systems to schools and universities, lowering of teaching standards, and 'partitioning' of academic staff (already substantially reduced in numbers) among state and private schools; daily, evening, extramural or even distance courses. In such state of affairs **students buy not only knowledge but also diplomas.**

Denek, 2001:14, emphasis mine

Concluding, a variety of institutions offering diverse courses on one hand, and ambiguous course standards on the other hand, create problems that are closely related to the subject-matter of the present study. Since early FL instruction combines the two fields—FL teaching and EY education—those responsible for teacher preparation in Poland will have to consider whether a new Combined Honours course should be brought to life. If so, it will involve serious rethinking of the course duration, modes of delivery, and degrees offered. Due to the fact that HEIs are financed and supervised differently, the question which of the three HE institutions—universities, HPSs or colleges—should be involved is also a matter of serious controversy.

¹⁰ The situation changed considerably in 2002 with the MoNE's resolution introducing precise standards in education (MoNE, 2002b). As defined, 'evening studies must comprise not fewer than 80 % and extramural studies not fewer than 60 % of the number of hours allocated to daily courses'. Already in July 2001, there have been moves to create a unified national system for the accreditation of HEIs. A State Accreditation Commission (*Państwowa Komisja Akredytacyjna*) was established and started to control the quality of education in HEIs.

Academic staff

Similarly, there is a problem concerning which academic staff should run new courses aiming at the preparation of teachers for early FL instruction. The Act on Higher Education of 12 September 1990 (MoNE, 1990a) has set a number of requirements specifying minimum staffing and programme requirements that HEIs have to fulfil in order for them to be able to organise and run their courses (see section 4.4.2.1). In particular these denote the number of staff holding professor and post-doctoral degrees. Since the understanding of the linkage between a post and academic degrees may be difficult to grasp, Figure 1-4 gives an overview of the system.

Figure 1-4 Academic degrees and posts in Poland

RESEARCH & RESEARCH-DIDACTIC POSTS			DIDACTIC POSTS	
Post	Requirements	Employment	Post	Requirements Employment
<i>Asystent</i> Assistant reader	Degree of <i>magister</i> (MA/MSc)	No fixed duration; maximum 8 years without obtaining the degree of doctor	<i>Instruktor</i> Instructor <i>Lektor</i> Language teacher <i>Wykładowca</i> Lecturer <i>Starszy</i> <i>wykładowca</i> Senior lecturer	Regulated by the statute of each HEIs.
<i>Adiunkt</i> Reader	Degree of <i>doktor</i> (PhD)	No fixed duration; maximum 9 years without obtaining the post-doctoral degree.		
<i>Profesor</i> <i>nadzwyczajny</i> Professor Extraordinary	<i>Doktor habilitowany</i> (post-doctoral) degree	At least 5 years.		
<i>Profesor</i> <i>zwyczajny</i> Professor Ordinary	Degree of <i>profesor</i> (professor)	Permanent.		

SOURCE: adapted from MoNE, 1990b; Kierzkowska, 1994:7.

The recommendations for the posts of *assistant reader* and *professor extraordinary* are made by the university rector on the recommendations of the dean and the faculty council. Nominations for the posts of *professor ordinary*¹¹ are made by the Minister of National Education (or other Minister if appropriate) on the joint recommendation of the university senate and the faculty council after an open competition for this post within the HEIs. As

¹¹ It may be surprising that the *professor ordinary* is higher in hierarchy than *professor extraordinary*. This is probably due to the original usage of the Latin word *ordinārius* denoting a clerical or a judge with an immediate rather than delegated jurisdiction (cf. *extraordinārius* – somebody employed for a special (not permanent) service, function, or occasion).

for the academic titles and degrees these are regulated by the Act on the Academic Titles and Degrees of 12 September 1990 (MoNE, 1990b), which specifies prerequisites, scientific attainments and awarding procedures for each of them.

Throughout the 1980s the universities were affected by a massive emigration of academic staff. In the 1990s they were confronted with domestic brain drain. The low salaries of academics in Poland do not attract high quality applicants for universities, and as a result, the whole system faces the problem of an ageing staff. Yet, as pointed out in the OECD (1995) report, shortage of academic staff may be due to the fact that HE seems to be a closed sector of the labour market. It is quite rare for a person who had gained professional experience outside HE sector to take up an academic post. As observed by the OECD experts (1995:36):

Generally, this is attributed to financial reasons, i.e. lower salaries in universities than in industry. It seems, however, that higher salaries for university teachers would not solve the problem. The multi-ladder and rigid career pattern in universities seems to be an additional hindrance to intersectoral mobility. The requirement of a 'habilitation' for senior posts renders it difficult for qualified persons with a career outside universities to apply for a university job. They have worked under different systems of evaluation and assessment which need not to be less demanding with regard to research or teaching qualifications. This is, to some extent, true for all countries with the requirement of 'habilitation', but it becomes more accentuated in systems like in Poland where doctorates are awarded at a relatively advanced age and where, in most cases, 'habilitation' degrees are awarded to persons aged 40 and 50 years.

It seems, it is not only difficult for an outsider to enter academia, it also appears that academics are detached from the world outside. For example it is rare for an academic teacher with an interest in pedagogy to be an active elementary or secondary school teacher at the same time. Moreover, the system of employment of HE staff, as well as the structure of academic degrees and posts is a legacy of the previous regime, in which academic achievements were measured by titles and not by the quality of research, publications or teaching. As Kruszewski (1999) points out, the post-doctoral degree was introduced in the first years of the communist regime according to the Soviet and not as some sources claim (cf. Sadlak, 1991), the German academic model. The idea was to defend the academic world from pseudo-scientists, but in reality, the Central Committee of Academic Titles and Degrees determined 'standards' by the political background of a candidate rather than by the calibre of his/her research. Even nowadays, new degrees seem to be 'contaminated' by thinking from the past, since these are the people who were educated under the old system and who supervise and head degree awarding committees now (Kruszewski, 1999). Therefore, alternations to the system may be very difficult, as possible changes may hit back at the people who are supposed to decide and implement them.

Consequently, if there are no staff holding professor and post-doctoral degrees in the new specialisation to be offered (i.e. early FL teaching), a serious question arises whether it will be possible to set up a new course in the first place. Also awarding degrees to new staff may pose some serious difficulties since teaching FL to children is a relatively new field. There may be few supervisors and examiners possessing necessary expertise and qualifications. More than that, acceptance to a PhD or post-doctoral course for staff interested in early FL pedagogy may be hindered by the fact that higher degrees in various disciplines are awarded by specific departments and their Senate. The research related to early FL teaching, on the other hand, crosses traditional departmental division into departments of Modern Foreign Languages and of Pedagogy.

Finally, launching a new programme and securing its quality may prove difficult when scholars throughout their academic career are required to pursue higher degrees. Conducting summative and formative evaluations (see for example Patton, 1997:64ff, for discussion) as well as experimenting with new process options and organisation, vital in the case of any new course, may simply not be attractive enough to academic staff concentrate on degree-oriented research.

1.1.4. Teacher training

The final domain crucial for this present study is organisation of pre-service and in-service teacher training, teacher induction and professional development in Poland. Special attention within the chapter is given to the description of FL and EY teacher preparation.

Pre-service teacher training

In agreement with the overall HE system, courses that include teacher preparation within their structure are offered on daily, evening and extramural bases and follow two schemes: a five-year long course leading to the *magister* (Master) degree and a three-year long course leading to the *licencjat* (Bachelor) degree (with the possibility of supplementing it via a two-year long Master's course).

Teacher training specialisation still corresponded to the pre-reform school structure:

- Early Years education teachers for crèches, kindergartens and first cycle of elementary school.
- Subject teachers for elementary and comprehensive secondary schools (10-19)
- Subject teachers for vocational school and technical secondary schools (15-18/20)

- Teachers for special needs education (various specialisations for both compulsory and remedial education)

Graduates, regardless of the length of the course and degree awarded, obtain qualifications to teach in secondary and primary schools, with preference given in secondary schools to graduates with an MA. Lack of any strict ruling on this is partly due to the fact that there is a severe shortage of certain specialist teachers, for example FL teachers. Yet, it is also true that even though BA course graduates are officially permitted to teach in both secondary and elementary schools, teachers usually wish to upgrade their qualifications through a supplementary MA course. Whilst the BA degree has gained on popularity since its introduction in 1993, the MA degree is still favoured and is regarded as the ‘full HE qualifications’ while BA has only ‘professional’ degree status. In such a qualification-led system more highly qualified teachers, the more likely they are to gravitate towards secondary level. The consequence of this is that it has a negative influence on the quality of FL teaching to younger children.

Pre-service teacher training is part of HE system and there are many different HEIs offering teacher training. Elementary school and comprehensive secondary school teachers are trained primarily in universities, HPSs and colleges. In addition PE teachers are trained in Academies of Physical Education, and teachers of religion in the Catholic University of Lublin and Theological Academies. Teachers of specialist vocational subjects for technical secondary and vocational schools graduate mostly from subject-specific departments in polytechnics and in academies. It is a complex system since they come under the auspices of different authorities. For example, colleges come under local *kuratoria* (LEAs); the MoNE supervises universities and HPSs; the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Music Academies; and the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Academies of PE. What is more, almost all HEIs in Poland have a Department of Pedagogy within its structure, which is responsible for running generic pedagogical modules within the block of pedagogical courses. Subject-matter pedagogical training (e.g. English language teaching methodology, applied linguistics, etc.) is usually organised by appropriate staff from a subject area.

Consequently, to standardise teacher training offered in various HEIs, the CCHE has started to develop so-called ‘minimum programme requirements’ (*minimalne wymagania programowe*)¹², which specify the allocation of hours for various course components and

¹² Since 2002 called educational standards (*standardy nauczania*).

their compulsory content. A separate pedagogical minimum curriculum has been developed as well as curricula for courses offered by TTCs (see discussion in chapter 4, section 4.4.2.1). Yet, as described in section 1.1.3, the fact that a myriad of HE institutions provides courses that are offered in various modes (daily, evening, extramural or even distance), may either lead to a degree or to (more or less recognised) diplomas and certificates, making this standardisation of teacher training very difficult.

Also, under the current system pedagogical training runs in parallel with content subject and it seems that there is very little integration between the two. In fact, it seems that the pedagogical block is only a fringe added to subject matter studies:

The model could be termed a concurrent model, with subject studies and educational studies and educational studies incorporated within the five years. However, the sequencing and balance of these components differ significantly from the concurrent approaches in western countries. Within the Polish tradition, students take just one subject, e.g. mathematics, right through for the five years. Those wishing to pursue the possibility of a teaching career opt for educational studies, which amount to 270 hours and some teaching practice, usually in the fourth and fifth years of the degree. The heavy emphasis is on the subject mastery, e.g. mathematics. It is staff of this subject area who volunteer to give ninety hours on aspects of the didactics of the subject in schools. The involvement of staff from the Education Departments tends to be very limited, and usually relates to no more than one hundred and eighty hours on varied inputs from educational studies. There is evidence to a lack of coherent planning with regard to these inputs.

OECD, 1995:25

Such a system has been heavily criticised by the OECD experts who have pointed out that the concentration on one teaching subject throughout a five-year period, especially in the case of elementary schools teachers, seems to be inappropriate as far as the school and the present economic situation in Poland are concerned. As observed:

A serious problem within the predominant form of teacher education in Poland is the concentration on just one teaching subject, over a five year period. It is probable that many graduates may have attained high standards in mathematics or science, but what is less in evidence is how suitably they are prepared for the work in schools, with an increasing heterogeneous and enlarged pupil population, with varying levels of ability, aspiration and application. Such subject specialisation, particularly for primary teachers, is a luxury not available in many countries more economically strong than Poland. More importantly, it would seem to be an impediment to the flexible deployment of staff in school, particularly in smaller schools. In the shift to a more pupil-centred approach to schooling, more emphasis is placed on the contribution of a subject to such a purpose than on the achievement of subject mastery *per se*. Moves towards more integrated curricula, more staff collegiality in schools, more economic and efficient use of human resources in schools suggest that a re-structuring of the single subject approach to education is overdue.

OECD, 1995:26-27

Indeed with the reform at full speed, the training of specialists able to teach according to the new integrated and block scheduling, seems to fall short. As for subjects such as Arts or Science which combine different subjects areas, these are still taught either by

separate teachers or by one teacher who is currently undergoing an intensive training in the areas not covered by his/her original training¹³.

Thus in its recommendations for the teaching profession and teacher education in Poland, the OECD (1995:70ff) experts have suggested changes:

- Polyvalent training for primary teachers, bivalent for middle school, and a major/minor subject framework for teachers at secondary school teachers
- Teacher education courses within the universities should be reconstructed to allow for a more satisfactory integration of educational studies, pedagogical methods and teaching practice to be achieved.
- The universities should give greater attention and support to educational studies as a fully legitimate area of academic scholarship and research.
- For the long-term, planning should seek the integration of teacher education within the ambit of university studies, rather than its concurrent over-fragmented structure.
- Special training schemes for teacher educators, mentors and headteachers.

And yet, in reality it is difficult to put at least some of these recommendations into practice. The reason for this is that both multiple-specialisation teacher training and the raising the status of the pedagogical component within them, will first of all require the gap to be bridged between the pedagogical and non-pedagogical departments. Yet, academic staff from non-pedagogical departments may be reluctant to pass over the main responsibilities to staff whose primary expertise is pedagogy, due to 'the distrust linked to indoctrination of education faculties of the earlier regime (...) or to more deep-seated lack of appreciation of educational studies within the university (OECD, 1995:27)

Indeed, a tradition of universities being the 'temples of knowledge' and not a place of professional training seems to be shared by quite a substantial number of Polish academics (Mizerek, 1999). There is also some truth in the statement that a general depreciation of pedagogical studies derives from a historical heritage of the previous era. While most of the universities in Poland are old and well established, both HPSs and the Departments of Pedagogy within universities were founded in the 1940s and bear a stigma of 'communist institutes'. Opinions like these expressed by Puszczek (cited in Kulerski, 1998:4[@]) are not uncommon:

¹³ Since the academic year 1999/2000 some universities and HPSs have introduced new teacher training programmes aiming at preparing specialists required by the post-reform system, such as for example teachers of Integrated Early Years Education or Science.

The aspirations of the Colleges of Education [HPSs] were shaped by their historical development. They were created in the second half of the 1940s as a higher form of teacher education that was developed to bypass the barriers of teacher education in universities and provide schools very quickly with teachers. What is characteristic of the time is that nobody wrote about this, but if we look at the history, it is clear that the government of the time wanted to have a sufficient number of politically correct teachers who had not been educated in the “bourgeoisie” universities.

When education and teacher preparation have been a tool of propaganda and indoctrination it is not surprising that the departments responsible for subject teacher preparation wanted to ‘minimalise the damage’ and therefore, reduced the involvement of the staff from the pedagogical departments. Even the responsibility of subject-matter didactics lies primarily within the staff from non-pedagogical departments. In this light, it is not surprising that recently many HPSs have decided to apply for an ‘upgrade’ to university or academy status. Yet, whether a mere change in the school name or merging with other HEIs and forming a university will help overcome deep historically rooted mistrust is not yet known.

Furthermore, when most of the staff see themselves predominantly as mathematicians, historians, linguists etc., and only very few of them are involved in the pedagogic dimensions of their academic subjects, it must influence the style of teaching adopted at the courses run by them. It appears that the type of education the prospective teachers are exposed to during their training at HEIs is in opposition to what various educators and reformers, who frequently originate from academia themselves, advocate for lower levels of schooling:

The style of teaching at university is heavily dependent on the formal lecture approach. There is little provision of seminars, tutorials, workshops or close interpersonal interaction between students and lectures. It is very much a “top-down”, teacher-centred model.

OECD, 1995:26

However, what for OECD’s examiners is the ‘top-down’ approach, is for some academics in Poland the very essence of university education. Many of them espouse the 12th century education tradition of teacher and student contacts during which ‘knowledge is gained from the latter’s explanations and from books indicated’ (Mokrzecki, 1994:46) and they despise the less academically highbrow but more practical approach to education in other institutions, for example at HPSs or TTCs. How exactly teachers in this scheme are trained in order to acquire professional skills and to be prepared to incorporate new approaches to teaching into their practice seems to be unclear.

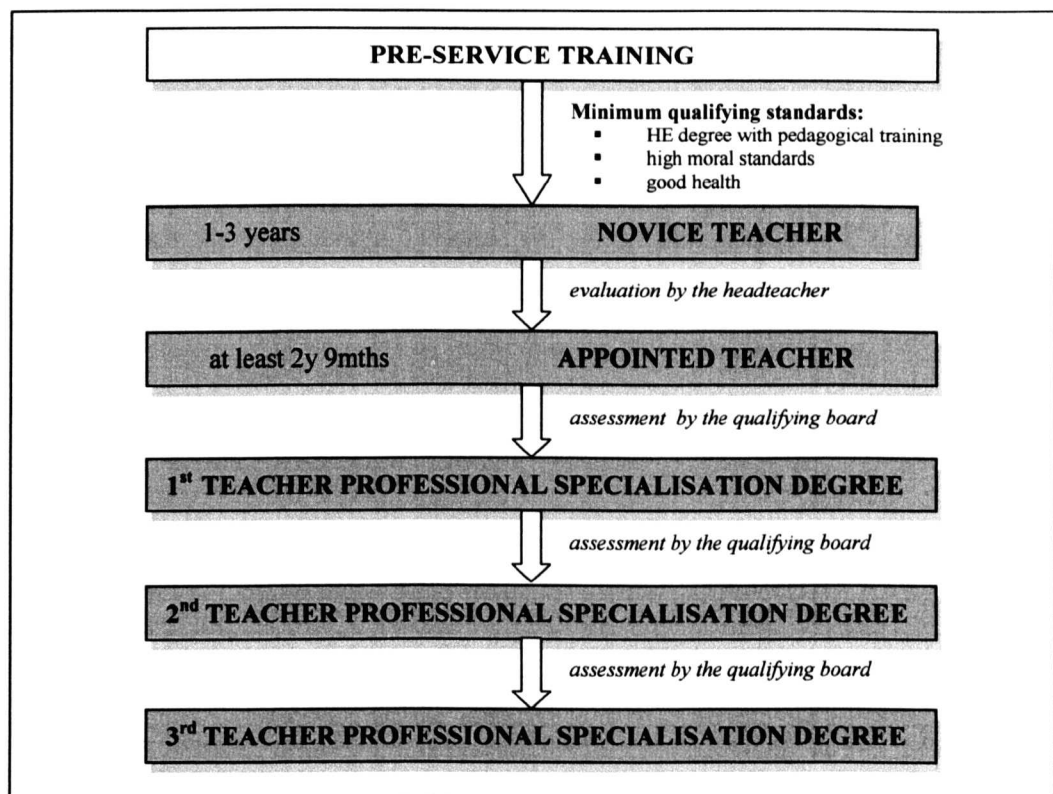
In sum, despite some changes within the teacher education in Poland, it is apparent that the system is still very traditionally structured with a heavy emphasis on subject-matter mastery. Moreover, a complex historical heritage influences both the perception of

pedagogical studies within HE as well as cooperation between pedagogical and non-pedagogical departments. Finally, teacher training providers have not yet responded to the need for a more general, multi-disciplinary specialists who are currently in great demand in the post-reform elementary schools.

Teachers' induction and professional development

The teacher's life is to a large extent regulated by one document, the Teacher's Charter (MoNE, 1982, 2000b) passed in 1982. After a long and exhausting national debate, it was finally amended in February 2000. Prior to these changes, the teachers' professional life looked more or less as in Figure 1-5.

Figure 1-5 Teachers' promotion route prior to the changes of February 2000



SOURCE: based on Teacher's Charter (MoNE, 1982)

After completing an HE course that included pedagogical training, a novice teacher began his/her probation period that lasted from one to three years. Poland did not seem to have a good system of induction for beginning teachers. Novice teachers were given a designated workload and often they also acted as class tutors (*wychowawca*) which required additional work. During the probation period the teacher was evaluated twice. The first evaluation usually took place after the first semester and the second one towards the end of induction period, after 5th or 6th semester. The evaluation was conducted by the headteacher and

involved the assessment of teacher performance on the basis of the teacher's portfolio of lesson plans and teaching aids, and at least two lesson observations. After that a teacher was formally awarded the Teacher's Appointed Status (*status nauczyciela mianowanego*) provided the following requirements were met:

- Polish citizenship and full legal rights
- full qualifications to hold a given post (i.e. HE course degree inclusive of pedagogical training)
- employment at school of at least 3 years
- probation period evaluated with at least 'very good' result ¹⁴.

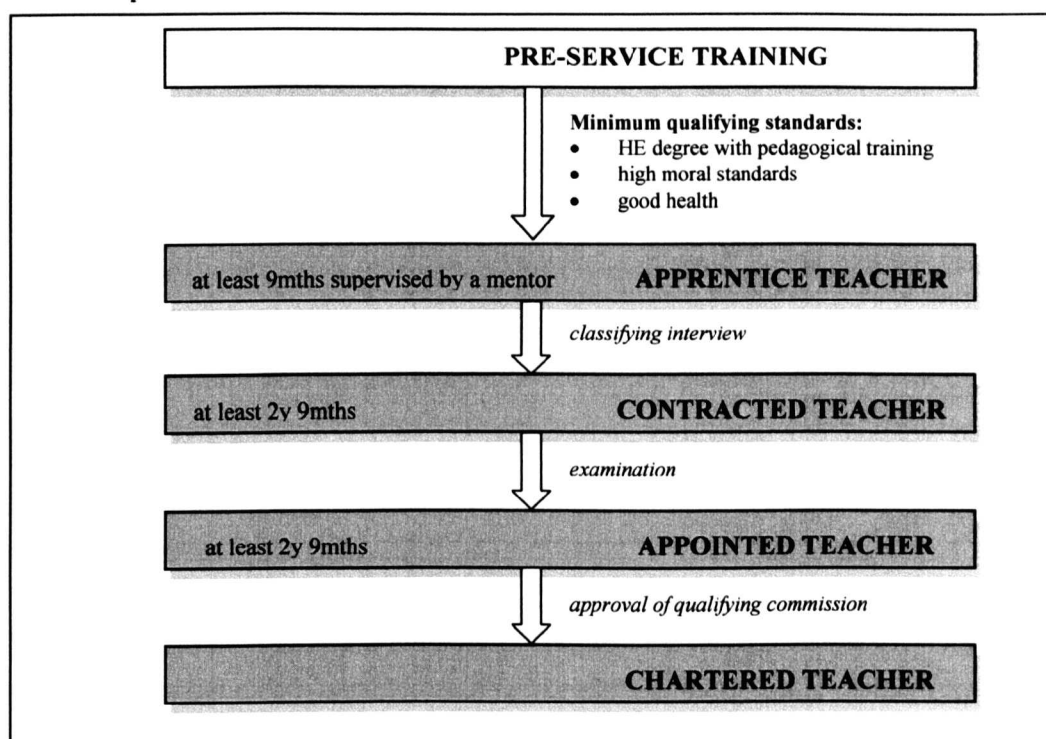
The only form of further promotion was pursuing the so-called Teacher Professional Specialisation Degrees (TPSD), the system of three-tiered degrees involving assessment of teaching practice, a written assignment and an oral examination. Second and third degree specialisations encompassed some time spent on additional in-service training.

In-service teacher training as well as the teacher's specialisation scheme were run by the Provincial Teacher Improvement Centres (*Wojewódzkie Ośrodki Metodyczne*, later *Wojewódzkie Centra Edukacji Nauczycieli*), which come under the aegis of the LEAs (*kuratoria*). Each centre has a group of supervisors, teacher advisors and assistants, who are themselves skilled, experienced teachers in a given school subject. In 1991, the MONE established the National In-service Teacher Training Centre in Warsaw (*Centralny Ośrodek Doskonalenia Nauczycieli*), which is a national agency to provide 'information, good practice, teaching materials, innovation, and coordination with international projects, all relating to education' (OECD, 1995:29). Both provincial and national centres publish booklets and teaching materials, and offer a wide range of courses. Moreover, some specialist postgraduate courses for teachers were also run by universities, HPSs and TTCs. Yet, there seemed to be little relationship between providers of pre-service teacher training and those responsible for further teacher development. As a consequence the OECD examiners recommended forming the Teacher's Council as an embracing body of coordinating all activities involving teacher preparation. (OECD, 1995).

However, pre-1998 the interest in upgrading teacher status through three-level specialisations was minimal since the extra financial bonus was very low. In the 1996/97 school year only 7% of full-time teachers possessed the specialisation degree, of which

43,666 had the 1st degree specialisation, 20,534 the 2nd, and 1,270 the 3rd (MoNE, 1998c). Similarly, none of the forms of teacher in-service training was popular even though as it read in article 12 of the Teacher's Charter, teachers were obliged to improve their general and professional knowledge and raise their qualifications throughout their professional career. The school governing body could bind a teacher to undertake an in-service training, yet in practice it was very infrequent. Consequently, there was much public criticism of the system in which appointments were for life and it was possible for a teacher to be assessed and appointed at the beginning of his/her career and virtually do nothing to refresh or upgrade his/her qualifications till retirement.

Figure 1-6 Teachers' promotion new scheme



SOURCE: based on Teacher's Charter (MoNE, 2000a)

An interesting point is that when the Ministry announced its plans for a new system of teacher inducement and promotion (see Figure 1-6) each level on the teacher promotion ladder was closely linked to a new pay spine. A substantial number of teachers then decided to obtain a teacher specialisations degree or enrolled on a postgraduate course. The reason for this may be that nobody was sure how the new promotion scheme would develop in practice, especially external and internal assessment and examinations, and the

¹⁴ On the scale from excellent, very good, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory.

old specialisations count towards the new 'chartered' status¹⁵ and the earnings in this group.

In discussions prior 1999 educational reform the MoNE was also planning to implement some changes involving a so-called 'horizontal' promotion of teacher, i.e. promotion into various functions and positions within a school, for example the post of a novice teacher mentor, a subject block team leader, a leader of class tutors team, and a school leader of in-service teacher training. Some teachers would also be able to obtain additional qualifications as external examiner, school inspector or a textbook reviewer. All these new functions and a new promotion scheme were to be matched with an appropriate financial reward. As announced by the Ministry in 1998 (Paciorek, 1998), a long-awaited new teacher pay scheme was to promote good teachers, and regular assessment and teacher contracts for a limited period of time and a set of professional examinations were to help to assure the quality teaching. However, post 2000, little was done to put these promises into practice and the Minister of Education and 'the father of the reform' was even forced to resign because of the miscalculation of the reform costs, which supposedly had eaten up the resources assigned for the revised pay system. Thus, a common feeling among teachers is that as usual the reform has started from a set of requirements and new responsibilities imposed upon the teachers by a new school system, curricula and teacher promotion scheme, but the promised 'considerable' reimbursement of teachers for their efforts for had not followed yet¹⁶.

To conclude, the changes in the present system of teacher professional development, though absolutely substantive and necessary, do not seem to tackle some fundamental problems of teacher education. Such as, the progressive ageing and feminisation of the present teacher population on one hand, and negative recruitment and dropout of new teachers on the other. Possibly the changes in teacher salaries, once implemented, will to some extent prevent these from happening. In addition, the new system of novice teacher

¹⁵ During the transformation period, all teachers appointed under the old system will automatically be given the 'appointed' status under the new system.

¹⁶ Since the introduction of the new teachers' promotion scheme, some teachers in Poland have nevertheless sought the Appointed and Chartered Teacher status, be it for the fear of dismissal or at least smallest improvement of their financial situation. Since the number of such teachers has been substantial, and as a result 'burden' to the MoNE budget considerable, in 2004 the Ministry passed an amendment to the Teacher's Charter increasing the minimal periods in between subsequent upgrades in status (MoNE, 2004).

induction and a clear route of both horizontal and vertical route of promotion, seem to be quite promising for the future.

After an overview of professional development of teachers in Poland, let's now focus on two aspects of teacher training that are the most relevant for the present study; namely, the development of FL and EY education specialists.

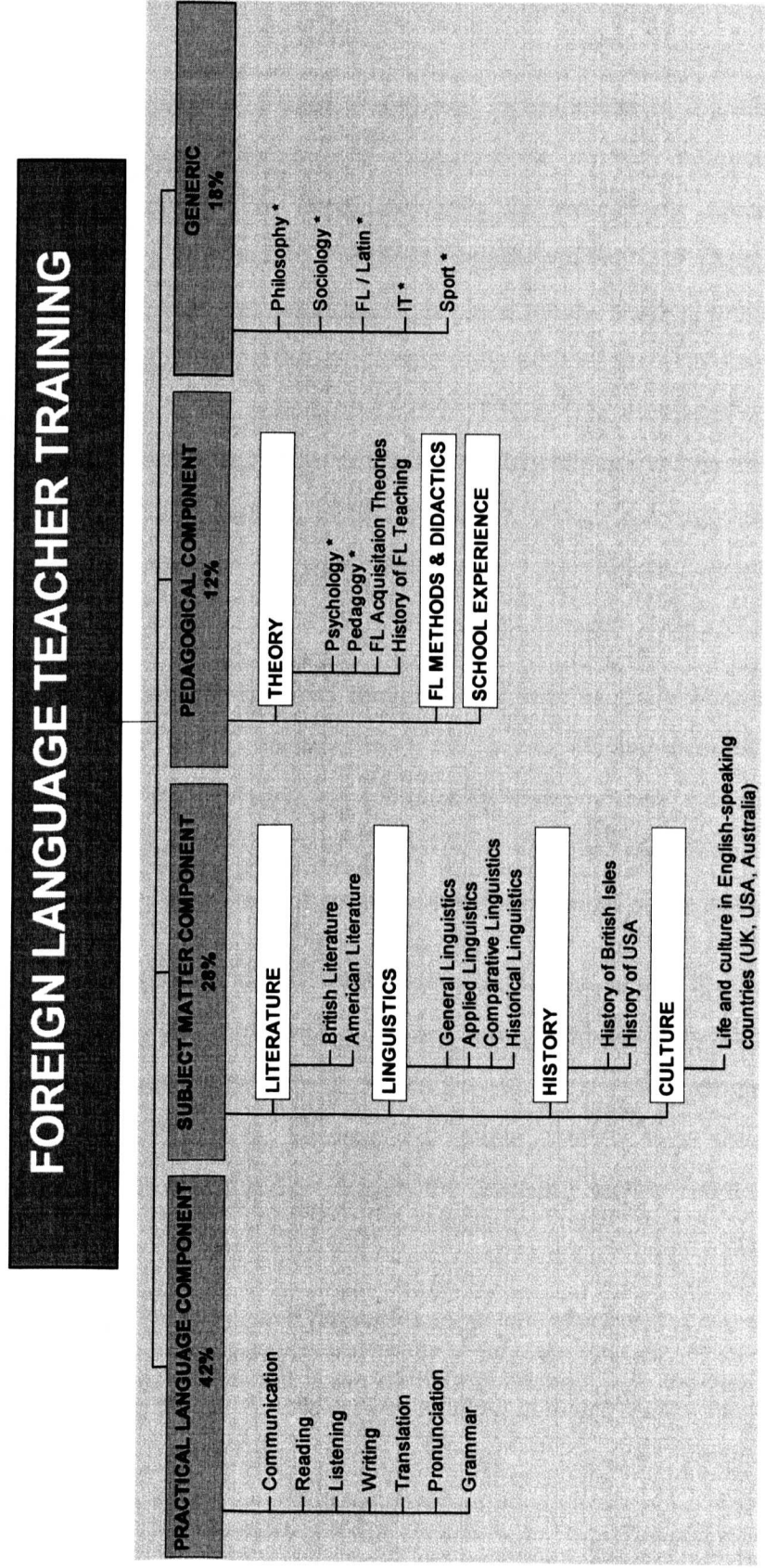
Foreign language teacher training

The preparation of FL teachers is part of FL Philology course provided at universities, HPSs, and FLTTCs¹⁷). The course, as the name suggests, has a strong literary and linguistic orientation without a strong educational profile (see Figure 1-7 overleaf). Pedagogical training (general educational studies, FL didactics and teaching practice) is concurrent with FL subject-matter subjects and practical FL courses. Yet only a very little proportion of the curriculum is spent on pedagogical studies as compared to more 'academic' subjects and practical FL courses. In MA courses pedagogical training is part of an extra specialisation and therefore it is compulsory only for students wishing to obtain these qualifications. In BA courses, on the other hand, pedagogical training is compulsory because this type of course was originally introduced as a shorter route for FL **teacher** preparation (as compared with traditional philological courses at universities). Therefore, FLTTCs in particular are trying to revise their curricula and syllabuses in such a way as to aim at genuine preparation of teachers and not offer a form of 'mini' philology programme (Komorowska, 1995b).

This affects the type of instruction offered in all three types of FL teacher training institutions. The main language of instruction and assessment is in a particular target language and the FL proficiency acquired by the students is very high. Universities are academically oriented and stress perfect language mastery over pedagogical skills of instruction. Content courses (i.e. non-practical language courses) in linguistics, literature or history are highly theoretical and cumbersome. The courses are very demanding and the

¹⁷ Due to the shortage of English teachers, from 1994 the MoNE and the National In-service Teacher Training Centre has also been providing a 'fast-track' INSETT accreditation course aimed at unqualified teachers of teachers of non-language subjects holding at least Cambridge First Certificate examination qualification. On successful completion of this course (140 hours of tutorials and 140 of individual study, lesson observation and project work) graduates receive qualifications to teach in primary and secondary schools (see Komorowska, 1994 for details). With the supply of new teachers from the colleges this offering is gradually dying out and the INSETT courses are currently offered mainly in new areas of specialisation (e.g. Testing and Assessment, Young Learners, FL in post-reform education system), and as FL 'refresher' courses (NITTC, 2000).

Figure 1-7 Structure of Foreign Language Philology course



Note: Courses indicated with asterisk * are offered by other then FL departments

dropout amongst students is high. Colleges, on the other hand, design their courses around future teacher needs and are very practical. HPSs, though aspiring to university status, being pedagogical institutes try to find a 'golden' mean.

Entrance examinations consist of a written and oral examination in a given FL and, in some cases, Polish or history. The entrance examinations are very competitive and the level of competence required from candidates may far exceed the secondary school curriculum. FL studies are still among the most popular studies in Poland and in some universities there are more than ten candidates per place for the daily courses. This is due to the fact that admission quotas for free-of-charge daily courses are very low: usually 100 places in universities, 30 in HPSs, and about 45 in FLTTCs ¹⁸. More places are available at evening and extramural courses but these courses are fairly expensive. As observed by the OECD examiners (1995:23) 'the quality of recruits to the foreign language teacher colleges is high, but it may be linked to the opportunities they provide for careers other than teaching'.

Students studying an FL are not required to spend one year of study abroad in a target-language-speaking country, though some of them take a year off and work as an au pair or volunteer worker. Places for exchange or scholarship visits abroad are offered only to exceptional full-time students. Extramural and evening students sometimes visit a target country as part of their job, as some of them work for international companies.

The most pertinent problem with the FL Philology programmes is that it is not clear what they are actually preparing the students for. A very strong orientation towards acquisition of FL skills means that some students treat this course as 'the best free language school in town' (Komorowska, 1995b). Also, because the course content is so diverse and rich graduates have many job opportunities outside the teaching sector. Even in the course description it reads:

A graduate [of the FL Philology course] represents a high level of preparation in general humanities, general linguistics and literature, culture and history of the target language community. In addition, a graduate possesses high proficiency in practical foreign language skills and parallel to the degree of MA in FL Philology (*magister filologii*) s/he specialises in literary studies, culture or linguistics,

¹⁸ Despite the high demand, these numbers cannot be increased since the Act on Higher Education (MoNE, 1990a) states a precise student-per-professor ratio in HEIs. The situation in colleges differs (see MoNE, 1992) since from a formal point of view they belong to post-secondary level, and as such, they can admit more students even though they do not have academic staff holding doctor and professor degrees. The negative aspect of the fact that they are not independent HEIs is that they are not entitled to award any higher degrees - these are awarded by a supervising university or HPS.

depending on the specialisation chosen. The professional training of a philologist enables him/her obtaining additional qualifications, such as the ones required from a teacher, editor, translator, propagator of the target community culture, etc.

CCHE, 1998b: *n.p.*

As already noted above, a glimpse at the typical components of FL Philology course (see Figure 1-5, and also the so called 'minimal hour allocation' for FL Philology described in chapter 4, Figure 4.39) also reveals that it does not have a strong pedagogical orientation. In MA courses pedagogical training is part of an extra specialisation and therefore is compulsory only for students wishing to obtain these qualifications. Even though a common practice is to make pedagogical training compulsory for all students of FL Philology courses, whether they eventually specialise in FL teaching or not, this does not make many more graduates undertake teaching jobs.

Hence, Polish schools perpetually suffer from a lack of western language specialists. In the 1989/90 school year when the free choice of foreign languages was implemented, Polish schools had about 1500 teachers of English, whereas the required number was 25,000. On the other hand demand for French and German teachers amounted to about 8000 (Janowski, 1992). The FLCCT, founded in 1990, was designed to address this problem and in 1997/98 more than 7 thousand students were reading there for a BA degree in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian.

Yet, the fact remains that quite a substantial number of graduates of FLTTC and HPSs, institutions whose main role is teacher education, do not take up a teaching career at all, or abandon it as soon as feasible for more lucrative employment. As already indicated rural areas still suffer from lack of FL teachers and there are still many unqualified staff teaching—in 1998 it constituted 26.9 % of overall number of English teachers and 16.8 % of German teachers (Stępniewski, 1997, cited in Stasiak, 1998:9). As already mentioned, in 2001 the shortage of FL teachers for the three types of schools reached an overwhelming number of 30,000 (Paciorek, 2001). The situation was quite dramatic in elementary schools.

Consequently, despite previous declarations that all re-qualifying programmes, fast-track accreditation schemes, and provisional employment for unqualified FL teachers will be gradually abandoned, this has not yet happened. As a result of high unemployment among teachers of some specialisations (including EY teachers) on one hand, and insufficient number of FL specialist on the other, the Ministry decided to set up a new, so-called 'Zero

Year' programme, a preparatory course for FL Philology course. Moreover, due to overwhelming mass media pressure, in 2001 the MoNE decided to sanction the practice enabling people with no pedagogical training or formal qualifications in a FL taught to be employed in schools (Książek, 2001). The evaluation of skills and competencies of these staff lies in headteacher's hands. Whether such measures will solve the problem of staff shortages, and whether it will not affect the quality of FL teaching, is a matter of the future.

The Ministry observed that expectations that college courses with a specific pedagogical orientation would solve the problem FL specialist shortages have been only partially fulfilled. The fact is that with the current trend of only 50 % of FLTTC graduates taking up teaching, which amounts to about 400 English and 300 German teachers per year, we will need at least 10 more years make up for the shortages in FL staff for compulsory FL teaching in the present shape (Stasiak, 1998).

Therefore, it is not surprising that in its report OCED experts have expressed concern about the wastage of public funds allocated to teacher training and advised the MONE to investigate this matter further and impose some restriction on this practice (OECD, 1995). Their concern was quite appropriate since FLTTCs were partly funded by western countries, and instead of boosting schools with highly qualified staff, colleges were effectively training specialists for private commercial companies. Their suggestion that there be 'reimbursement arrangements for those who do not contribute as teachers, at least for a set period of time' (*op.cit.*:24), though widely discussed in the FLTTCs, has never been carried out. It was said that the whole idea resembled too much 'work coercion' of the 1950s and that such a scheme was an infringement of individual liberties unacceptable in a new Polish democracy. Besides, commercial employers seeking a well-trained working force were quite eager to pay off their employees' studies, so reimbursement was not a solution to the problem. It is believed that only higher salaries corresponding with teacher's skills and qualifications, a good system promotion and improvement of working conditions will prevent further negative selection of teachers, FL teachers in particular.

It also seems that traditional FL Philology courses neither address the needs of those wishing to become teachers, not those who want to pursue employment elsewhere. It would be reasonable to split a course into two phases: a shorter general FL education during the first years, followed up by a specialisation in different disciplines, such as translation, literary or linguistic studies or FL teaching. In this way pedagogical specialisation would no longer be a fringe extra but would receive equal status and

recognition. However, under the present market 'hunger' for qualified FL staff, such changes do not have many advocates since once the students are equipped with pedagogical training, there is still some hope that some of them would eventually take up teaching posts.

To conclude, FL teacher preparation under the current provision faces many problems. FL Philology courses are extremely popular since they offer education of a very high market value. However, many FL course graduates do not take up a teaching career lured by many better job opportunities elsewhere. Yet, a very general profile of this course, with little emphasis given to pedagogical training, seems not to be adequate either to prepare good teachers or other language specialists.

Early Years education teacher training

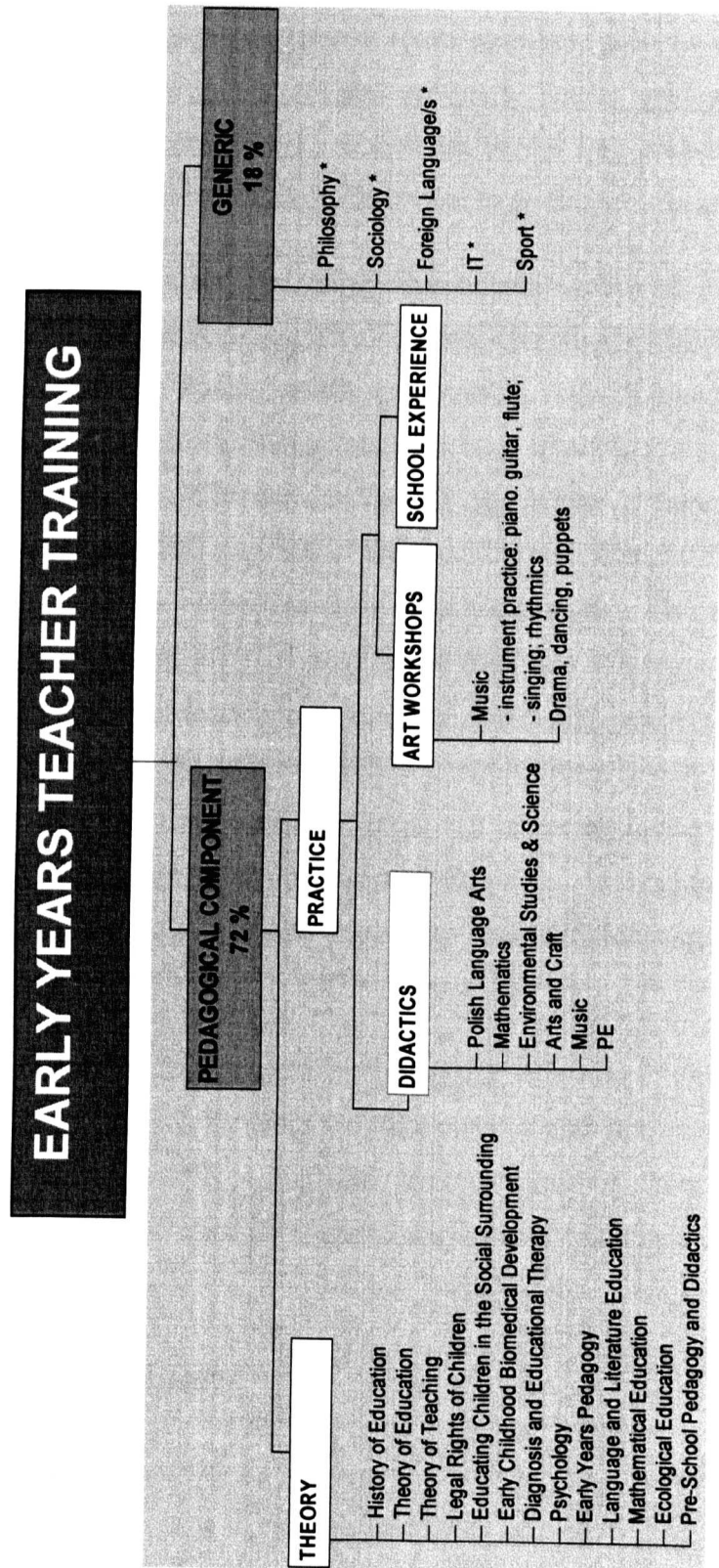
BA and MA courses in EY pedagogy prepare teachers to work with young children in pre-school institutions (pupils aged 3-6) such as crèches, kindergartens and zero classes, and the first cycle of elementary school (pupils aged 7-10). Teachers are trained in universities, HPSs and TTCs as part of a general course in Pedagogy with a specialisation in Early Years Education¹⁹.

The training comprises educational and didactic studies and many additional practical courses that aim at the development of teachers' artistic and musical skills. Students preparing to teach children in the 7-10 age range, the first three years of primary school, will follow a specially designed module covering all aspects of early years curriculum with a special emphasis on teachers' ability to develop oracy, literacy, and numeracy skills. This provides a very thorough background in early childhood pedagogy and psychology. The typical curriculum, based on the CCHE minimum programme guidelines comprises components illustrated in Figure 1-8.

The courses represent a balance of theory and practice and students have a great many opportunities for hands-on experience in teaching, as well as the production and development of teaching resources. In addition, students will be given a substantial number of music classes focusing on the development of composing, performing and listening as

¹⁹ Until the mid 90s the kindergarten and classes 1-3 specialisations constituted two separate courses which were later combined into one-Early Years Education course. Post reform, however, due to the need to prepare teachers for the integrated curriculum teaching, some institutions are planning to offer these specialisations separately again, probably linked with some other offering such as foreign language teaching or speech therapy.

Figure 1-8 Structure of Early Years education teacher training course



Note: Courses indicated with asterisk * are offered by other than Pedagogy department

part of a progressive music curriculum for children. Practical workshops and seminars develop the instrumental skills of playing the piano, recorder/flute and guitar, and improve vocal skills.

Moreover, students are encouraged to choose some electives, such as creative writing, drama, dance or puppet theatre workshops and seminars. Yet, as evident from the hour allocation, the programme of studies (see discussion in 4.4.2.1) is distributed between various sub-disciplines and there is relatively little time to go deeper into any of them.

The entrance examinations for EY Pedagogy departments consist of a written or oral examination in Polish language arts/history/biology and a practical examination testing the correctness of pronunciation in Polish, artistic and musical skills of a candidate. In some institutions students have an interview measuring teaching aptitude or a so-called psychopedagogical predisposition test. The demand for EY specialists is extremely fluid. The 1970s and 1980s saw a very high population boom and a high demand for EY teachers. Yet, very low salaries of primary school teachers were not attractive. To make up for acute shortages, the MoNE employed a lot of unqualified staff and offered a short, two-year course and in-service training. Thus, throughout the 1990s EY teachers constituted the largest group complementing and improving their qualifications at MA level. Once the situation improved, the 1990s has brought a drastic fall in the birth rate and thereby EY teachers potential unemployment. The high number of teachers studying in this group may also be due to the fact that some teachers decided to seek additional qualifications as a form of insurance.

Despite changing conditions, departments providing EY education courses are quite a popular option and many students compete for places during entrance examinations. What is characteristic about the students is that they have no illusions about finding careers outside teaching—they seem to want to be elementary school teachers and make the best use of the years spent at the HEI.

1.2. *Research problem*

As an FL teacher and teacher educator, I had become more and more aware of the fact that, though officially FL learning starts at the age of 11/12, in grade 5 (since the 1999/2000 school year, from grade 4), due to the recent political and economic changes in Poland, parents in vast numbers, enrol young children onto various FL courses as early as the age

of three. A growing number of private and state pre-school institutions use FL courses as a magnet to attract more children. Similarly, many FL schools offer extra-curricular language courses for children attending the first forms of elementary school. Some elementary schools have also introduced early FL instruction and it seems that post September 1999, we will see more of such initiatives since the new Core Curriculum (MoNE, 1999b) permits an allocation of some hours to FL teaching. As none of the teacher training programmes, neither for FL teachers, nor for EY educators, offer specialist training in early FL pedagogy, interesting questions arise: Who actually teaches FL to young children and what qualifications should they have?

To date, little research in Poland has been devoted to the quality and effectiveness of extra-curricular FL education and how it is related to the lack of adequate FLTYL training provision. Likewise, little is known about FLTYL and their needs for training. It seems that the FL teacher training has not yet responded to the growing market demand for FL teachers of young learners (FLTYLs). As described in the section 1.1.4, traditional FL teacher training in Poland devotes only a limited proportion of the curriculum to educational studies compared to the number of hours spent on academic/subject matter studies. Yet, even those limited courses in educational sciences and FL didactics seem to be far too generic and unspecialised to address the needs of FLTYLs. EY teacher training, on the other hand, consists entirely of educational and didactic studies and adequately prepares graduates to work with young children. Yet, the FL course is confined to improving students' basic communicative skills and does not let students acquire a sufficient level of FL linguistic skills for teaching purposes. Moreover, there is no possibility to study FL methodology except on the FL Philology course.

Therefore, it appears that optimal FLTYL training should involve concurrent training in both a FL instruction and EY instruction. This idea is also supported by the literature (see 2.12 and 2.13). In Poland, however, FL teacher training and EY teacher training are traditionally kept separate (see section 1.1.4). Thus, the question arises of the possibility of introducing a new specialist, combined FL+EY education course or whether it is better to reorganise the current FL teacher training and allow for, for example, an additional specialism in teaching FL to young learners (TFLYL). Both models have relative strengths and limitations, yet none of them is well-established and rooted in the Polish educational tradition so it is impossible to predict without adequate research which one will work better.

Moreover, the content and organisation of FLTYL programme is also problematic. FLTYL preparation depends to a large extent on the type of early FL instruction in elementary schools. The teacher of an immersion programme (in a 'one teacher for both L1 and L2' option) requires a significantly different training than one who teaches a FL as a separate subject with only limited or no integration with the rest of mainstream elementary curriculum. Thus, appropriate FLTYL curriculum design has to involve establishing what sorts of teachers schools need and for what programmes.

1.3. Research objectives

The benefits and constraints of starting FL learning early are widely described in the literature, as are the theories of second language acquisition in childhood and the necessary provisions for this. My research stance is from the teacher's perspective and the problems s/he may encounter in teaching languages to children due to the lack of proper training. Therefore, the main research objectives are as follows:

- Identify the needs of FLTYLs and evaluate how current teacher training provision addresses these.
- Collect data to support a request for a special programme or improvement of existing teacher training to meet the needs of FLTYL.
- Identify optimal organisational type and areas for curriculum change and/or curriculum development.
- Recognise the basic problems of acceptance and implementation of a new programme and/or changes within current provision.

Teacher needs analysis will be conducted both from the perspective of future teachers (student-teachers from EY and FL departments) and teachers currently involved in teaching FL to children. Thus, the research will investigate the motives and background of FL teachers of young children; common teaching practice with a special emphasis given to problems they have encountered potentially due to insufficient training, in order to consider if their experiences should and could find recognition in the training of future teachers.

In addition, since a common excuse for not providing teacher training is a presumed non-existence of early FL instruction, the research aims at providing evidence of the extent of FL teaching to children, and thus reinforcing the argument for the adequate training of teachers involved. This rationale will be built on the basis of current early FL provision in elementary schools and private language schools. I will inquire into the motives

underpinning the introduction of early FL programmes in some elementary schools, the number of pupils and teachers involved and the forms of the programmes. Moreover, the research will investigate the opinions of parents—those who send and those who do not send their children to various forms of FL courses. I want to see if the lack of official policy and support for early FL provision causes any problems. I also want to consider the opinions reported on the competence teachers need in order to teach young children. Thus, the research will shed some light on the quality and effectiveness of the *status quo* of FL teaching to children in Poland and point a way forward.

1.4. Research scope

My primary interest in this study was on teachers involved in teaching FL to children enrolled in the first three years of the elementary school in Poland (see 1.1.1), so-called ‘early years education’ (*edukacja wczesnoszkolna, nauczanie początkowe*) or ‘classes 1-3’. In the Polish educational system this denotes pupils between seven to ten years old. Yet, because early FL instruction often involves mixed groups of both pre-schoolers and children from classes 1-3, the research addresses FL teaching and learning prior to the age of eleven.

In the same vein, because EY teachers frequently possess double-specialisation and are qualified to teach both in elementary school and in kindergarten (unless they have chosen a different combination, e.g. kindergarten education & special needs education) many issues discussed in relation to EY teachers are relevant to kindergarten or nursery teachers.

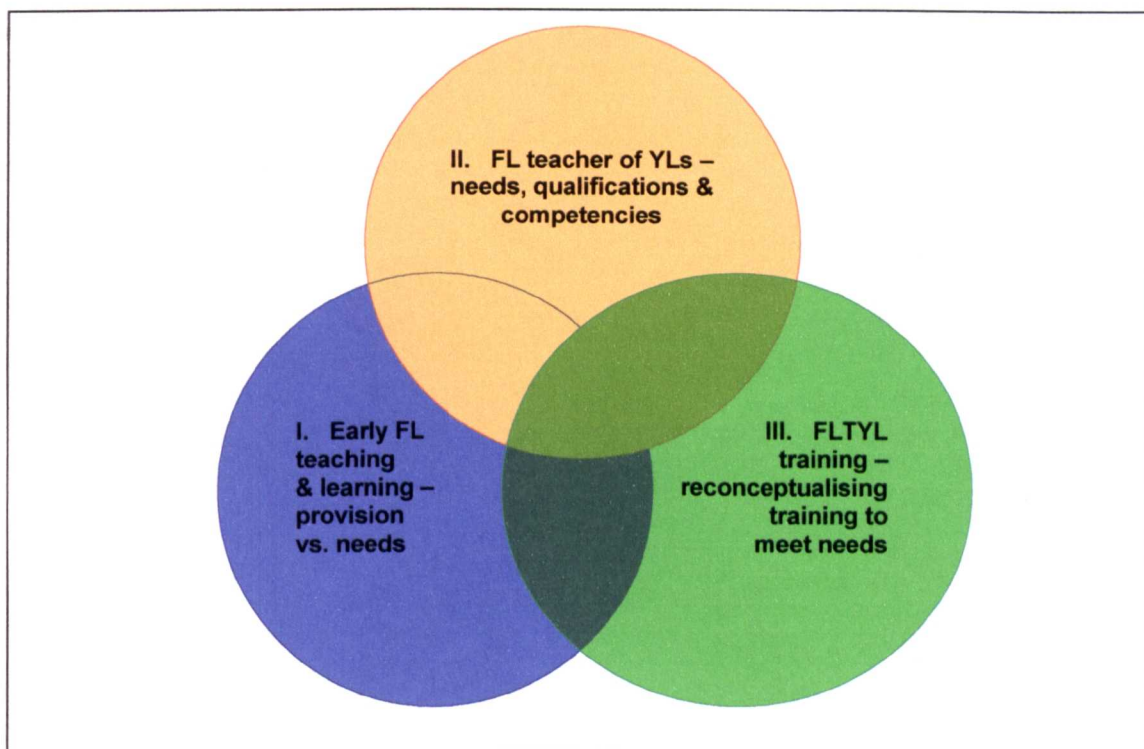
Though my experience is as an English teacher and teacher trainer, I decided not to limit the scope of this work to teachers of English to young learners but to broaden the focus to FL teachers of children in general. This was due to the fact that English language teaching shares commonalities with teaching of other FLs. Likewise, FL teachers and their training share many similarities. I do realise, however, that since English is the main FL taught in Poland and since teachers of English are the largest group among FL teachers, their needs and problems are in some ways unique and have to be approached differently. Yet, my opinion was that the separation of English teachers from other FL teachers was artificial and unnecessary, and thus the present study discusses FL teaching and teacher training as a whole.

1.5. Research themes and preliminary research questions

Three key areas for research have been identified:

- I. Early FL teaching and learning in Poland – provision vs. needs.
- II. Foreign language teacher of young learners (FLTYL): needs, qualifications and competencies.
- III. FLTYL training – reconceptualising training to meet needs.

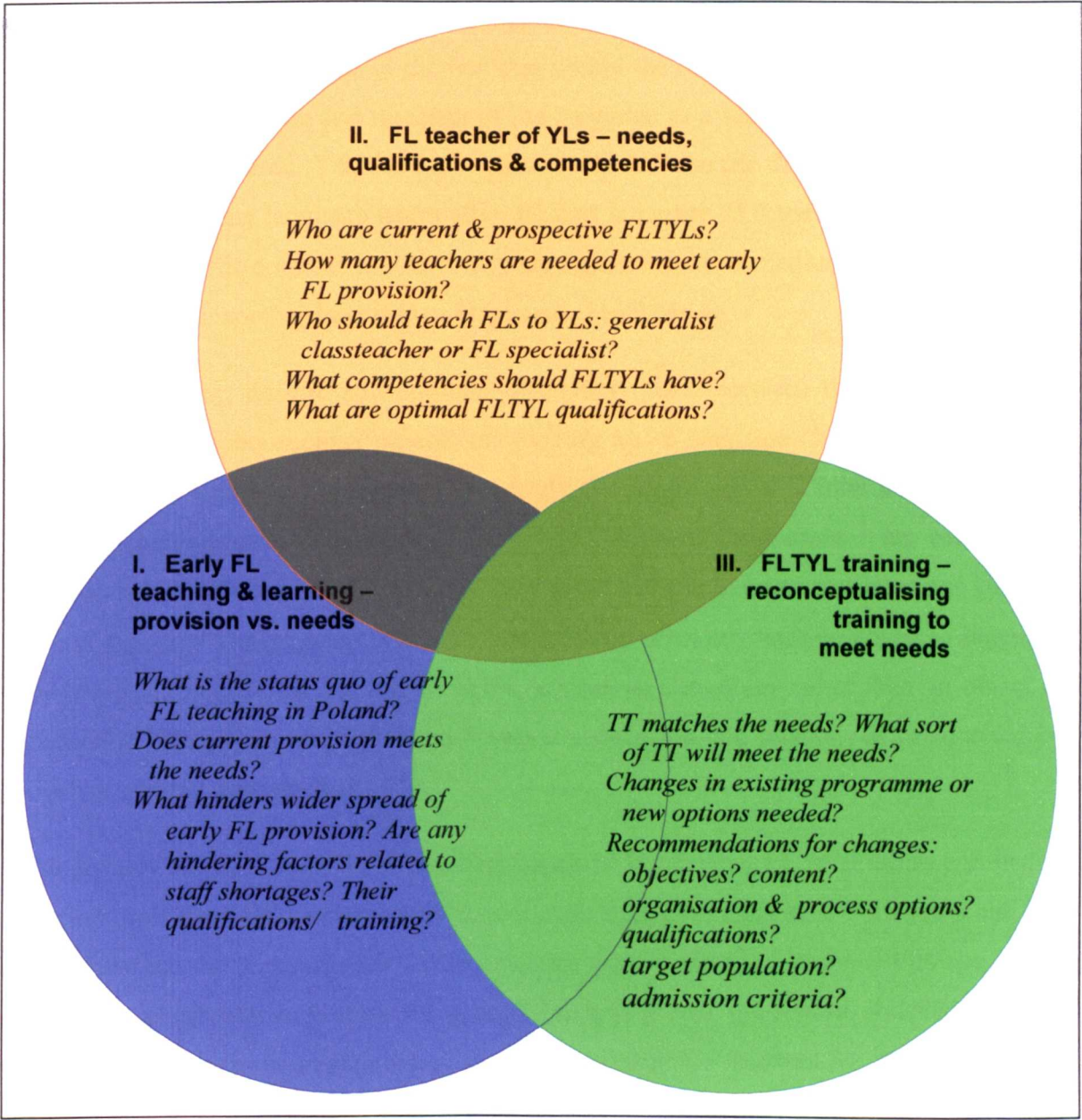
Figure 1-9 Key research areas



The three research areas can be represented diagrammatically as three overlapping circles (Figure 1.9). The first theme identifies past and current provision (number of children involved, types of early FL projects available) and prospective needs in this respect. The first theme is related to the second theme, i.e. the question of who current and prospective FLTYLs are. The second theme also deals with the problem of what FLTYLs' needs, qualifications and competencies are, and whether these needs are met by existing teacher training provision. Issues related to 'optimal' (What FLTYL training ought be provided?), existing, vs. 'viable' (What FLTYL training teacher can be provided?) are covered by the third theme.

Preliminary research questions are illustrated in Figure 1.10. The detailed list of research questions that have been derived from both the research problem **and** the review of the relevant literature on early FL teaching and teacher training is provided in section 2.17.

Figure 1-10 Preliminary research questions



1.6. Terminology

The term *teacher training* is used in this study as a superordinate to include any form of teacher education and development. Despite the differences (cf. Richards and Nunan, 1990), I have decided to use these terms interchangeably since in the present study the

distinction was often not clear-cut and the needs of FLTYL denoted education in the broadest sense; ranging from initial training and the on-going professional development.

Poland is a fairly homogenous country in linguistic terms and apart from few minorities Polish is the main language of communication within the country and the first learnt by children. In the same way for the majority of children any language learnt subsequently is both the *second* (L2) and *foreign language* (FL). On the whole, I have decided to use *foreign* for most purposes due to the fact that within the context of this study I am mostly talking about the learning and teaching of the language as a school subject, for which this term is usually preferred. Yet, there are cases in which I also use the term *second language* is used to denote any language learnt after the first language. If it used in a different sense, i.e. to mean specific contexts in which the language is used as a medium of communication usually alongside another language or languages, I indicate so.

In the same way, despite an important distinction made between the two by Krashen (1981) between subconscious process of ‘picking up’ a language (*language acquisition*) and conscious study of it (*language learning*), the terms are used interchangeably. The argument behind such a choice was that even though in most cases I am referring to classroom FL *learning* situations rather than a natural acquisition of a language through natural exposure to a language, yet at the same time, I often advocate content-and-language integrated learning (CLIL) in which an FL is used as a medium rather than an object of instruction. Therefore, the distinction between acquisition and learning as categorised by Krashen was not always clear.

The primary research focus is on teachers involved in teaching FL to children enrolled in the first three years of the elementary school in Poland, i.e. pupils aged 7-10 years old, so I frequently use the terms *classes 1-3* or *children from classes 1-3* to mean this age group. However, as already indicated, FL groups frequently mix pre-school children are with those from lower forms of elementary school. At present EY teachers are qualified to teach both in kindergartens and lower classes of elementary school. Thus, I have decided to use the terms *early years*, *early FL teaching* and *teaching young learners* to generally encompass teaching and learning of children up till the age of 10.

1.7. Thesis structure

Due to a considerable length of the thesis, it has been divided into two volumes. The division is arbitrary and consecutive page numbering is used. The first volume contains three chapters, while the second volume comprises two chapters, bibliography and appendices.

Chapter 1, which provides a general background to the study and provides an overview of research problem, objectives of the study and its scope. It finishes with preliminary research questions, which are then reformulated at the end of the second chapter

Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to the research problem. Four themes are explored: 1) past and presents practices in the area of FL teaching to young learners in selected countries; 2) arguments for and against teaching FLs to young learners; 3) views on what constitutes optimal conditions for FL learning in childhood, and 4) the issues related to professional development of FL teachers of young learners (FLTYLs), domains of FLTYL professional knowledge that should be developed, process options and organisation of FLTYL education. In conclusion section that follows, I provide a recapitulation of the issues which my literature review has revealed and how these relate to my research questions.

Having put the project into a theoretical context, I then (in **Chapter 3**) give a rationale for a multi-methodological research approach, describe the design of the study and provide the description of research tools, samples and data collection procedures.

Chapter 4 provides the account and discussion of research results. The argument is divided in the same three sections that reflect follow the division of the research questions. First, I provide a rationale for FLTYL training derived from current and future school needs. Next, I highlight problems of FLTYL qualifications that are not addressed by the current provision. Finally, I provide evidence what training should be available to FLTYL and discuss factors that may hinder its organisation.

Lastly, **Chapter 5** presents the study conclusion and makes recommendations for the future of FLTYL training in Poland and further research.

2.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two reviews the literature related to the research problem. The chapter has been organised in four parts based on four fundamental issues:

1. *Past and present **status quo** of early FL teaching in a variety of contexts.*
2. ***Why** it is worth investing time and effort in teaching FLs to children at a younger age.*
3. ***How** FLs should be taught in early years of schooling (what constitutes good FL practice at primary level) and what 'conditions of success' must be satisfied to make successful FL teaching and learning possible.*
4. ***Who** should teach FLs to young learners; what expertise is required from these teachers, and what forms of professional development should be made available to them.*

Part 1 The 'STATUS QUO' issues

H.H. Stern stated some years ago:

Through studying the history of language teaching we can gain perspective on present-day thought and trends and find directions for future growth. Knowing the historical context is helpful to an understanding of language teaching theories.

Stern, 1983:67

Similarly Howatt (1991) argues that today's controversies often reflect responses to questions that have been asked throughout the history of language teaching. This in particular concerns the issue of whether a child's mother tongue has a privileged status in elementary education or whether the mother tongue can happily co-exist or even be set on the one side with education through the medium of other languages. A good starting point, therefore, is to offer a historical survey of how ideas about language teaching to children have evolved. The second part of the 'status quo' section provides a selective review of the current early FL practices in various countries.

2.1. History of FL teaching to young learners

From some publications (e.g. Brzeziński, 1987; INTO, 1991; Pamuča, 2003) we may get the impression that the concept of an ‘early start’ to FL learning has developed in the last fifty years. Yet as numerous authors (Kelly, 1969; Howatt, 1984, 1991; Sáez, 2001) have demonstrated, teaching FLs to young children has a much longer history.

Sáez (2001), for example, holds that the first written evidence about teaching FLs to young learners dates back to Ancient Rome. He argues that the first real experience in FL teaching, as it is understood in modern times, involved young children in a sort of ‘immersion’ experience with a Greek native speaker.

Howatt (1991) reminds us that until the 18th century, the formal education of boys consisted almost exclusively of the teaching of FLs. Typically Latin, Greek, and Hebrew were taught from the age of six, mostly through rote learning of grammar rules and lists of isolated words, study of declinations and conjugations, and arduous translation (Kelly, 1969; Howatt, 1991). Literacy skills in the mother tongue were at that time practically ignored (*ibid.*). When ‘modern’ FLs, particularly French, gained their way to schools in the 18th century, they were taught using the same basic procedures that were used for teaching Latin and which later became known as the Grammar-Translation Method or the Classical Method (see details in Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

In this light it is hardly surprising that from mid 16th century onwards, many educational reformers like Ratke, Comenius, Locke, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and others argued that ‘education should grow out of the child’s experience of the mother tongue and foreign languages (particularly Latin) should be relegated to a subsidiary role’ (Howatt, 1991:290). When such instruction was finally introduced in the 19th century, FL learning was gradually shifted to secondary (grammar) schools and universities (Howatt, 1991). It was precisely during that period that many claims about early FL teaching were given their legacy. Three of them are worth mentioning at this point.

1. **The child should first learn to read and write in the L1** (the ‘mother tongue principle’), much in the Ratke’s famous assertion: ‘In everything we should follow the order of Nature. There is a certain natural sequence along which the human intelligence moves in acquiring knowledge. This sequence must be studied and instruction must be based on the knowledge of it. (...) First let the mother tongue

be studied, and teach everything through the mother tongue, so that the learner's attention may be not diverted to the language' (Ratke, 1625, cited in Howatt, 1991: 291).

2. **Mother tongue learning is 'natural'**²⁰ **while FL learning is 'artificial'**, mostly tracked back to Rousseau and his claim that 'the acquisition of the mother tongue is a special event—in accord with "Nature"—but that languages learnt are little more than artificial displays of verbal expertise (Howatt, 1991: 294).
3. **Early FL study is an arduous and difficult task**, and as such is unsuited to the needs of mass elementary education—the claim which can be to a large extent justified in the light of the teaching method used at that time, namely the Grammar Translation Method with its heavy emphasis on linguistic form at the expense of meaning.

Consequently, when in the 19th century FLs (particularly the classics) were gradually moved to the secondary and university levels (accessible at that time to the privileged few), another claim was brought to life:

4. FL learning is elitist.

In Britain the situation was particularly unfortunate since the old 'Latin' grammar schools were transformed into an expensive private sector of exclusive ('public') secondary schools for which numerous private 'preparatory schools' grew. Since Latin and French were taught in those schools but in state elementary schools FLs were not taught at all, the transfer between private and public sector was not possible either at elementary or higher levels (Howatt, 1991). Thus, the accusations of elitism were justified.

In this light the emergence of so called Natural Method, and its better known successor, the Direct Method (see description in Richards and Rodgers, 2001), a new teaching methodology that were developed out of naturalistic principles of language learning seems positive. And yet, Kubanek-German cautions against superfluous reading of some 'reformist' writings of that time advocating 'natural' or 'conversational' methods to teaching FLs:

²⁰ For discussion of the various connotations in education of the word 'natural', see Howatt, 1991 and Kubanek-German, 1998.

For example, Locke when he asked why little girls were the only ones who profited from the natural way of learning French from the French governesses, emphasised the positive aspects of learning through conversation. On the other hand there was the century-old argument that Latin with its rigid grammar teaching was the language for intellectually superior—i.e. boys, whereas French could be learned by those of lower intellectual capabilities, namely women and children, through conversation.

Kubanek-German, 1998:196

In this light the introduction of the natural methods may also be interpreted as a means of making FL learning accessible to those less intellectually privileged, and as such, not essentially seen as desirable as part of formal education (Howatt, 1991). Besides there were also practical problems: success of the method was dependent on teacher's skill and 'not all teachers were proficient enough in the foreign language to adhere to the principles of the method' (Richards and Rodgers, 2001:13). In absence of teachers who were native speakers or who had nativelike fluency, the basic premise of the natural methods—spontaneous use of the target language—was often replaced with labelling exercises in which new foreign words were attached to long-familiar concepts (Howatt, 1991). Thus the accusations that the natural methods trivialised the learning process (Kroeh, 1887, cited in Howatt, 1991: 295) had some substance.

No wonder then that such methodology did not gain momentum at that time. The traditionalists from the private schools advocated the old Grammar-Translation Method as a way of teaching FLs to young learners. The 'reformers' from the state sector, on the other hand, much under the Rousseau/19th century romantic-nationalistic thinking, fiercely advocated the 'late start' policy. As Stern and Weinrib (1977: 5) write, 'The broad trend in most educational systems up to the 1950s was to regard languages as a natural part of secondary education.' The use of vernacular at primary level was reaffirmed by UNESCO: 'It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his (sic!) mother tongue' (UNESCO, 1953, cited in Stern, 1967: 7).

The arguments against premature introduction to FL study were strengthened by the findings of early studies into bilingualism. Research studies documented extremely poor results of second- and first-generation minority students on school achievement tests. Similarly, research measuring IQ scores of bilingual and monolingual students reported much higher results of the latter, particularly on verbal IQ tests (see Baker and Jones, 1998; Baker, 2001 for review). Despite accusations that some of the studies were heavily biased by the political and educational agendas and outcomes were almost predetermined (Hakuta, 1981, cited in Bialystok and Cummins, 1991), they had nevertheless given rise to

the belief among the public and academics that bilingualism has a detrimental effect on cognition (see Baker and Jones, 1998; Baker, 2001 for review). These apparent problems tend to be expressed twofold:

First, some tend to believe that the more someone learns and uses a second language, the less skill a person will have in their first language. Rather like weighting scales or a **balance**, the more one increases, the more the other decreases. Second, concern is sometimes expressed that the ability to speak two languages may be at the cost of **efficiency** in thinking. The intuitive belief is sometimes that two languages residing inside quarters will mean less room to store other areas of learning. In comparison, the monolingual as having one language in residence and therefore maximal storage space for other information.

Baker, 2001:135, emphasis in original

Other predicated problems ranged from ‘bilingualism as a burden on the brain, mental confusion, inhibition of the acquisition of the majority language, identity conflicts, split loyalties, even schizophrenia’ (*ibid.*). Consequently, in numerous countries (e.g. the USA, Canada or Great Britain) there has been a strong tendency to replace L1 spoken by minority children with the majority language (Stern, 1967; Cummins, 1981a), the policy which seems to violate the above quoted UNESCO’s resolution calling for the right of each child to be educated in the mother tongue. (Educational offerings for linguistic minorities are discussed in section 2.2; modern views on bilingualism and cognition are described in section 2.3.)

2.1.1. The 1950s—the first wave of enthusiasm

A new trend in thinking came in the 1950s. As argued in 1952 by Earl McGrath, US Commissioner of Education, the events of the World War II required that ‘immediate attention to be given to providing foreign language instruction to as many citizens as possible’ (Finney, 1996). In 1953 Theodore Andersson wrote *The Teaching of Foreign Languages in the Elementary School* laying the foundations for the FLES (Foreign Languages in the Elementary School) movement in the USA. By 1960 all 50 states had FLES programmes with enrolment of 1,127,000 pupils in 8,000 elementary schools (*ibid.*). Paradoxically, an upsurge of interest in early FL teaching was triggered when limited knowledge of FLs among American scientists prevented them from intercepting news of Russian plans for their first Sputnik satellite launch in 1957 (Heining-Boynton, 1990). As a result, the US Government acknowledged the urgent demand for an improvement in FL teaching. The National Defense Educational Act of 1958 provided generous funds for the training of teachers in ‘critical’ languages (German, French, Spanish, Russian) and the

purchase of equipment and materials. Matching funding for research and development of new teaching methodology followed (*ibid.*).

Consequently, throughout the 1960s the teaching of FLs to young learners became a subject of a serious debate and research. A popular belief that children are better and much quicker language learners, as well as anecdotal ‘proof’ that children of immigrants seem to ‘osmose’ a second language (L2) and learn it without any formal training, were supported by scientific evidence. The original claim that children should be instructed in an FL as early as possible came from neurological arguments concerning the brain plasticity and so called critical period for language acquisition (Penfield and Roberts, 1959; Lenneberg, 1967; see detailed argument in section 2.3). Moreover, the union between behavioural psychology and descriptive linguistics resulted in inventing the Audiolingual Method (see Richards and Rodgers, 2001 for description), which seemed to be the epitome of effective language teaching. With much hope and enthusiasm numerous early FL teaching projects were launched in many parts of the world.

The Council of Europe and two international UNESCO conferences set up in Hamburg in 1962 and 1966 (Stern, 1967, 1969) supported these projects. These meetings also demonstrated an urgent need for empirical and evaluative research into the effectiveness of early FL programmes (Stern and Weinrib, 1977). When such reports finally became available (e.g. Andersson, 1969; Burstall, Jamieson, Cohen, and Hargreaves, 1974; Carroll, 1975), they showed that children generally responded positively to FL teaching; nevertheless, high expectations of children’s FL fluency be achieved in a relatively short span were not fulfilled (Stern and Weinrib, 1977; Stern, 1983). These findings provoked doubts in the minds of policymakers, who started to debate on the advantages of early FL teaching, especially as these programmes proved to be expensive (Partlow, 1977). Consequently, the initial enthusiasm towards early FL instruction gradually vanished and many projects were abandoned.

A typical example of a programme from that time was the National Pilot Scheme *French from Eight*. Launched in England and Wales in 1963 with a great support and enthusiasm (IAAMSS, 1967). It introduced French into the primary school curriculum and by 1970, 35% of junior schools were involved (Burstall *et al.*, 1974). After ten years of monitoring the linguistic achievements and attitudes of 17,000 pupils enrolled in early FL instruction and comparing them with the achievements of pupils who started FL at the age of 11, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) evaluation team (Burstall *et al.*,

1974) concluded that FL teaching in primary school was feasible and it was not detrimental to achievement in other school subjects (a 17th century argument against early learning). It was also noted that pupils starting FL early revealed a much more favourable attitude towards French language and culture. However, the effect of early FL instruction as a stimulus to study a second FL at secondary level was disappointing. Likewise, no ‘substantial’ gains in FL proficiency achieved by beginning to learn French at the age of eight were revealed. The only ‘statistically significant’ difference between early and late starters was in the area of listening comprehension and in speaking French, which runs against the critical period hypothesis. In fact, the authors of the evaluation stated that the theory of the advantages of the early start was a myth. (See, however, section 2.3 for the polemics to the NFER evaluation and discussion of other studies considering the ‘optimal age’ issue.)

The NFER report revealed several problems in the implementation of the scheme (see below), which might have resulted in the apparent lack of significant gains in FL achievement between early and late start groups. Nevertheless, rather than eradicating these weaknesses, the LEAs chose to terminate the project on the basis of the very last sentence of the 250 page report (Brewster, Ellis and Girard, 1992):

Now when the results of the evaluation are finally available, however, it is hard to resist the conclusion that the weight of the evidence has combined with the balance of opinion to tip the scales against a possible expansion of the teaching of French in primary schools.

Burstall *et al.*, 1974:246

By the same token, hastily organised, ill-conceived, inappropriate American FLES gradually declined by the end of 1960 (Strupeck, 1988). As in Britain, the programmes grappled with several problems, which is well reflected by the title of the Andersson’s second book, *Foreign Languages in the Elementary School: A struggle against mediocrity* (1969). However, unlike the British project, no appropriate evaluation component was built into the American FLES, so it is difficult to state with any certainty what aspect (or aspects) of these programmes accounted for their problems—or, in some instances, their successes (Schinke-Llano, 1985).

According to Heining-Boynton (1990) and Khan (1991), amongst the factors that contributed to failure of both American FLES and British *French from Eight* projects and which other countries might well pay attention to were:

- **Methodology and materials:** over-reliance on the use of the then popular audiolingual approach, which limited learning to excessive repetition and drilling exercises; separating FL teaching from the rest of the elementary school curriculum; lack of homework, grades and (in the USA) programme evaluation, giving the impression of language classes as ‘frivolous and not worth series effort’ (McLaughlin, 1978:138)
- **Management:** the problem of transition to secondary school and the difficulties the secondary school FL teachers faced in integrating the early starters (of varying proficiency in the FL) into classes that contained zero beginners; lack of parental and community support.
- **Teacher training:** a patchy implementation in terms of who was selected to teach, the diverse kinds of in-service training given to prospective FL teachers, very different levels of teachers’ competence in the target language and/or in primary pedagogy.

With regard to the last point, namely problems related to inadequate preparation of the teachers involved in the scheme, Burstall (1970:82) gives a crude summary of the problem in Britain:

The worst threats to children’s interests derived from inexperienced teachers unused to oral approaches, from teachers who were good French speakers but who were unfamiliar with primary methods, from teachers who were poor French speakers but who had reasonable teaching methods, from teachers who were over-active and allowed the children no initiative and from situations where there were very frequent changes of the staff.

These teachers, even though lacking in FL skills and methodology, showed the high motivation and positive attitudes toward the scheme (Burstall *et al.*, 1974). In the USA, however, an extreme lack of teachers to provide early FL instruction resulted in ‘drafting’ elementary school teachers (often with little or no FL skills and/or experience in FL teaching), who in turn, ‘resented the assignment looking upon it as yet another task to be squeezed into an already crowded day’ (Heining-Boynton, 1990:504). Their students and students’ parents often picked up these negative feelings. Strupeck (1988:3) argues that the most important loss of the FLES programmes of the 1950s and 1960s was that:

They failed not only in their observable goals of teaching the language, but also in the sense that they influenced an entire generation and their offspring of potential language speakers and advocates to be intimidated by foreign language and to be, because of their memory of sorrowful experiences in foreign language classes against the idea of foreign language learning.

Nevertheless, the awakening of interest in teaching FLs to young children made a powerful impact on the education of language and ethnic minorities, which seems particularly significant in the light of large-scale shifts in population abundant since 1950 and the emergence of substantial linguistic minorities in countries where they had not existed before (Howatt, 1991). In 1962, the highly influential piece of research by Pearl and Lambert was published. As summarised by Baker and Jones (1998), the research rectified

many of the methodological weaknesses of the earlier research and also provided a strong scientific support that bilinguals may have a cognitive advantage over monolinguals or at least bilingualism need not have negative consequences. Pearl and Lambert's (1962) findings have been widely quoted to support bilingual policies in areas of the world like North America, for instance, or Britain where one language is dominant. In the USA, for example, the Bilingual Education Act of the 1968 made possible for the funding of bilingual education programmes, in which the essential feature has been the use of both minority and majority language as a medium of instruction at different stages of the programme (Howatt, 1991). Unlike numerous programmes of the past, which aimed at rapid assimilation into the mainstream, these new offerings 'strive for language preservation and cultural enrichment' (Stern and Weinrib, 1977:8; see also description of current provision for linguistic minorities in section 2.2.3). Even though by the end of the 1960s FLES movement declined in the USA, FL learning has been available for some younger children through bilingual education for minorities (*ibid.*).

Some of the same influences were also at work in Canada, where there general disenchantment with the Core French offering—20 minutes of French a day over a period of two or more years in the elementary school—led in the late 1960s to extensive experimentation in the area of early FL teaching. In brief, the experiments dealt with various permutations of the three variables: the starting age (from kindergarten to grades 8-9); the amount of time devoted to FL study (from 30 minutes a day to whole school day); and the teaching approach used (from the traditional 'formal' teaching of French as a subject to various combinations of the formal approach with the 'functional' use of French as a medium of teaching) (Stern and Weinrib, 1977:9). The practical outcome of this experimentation has been the establishment of so called 'immersion' programme, in which the children are educated either entirely or partially through the medium of their L2 (Barik and Swain, 1975). The prototype immersion kindergarten was opened in 1965 in St. Lambert, on the outskirts of Montreal. It operated on the 'home-school language switch' principle, i.e. majority-group English-speaking Canadian children received their schooling entirely in French through kindergarten and grade 1, with English introduced in limited amounts in Grade 2 and gradually increased in successive grades until approximately half the curriculum was taught in English and half in French (*ibid.*). Following the success of the St. Lambert project (what counts as success in immersion is discussed section 2.3; see also relevant evaluative studies, e.g. Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Bruck, Lambert and Tucker, 1974), immersion programmes of various types have spread in Canada (Barik and

Swain, 1975) and elsewhere (Dodson, 1985; Genesee, 1987; Beatens Beardsmore, 1993; Johnson and Swain, 1997). Immersion has become an important alternative to submersion programmes for language minorities, and when early FL teaching was revived in the 1990s, also to traditional FL subject teaching for young learners from linguistic majorities (see section 2.3.1).

2.1.2. The revival of early FL teaching in the 1980s and 1990s

The late 1980s brought a revival of interest in early FL teaching throughout the world (Schinke-Llano, 1985; Brumfit, 1991; Rixon, 1992; Curtain and Pesola, 1994). As usual, there were many political and economic concerns, which shaped the perception in many countries on the value of learning an FL. In Europe this interest was sharpened by the creation of what is now the European Union and the Single Market, which dramatically increased ‘prospects not only of vocational mobility, languages for export, international joint ventures, electronic information networks, increased travel and tourism, but also of cultural and educational links, and even shared identity within the one community’ (Johnstone, 1994:1). Similarly in Driscoll:

The recent resurgence of interest in primary modern foreign languages (MFL) in almost every country in Western Europe reflects a growing realisation that pupils need to be equipped with the competencies, attitudes and skills to cope successfully with the social and economic changes which are transforming life in Europe. Primary MFL is not only an investment for the future but it also reflects our values as European citizens and our conception of what it means to be educated.

Driscoll, 1999a: 9

This trend was reinforced in 1995 by the European Commission’s White Paper, *Teaching and learning–Towards the learning society*, which stated that ‘upon completing initial training everyone should be proficient in two Community foreign languages’ in addition to their mother tongue (European Commission, 1995:47). And the knowledge of at least three languages was declared an essential qualification for citizens willing to make a full contribution to the construction of an integrated Europe and to benefit from the professional and personal opportunities offered by the single market (*ibid.*). In order to achieve these aims, it was recommended to introduce the first FL in pre-school education, so that it may be developed throughout the primary level schooling and the second FL to be introduced at secondary. In line with the 1992 Treaty on European Union (the Maastricht Treaty), which shifted emphasis from purely economic and political integration to cultural, educational and linguistic developments within the member states (Beatens

Beardsmore, 1994), early fostering of international awareness of cultures stripped of prejudices and stereotypes seems relevant, too. As Johnstone (1999:197) observes:

The White Paper indeed implies that much more than language competence is required: personal development, intercultural learning and the cultivation of a European identity to complement children's existing local and national identities will also be at stake. This overreaching policy objectives sets the scene for a rich and varied research agenda in relation to languages in primary education.

In 1997 the Council of the European Union through its *Resolution on the early teaching of European Union languages* called upon the Member States:

- to encourage the early teaching of languages and diversify the languages taught;
- to encourage cooperation between schools providing this type of education and foster pupils' virtual mobility and, if possible, their physical mobility;
- to promote the continuous provision of teaching of several languages;
- to increase awareness among all those involved, particularly parents, of the benefits of early language learning;
- to develop and distribute the most suitable teaching materials, including multimedia resources;
- to prepare teachers working in the field of early language teaching to meet these new needs (Council of the European Union, 1998).

The Council also invited the European Commission to support measures taken by the Member States to achieve the above objectives and to promote early language teaching within the framework of existing Community programmes by:

- providing support for measures aimed at strengthening European cooperation and sharing or exchanging experience and examples of good practice in this field,
- endorsing transnational cooperation in the development of teaching methods and materials (including multimedia products) and means of evaluation in the field of early language learning,
- supporting the distribution of suitable, high-quality teaching materials via European networks,
- supporting measures aimed, on the one hand, at increasing teacher mobility and, on the other hand, at updating and improving the skills required to teach languages at an early age,
- fostering cooperation between teacher training institutions, for example by encouraging the creation of European credit transfer systems,
- encouraging contacts between pupils, particularly by means of virtual mobility,
- bearing in mind early language teaching when considering future cooperation in the field of education (*ibid.*).

In keeping with the above, teaching and the promotion of languages and their corresponding cultures has been at the heart of Community actions. Three initiatives are worth mentioning at this point:

1. In 1989 the Council of Europe and its Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) launched a new programme entitled *Language Learning for European Citizenship*, which consisted of a series of 'new-style' workshops²¹ aimed at bringing together primary and secondary teachers, teacher trainers, and policy-makers for the fusion of ideas and resources. Seven workshops (4A, 4B, 5A, 5B, 8A, 8B) were specifically devoted to learning and teaching modern languages in primary schools, while workshop 17 provided some insights on the challenge of in-service training for FL teachers of young learners (for reports on these events see Giovanazzi, 1991; Doyé and Edelhoff, 1992; Hughes, 1993; Kuperberg, 1993; Èok, 1995; Felberbauer and Heinder, 1995; del Moral and Pérez Iruela, 1995). Among the most interesting and successful early FL projects set up at the at time there are: *The Lollipop Project* for 1st form pupils in Vienna, *Wiener Neustadt Project* for two FLs in primary schools, *The Elementary English* in Finland, *Primary English* in Hesse (see description in Doyé and Edelhoff 1992), *The English Language Project* in France (Kuperberg, 1993), and *The National Pilot Modern Languages Project* in Scotland (Hurrell, 1991; Low, Brown, Johnstone and Pirrie, 1995; Low, Duffield, Brown and Johnstone, 1993; Low, 1996, 1997).
2. In 1994, upon the initiative of Austria and the Netherlands, with special support from France, eight states founded the European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) in Graz, Austria as an Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe. The overall role of the Graz Centre is the implementation of language policies and the promotion of innovations in the field of teaching and learning modern languages. Workshops 2/1997; 1/1998, 6/2000, 12/2000 and the 1999 Regional Workshop were dedicated to various aspects of teaching languages at primary level (see Felberbauer, 1998; Dalgalian, Caré, Èok, Doyé, 2001; Èok and Sollars, 2002; Sollars and Camilleri, 2002, respectively), and culminated in a comprehensive review of early FL provision in Europe, Canada, the USA, Hong Kong, and Australia (Nikolov and Curtain, 2000).

²¹ New style workshops were the continuation of the Council of Europe "Modern Language" Project No. 12 (1982-86), which had an overall aim 'to raise the level of the learning and teaching of modern languages, throughout Europe, for communication' (Girard and Trim, 1988:33).

3. A conference of experts and decision-makers, *Early Learning and After*, was organised in Luxembourg in September 1997. European Union Education Ministers subsequently adopted a Resolution (98/C/1) calling upon Member States to encourage the early teaching of languages and European co-operation between schools providing such teaching. In the same year, the European Commission has commissioned a publication entitled *Foreign languages at primary and pre-school education: contexts and outcomes* (Blondin *et al.*, 1998). Published in English, German and French, this is based on an analysis of existing projects and sets out the conditions for successful early language learning.

Efforts of the European Commission and those of the Council of Europe have been supported at national and international levels by various organizations, such as the British Council²² and the International Association for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) and its Young Learners Special Interest Group (see YLSIG, 2000-2003), Goethe Institute, Alliance Française, and Servantes Institute. In Great Britain, FL teaching at primary level was assisted by the Association of Language Learning and the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (Trafford, 1992), and more recently the National Advisory Centre for Early Language Learning. In 1999 the Early Language Learning initiative (ELL) was founded by the DfEE/DfES to support FL learning in British primary schools (CILT, 2002). In the USA, the founding of the National Network of Early Language Learning (NNELL) in 1987 marked a significant milestone in promoting early FL learning (Lorenz and Redmond, 1998).

As already mentioned in section 1.1.2, these events and reports disseminated from them provided a benchmark for FL policy and practice in Poland (Komorowska, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c). In particular, they supported teaching of languages other than Russian in the primary school. Following the European Commission's White Paper, in 1999 the official starting age was lowered to class 4 children aged approximately 10 (Pamuła, 2003). The 1998-2000 early FL provision in selected countries is provided in section 2.2.

²² Already in 1982 in response to the plans of Italian Ministry of Education to introduce the teaching of FLs into primary schools, the British Council set up a series of annual conferences devoted to teaching English to young learners (see, e.g., Holden and Rixon, 1986; Boardman, and Holden, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c, 1987d; Holden, 1988). Since then, similar events have been organised by the British Council (often with the association of other organisations) in other countries, e.g. Spain, Hungary and Poland (Moon and Nikolov, 2000). Organisations such as the English Language Teaching Contacts Scheme, also set up by the British Council, have established extensive regional networks of professionals involved in English language teaching to young learners across the world (ELTeCS, 2002). Twenty years of

2.1.3. Lessons learnt from the past

The upsurge of interest nowadays in early FL teaching is not only visible in sheer numbers of children involved (see section 2.2), but it is also indicated by a wide range of international publications on methodology (e.g. Brewster *et al.*, 1991, 2001; Brumfit, Moon and Tongue, 1991; Cameron, 2001; Curtain and Pesola, 1994; Halliwell, 1992; Moon, 2000; Lipton, 1998; Slattery and Willis, 2001; Scott and Ytreberg, 1990) and research (see, for example, Blondin, Candelier, Edelenbos, Johnstone, Kubanek-German and Taeschner, 1998; Dickson and Cumming, 1998; Edelenbos and Johnstone, 1996a; Moon and Nikolov, 2000; Rixon, 1999).

Three things are evident from these sources. First of all, new evidence coming from various branches of study—neurolinguistics, psycholinguistics and L2 acquisition among others- helped to re-examine the ‘optimal age’ issue and the advantages of an early start to FL learning. This, on the other hand, has helped to set the expected or intended ‘outcomes’ of early FL provision more realistically, especially in relation to the L2/FL exposure in and outside school (see discussion in section 2.2). Generally speaking, the aim of early FL instruction is no longer ‘the creation of bilingual children but more reasonably, to prepare children linguistically, psychologically and culturally for language learning’ (Brewster *et al.*, 2002:5). At the same time, the success of Canadian immersion and of other types of bilingual programmes that followed is a reminder of the fact that young children seem to benefit the most from the programmes in which the FL is used ‘for normal communication purposes and acquisition is incidental to the pursuit of some other activity’ (Howatt, 1991:298). Consequently, a growing number of authors (e.g. Met, 1991; Curtain and Hass, 1995; Girard, 1996) advocate early FL programmes in which the FL is the medium of communication (including instruction) at school or FL learning is embedded in the primary school curriculum (Johnstone, 1994). (See discussion in section 2.5)

Secondly, sober assessment of the past and present practices helped to identify the key methodological and organisational requirements for successful early FL teaching and learning (see Blondin *et al.*, 1998; Brewster, *et al.*, 1992, 2002; Curtain, 2000; Curtain and Pesola, 1994; Kaiser, 1996; Khan, 1991; Lipton, 1994, 1998; Rhodes, 1992; Rhodes and Schreibstein, 1983; Rosenbusch, 1991, 1995). These can be summarised as follows:

involvement of the British Council have recently resulted in commissioning of *The Worldwide Survey of Primary English Language Teaching* and its publication on the Internet (Rixon, 2000).

- **Good course planning and funding.** The budget should take into account the start-up costs, salaries, curriculum and staff development, and materials' purchase and development); appropriate choice of the language(s) taught; setting appropriate and realistic goals and planning programmes that will meet those goals.
- **Adequate staffing** (see discussion below)
- **Appropriate teaching methodology.** Methods used in early FL classrooms should be both age-suitable and based on sound L2 acquisition theory. Classroom materials and curricula must be created that are meaningful and appropriate to the cognitive level of the pupils and to their learning style preferences. There should also be developed suitable instructional materials for those pupils who generally have difficulty at school and/or who come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.
- **Coordination and articulation** across and between all levels of instruction (pre-primary, primary and secondary school) must be secured.
- **Adequate scheduling and fitting the FL instruction into the total elementary school curriculum.** The overall amount of time devoted to early language learning (and especially to speaking) should be increased, wherever possible. There should preferably be short, daily lessons instead of one or two longer lessons per week.
- **Involving the parents and community** in the programme; informing them about the value of the programme, and celebrating its successes with community participation.
- **Evaluation** of students, teachers and the entire programme on the regular basis.
- Sufficient funding must be made available for **research** and **innovation**, throughout the development of early language learning initiatives, from the planning stage to the post-implementation stage. This research should focus on the results achieved, taking account of the context, and on direct observation of classroom situations.

However, central to research evidence is the belief that teachers are the key to successful early FL teaching (Pinthon, 1979; Brumfir, 1991; Rosenbush, 1991; Rhodes, 1992; Curtain and Pesola, 1994). The *sine qua non* condition for the future expansion of FL teaching to young learners is securing an adequate number of well-trained teachers (Girard, 1996). According to Pinthon (1979), these are teachers who make use of the resources provided for them or apply methods advocated by experts or those that they have developed themselves. Possibly their enthusiasm and skill is most influential and eventually determines whether children progress in an FL and whether, most importantly, they like this early experience and would wish to continue (Met, 1989). Teachers also need knowledge and skill how to establish cooperation with both generalists EY teachers (if an FL is taught separately from the general curriculum) and FL specialists involved in FL provision at higher levels of schooling. In the past, lack of cooperation between these groups often resulted in discontinuation of study.

With respect to ‘teacher factors’, Blondin *et al.* (1998) recommend teachers should be educated in the following domains: proficiency in the target language, ability to analyse and describe that language; knowledge of the principles of language acquisition; pedagogical skills specifically adapted to teaching FLs to young children. Consequently, depending on the prior experiences and qualifications of particular individuals some of these attributes may already be acquired; others, however, will need to be developed through ‘substantial induction courses’ or in the case of prospective teachers, during initial teacher education (Blondin *et al.* 1998.: 41). However, many questions remain unresolved as to whom is best placed to provide the teaching (generalist vs. specialist debate), what are the crucial competencies and skills required from FLTYLs in various models of early FL instruction, and according to which model(s) the training might be provided. I am elaborating on these points in Part 3 (sections 2.8-2.11).

Girard (1996:5) summarises these main lessons that can be learnt from past experiments in various countries under the following five points:

1. advantage should taken of certain children’s aptitudes for foreign language learning at primary school;
2. it is not really possible to postulate an optimal age for starting to learn a foreign language; the best age may depend on the country and the linguistic situation (...);
3. the learning of a language which is not the pupils’ mother tongue should be integrated into other subjects taught at primary school;
4. the language should always be taught with a view to facilitating its further acquisition at secondary school;
5. the linguistic and teaching skill of the teachers is certainly one of the most important factors.

2.1.4. Recent actions undertaken

Following various activities of the European Year of Languages 2001, on 14 February 2002 the Education and Youth Council the European Union adopted a resolution in which, among many others, it invited the Member States to ‘to ensure that study programmes and educational objectives promote a positive attitude to other languages and cultures and stimulate intercultural communication skills from an early age’ (Council of the European Union, 2002: 2). A month later at the Barcelona European Council of 15 and 16 March 2002, the Heads of State and Government asked the European Commission to pursue the

action undertaken to improve mastery of basic skills, particularly by teaching two foreign languages from an early age (European Commission, 2003).

In preparing its action plan for 2004-2006, the European Commission undertook a public consultation involving the other European Institutions, national ministries, a wide range of organisations representing civil society, and the general public. The responses to the consultation were disseminated in Final Report (see European Language Council, 2003).

On 27 July 2003 the European Commission adopted the *Action Plan* for the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity (European Commission, 2003). The Action Plan makes concrete proposals for 45 actions to be undertaken from 2004 to 2006 with the aim of supporting actions taken by local, regional and national authorities. The actions encompass three broad areas:

- Firstly, the key objective of extending the benefits of language learning to all citizens as a lifelong activity;
- Secondly, the need to improve the quality of language teaching at all levels;
- Thirdly, the need to build in Europe an environment which is really favourable to languages.

The action plan also makes a specific reference to the objective of ‘mother tongue plus two other languages’ in a lifelong learning context. The documents notes that it is a priority for Member States ‘to ensure that language learning in kindergarten and primary school is effective, for it is here that key attitudes towards other languages and cultures are formed, and the foundations for later language learning are laid’ (European Commission, 2003: 7). However,

The advantages of the early learning of languages - which include better skills in one’s mother tongue - only accrue where **teachers are trained specifically to teach languages to very young children**, where class sizes are small enough for language learning to be effective, where appropriate training materials are available, and where enough curriculum time is devoted to languages. Initiatives to make language learning available to an ever-younger group of pupils must be supported by appropriate resources, including **resources for teacher training**.

Ibid. (emphasis mine)

In implementing ‘mother tongue plus two other languages: making an early start’ commitment, each Member States (including Poland, past its accession to the EU on 1 May 2004) is invited to establish its own programme of actions. For example, they should consider ‘whether adjustments are necessary to primary school curricula, and whether

provision for the training and deployment of additional specialist teaching staff and other teaching and learning resources in primary and pre-primary schools is adequate' (European Commission, 2003: 15). The Action Plan offers a list of proposals for actions undertaken at a European level (actions 1.1.1-1.1.5), which will complement Member States' own initiatives.

2.1.5. Summary and conclusions

Before discussing the present early FL programmes in selected countries, let me recapitulate the major questions recurring throughout the history of early FL provision:

- 1. The question of the role the mother tongue in education:** Howatt (1984) refers to a number of attitudes, approaches and methods which advocate or reject the use of L1 in ELT. The use of L1 in language teaching was supported by proponents of the Grammar Translation 'method' (the first 'grammar translation' course was published in 1783) and Pendergast (around 1860). Those against L1 use were the proponents of the Direct Method, particularly as interpreted by Berlitz (around 1878). Moderate views were expressed by the Reform Movement (Victor, 1882/1886), and Palmer (mid 1910s to late 1920s).
- 2. The question of motives for lowering the starting age of FL instruction and goals that an earlier introduction to an FL is purported to serve:** At different points in history FL study was made accessible to younger children for a variety of reasons, e.g. 'taking advantage of natural interaction with an L2 native speaker in the home milieu'; 'to learn a language in order to access the subject matter, e.g. learning arithmetic through the medium of Greek'; 'to learn a language in order to read its literature and in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from FL study'; 'taking advantage of an optimal time when linguistic abilities are at their peak'; 'providing a longer sequence of instruction', 'enriching primary school curriculum'; 'competence in an FL is as a part of elementary (basic) education', etc.
- 3. The questions of methods used for teaching young learners:** Mackey (1965, quoted in Hawkins 1996: 19) likened the history of FL teaching to the repeated swinging of a pendulum from one extreme of practice to another. Also in the case of early FL classrooms this 'pendulum effect' has been exercised: grammar-translation courses in which literary texts were studied, analysed, memorised and repeated; back to involving a child in a natural conversation with a native speaker in natural methods; from

scientifically-grounded Audio-Lingual Method in which dialogues were learned through imitation and repetition, back again to Canadian immersion where an FL is used for normal communication.

4. **The question of the teacher role:** In accordance with the changing approaches to teaching children, the role and competence of the teacher have changed, e.g. the explicator of classical texts in the grammar-translation era; model provider and controller of the language behaviour of the students in the Audio-Lingual Method; the facilitator of the communication process in Communicative Language Teaching (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).
5. **The question of essential provision:** It is argued that early FL programmes not only have potential for success, but they are highly recommended to develop bilingual skills needed in a unified Europe. However, to make early FL provision successful, especially after its failures in the 1960s and 1970s, some basic conditions must be satisfied. These in particular include 1) securing well-trained teachers; 2) establishing provision of pedagogical support; 3) adequate timetabling; 4) suitable teaching materials and resources; 5) articulation and continuation; and 6) integrated control and evaluation.

2.2. Survey of current practices

With a new wave of enthusiasm for FL teaching to young children in the 1990s, a great deal of countries in the world launched early FL programmes at primary level. Yet, the disparity of provision—programme types, starting age, language choice, articulation, teachers involved, evaluation, etc.—is enormous. Besides different countries operate within various linguistic environments that influence FL programme choices. The first part of this section defines various social settings in which L2/FL is learnt. My intent here is primarily to highlight the differences between so called natural and instructional language settings. I then outline different teaching approaches that have been adopted in providing early FL instruction. Finally I describe the situation regarding the teaching of FLs at primary level (with a special focus on learners aged 10 and below) as of 1998/1999 school year, when the present research was undertaken. The limited scope of this work does not

permit a through exploration of specific policies and practices in various countries²³, thus only general trends concerning the age or grade at which instruction begins, whether languages are compulsory or not, and which languages are taught are described here. The issues concerning types of FL teachers involved in early FL provision and modes of teacher training adopted in various countries are discussed separately in section 2.8.

2.2.1. Social contexts of early L2/FL learning

A general distinction is made in the literature between **instructional** and **natural** (educational, classroom) settings. As Lightbown and Spada (1999:91) define, natural language contexts are those in which the non-native speaker is exposed to the language at in social and professional contexts (e.g. at home, work, school²⁴ etc.). In instructional settings, since opportunities for social interaction with native speakers are scarce, language is used primarily for classroom use. Referring to the same type of contexts, Brown (2000) uses the terms ‘tutored’ L2 learning as opposed to ‘untutored’ L2 learning.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, Krashen (1976) makes a similar distinction between two ways in which knowledge of an L2 may be developed: **learning** (formal language learning) and **acquisition** (informal language learning)²⁵. In the former, some kind of cognitive activity occurs, i.e. conscious attention to linguistic rules and principles forms. The latter takes place through observation and direct participation in communication. In that case, providing certain conditions have been met, learning is a process of discovery which takes place spontaneously and automatically.

However, it would be a mistake to equate classroom and formal learning on the one hand and naturalistic and informal learning on the other (*ibid.*). In fact some classroom learning can and does involve informal learning, for example when learners have the opportunity to engage in meaning-focus communication. Accordingly, Lightbown and Spada (1999:92) distinguish between **traditional instructional settings** (in Ellis’ words, ‘language classroom settings’), characterised by the explicit teaching of the language and the major focus on the language *per se* rather than the meaning, in **communicative instructional**

²³ Comprehensive profiles of FL teaching in various countries can be found, for example, in Dickson and Cumming, 1996; European Commission/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2000; EURYDICE, 1995a, 2000, 2001a, 2001b; Nikolov and Curtain, 2000; Pufahl, Rhodes and Christian, 2000; Rixon, 2000; Rhodes and Branaman, 1999.

²⁴ This will typically involve submersion (see description below).

²⁵ *Acquisition and learning* distinction is discussed more fully in section 2.3.3.

settings, where the emphasis on interaction, conversation, and language use, rather than learning *about* the language’. Within this last category the authors also place content-based instruction (CB) and task-based instruction.

Figure 2-1 Comparison of natural and instructional L2 learning settings

CHARACTERISTICS	NATURAL ACQUISITION	TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION	COMMUNICATIVE INSTRUCTION
Error correction	—	✓	—
Learning one thing at a time	—	✓	—
Ample time available for learning	✓	—	— (more in CBI)
High ratio of native speakers to learners	✓	—	—
Variety of language and discourse types	✓	—	✓
Pressure to speak	✓	✓ / — (imposed by the teacher)	✓ / — (comprehension emphasised over production)
Access to modified input	— (only in one to one conversations)	✓ (including access to L1)	✓

SOURCE: adapted from Lightbown and Spada (1999: 93).

Note: ✓ characteristics normally present; --non-present

Apart from general instructional focus, Lightbown and Spada (1999:93) list seven distinguishing features of the different contexts of L2 learning: 1) type of error correction (if any); 2) type of input that learners are exposed to; 3) time available for language learning; 4) ratio of native speakers to learners; 5) variety of language and discourse types; 6) pressure to speak; and 7) access to modified input (Figure 2-1). As evident from the comparison, though communicative instruction is still different from natural acquisition, some efforts are made to create at least a similar environment in the classroom, and consequently, facilitate success in L2 learning.

In many respects, therefore, the distinction between natural and instructional language learning is a crude one. As argued in Ellis (1994:215), ‘learners in natural settings often resort to conscious learning and may deliberately seek out opportunities to practise specific linguistic items (...)?’. Conversely, learners in language classrooms may not be required to treat the language as ‘subject matter’, but instead be given opportunities for acquisition. In the similar way, there is no simple connection between setting and the type of learning:

Acquisition and learning are not defined by 'where' a second language occurs. Formal learning can occur in the street when a person asks questions about correct grammar, mistakes and difficulties. Acquisition can occur in the classroom when the focus is on content learning and second language acquisition is seemingly a by-product. (...) Also, conscious thinking about language rules is said to occur in second language learning; unconscious feelings about what is correct and appropriate occurs in language acquisition.

Baker, 2001:114

In the literature, reference is frequently made to language teaching in 'naturally' bilingual or multilingual settings. This division is, yet again, not clear-cut. Given that between half and two thirds of the world's population (Baker, 2001), are bilingual, one could assume that strictly monolingual and monocultural settings are the exception rather than the rule (Cummins, 2000)²⁶. Still, the status and power of various language communities within a society vary considerably²⁷. At this point it would be useful to make a distinction between four possible contexts that relate to the way linguistic majority and minorities (both indigenous and non-indigenous) are treated within a country (Skuttnab-Kangas, 1988 in Ellis, 1994):

1. **Segregation** or 'minority language only' education refers to a situation in which minority language speakers are denied access to those programmes or schools attended by the majority or a politically powerful minority, who speak the target language as their mother tongue and are educated only through their L1. Alternatively, segregation may refer to special short-term programmes for immigrants or migrant workers to help them adjust socially, affectively, and linguistically to the demands of the target country. In this type of instruction, L2 proficiency may be restricted to development of 'survival skills' only.
2. **Mother tongue (L1) maintenance**—in a weak form, pupils are given classes in their mother tongue, directed at developing formal language skills, including full literacy. In the stronger form, pupils are educated through the medium of their mother tongue. This types of instruction is likely to result in balanced bilingualism²⁸ (i.e. learners are going to develop high levels of proficiency both in L1 and L2, and preserve their own ethnic identity and of the target language culture).

²⁶ Mistarz (2001) reports that one in six inhabitants in Europe belongs to a national, ethnic, cultural (linguistic, religious) minority. There are about 280 of such minorities in Europe and according to some estimates they total 100 million people.

²⁷ For a thorough review of languages in relation to social groups, social class, ethnicity etc., see, for example, Romaine, 2000.

²⁸ For description of various levels of bilingualism, see for example Cummins, 2000; Baker, 2001.

3. **Submersion**—a programme where linguistic minority children are placed in regular language classrooms and are educated entirely through the medium of a second majority language, in classes where some children are native speakers of the language of instruction, where the teacher does not understand the mother tongue of the minority children. This type of instruction often results in either subtractive bilingualism (mother tongue loss) or semilingualism (insufficient proficiency both in L1 and L2, negative attitudes towards both their own and culture and that of the target language).
4. **Immersion**—initially, the term was used to indicate Canadian French immersion programmes, where members of a majority group (native speakers of English) were educated through the medium of French, the language of minority group (see p. 54-55; 88-89). Nowadays, as indicated by Cummins (1988 quoted in Ellis, 1994), the term has also come to be used to refer to a variety of programmes for linguistic minorities:
 - a. L2 monolingual immersion programmes for minority students, in which provide English-only instruction directed at classes consisting entirely of L2 learners;
 - b. L1 bilingual immersion programmes for minority students, which begin with L1-medium instruction, introducing L2-medium instruction some time later;
 - c. L2 bilingual immersion programmes for minority students, which emphasis instruction in and on the L2 but also promote L1 skills²⁹.

In immersion education many learners achieve high levels of functional proficiency in both L1 and L2 (see discussion in section 2.3.1).

Other types of instruction within these broad categories—natural, educational, and classroom instruction—are summarised in Figure 2-2 overleaf.

I would like to conclude with a general observation related to L2 learning of Polish language speakers in various settings. On the one hand, Polish parents vote in great numbers in favour of an early start to FL learning. Many of them believe this will result in the long run in high levels of language proficiency. They rarely perceive FL instruction as putting child's L1 competence into jeopardy otherwise most of them would probably withdraw from it. Many of them also subscribe to the view that learning the language 'on the street' is the most effective and vote in favour of some form of 'natural' method which

²⁹ Cummins (*ibid.*) also notes that, misleadingly, even submersion programmes have been referred to as 'immersion'. Similarly the term 'bilingual education' can be confusing since it may refer to submersion, immersion or L1 maintenance programmes (see Beatens Beardsmore, 1993; Fruhauf, Coyle and Ingeburg, 1996).

focuses on: maximum conversational use of the language, grammar taught inductively, teachers who are native speakers of the L2, etc.

Figure 2-2 Social contexts for L2/FL learning

SETTING	DESCRIPTION/EXAMPLE
NATURAL CONTEXTS	
1. Majority language settings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ monolingual ▪ bilingual 	L2 English learnt in USA or UK L2 English learnt by Francophones in Canada
2. Official language settings	L2 English in Nigeria; Bahasa Indonesian in Indonesia
3. International settings	Use of L2 English for tourism, business; media etc.
EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS	
4. Segregation	Special migrant worker programmes in Germany.
5. Mother tongue maintenance	Finnish-medium education for Finnish minority in Sweden.
6. Submersion	Education in mainstream classrooms for ethnic minority students in UK and USA; withdrawal for L2 instruction.
7. Immersion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ majority language ▪ minority language 	Bilingual education programmes for English speaking students in Canada. Bilingual education programmes for Hispanic-speaking students in USA.
LANGUAGE CLASSROOM	Foreign language classes in monolingual countries (e.g. Japan); second language ESL (English as a second language) classes for Francophone students in Canada.

SOURCE: adapted from Ellis (1994:229)

Paradoxically, however, if such learning conditions are produced ‘naturally’, i.e. when people move or emigrate to the target-language country, Polish minorities seem to be particularly prone to language loss. According to the 1990 U.S. census, some 9.1 million Americans claimed Polish ancestry, yet fewer than 750,000 of them declared speaking Polish at home. At the same time 455,551 claimed high levels of fluency in English (Crawford, 1997). In 1997 Polish language classes were offered by less than 1% of the elementary and 2% of secondary schools in the USA (Rhodes and Branaman, 1999). Lambert and Taylor’s (1990) researched attitudes towards language and culture maintenance among parents of primary school children of Polish, Arabic (of Yemen) and Albanian language minorities living in Hamtramack, Detroit. The findings indicate that unlike the two other groups, the Polish minority was indifferent concerning the access to native language and culture education in state schools. A similar answer was obtained to

the question whether some sort of bilingual (Polish-English) education should be made available to their children. The respondents were rather in favour of the extra curricular teaching of Polish to their children i.e. at courses organised by community or church organisations. However even in this presumably bilingual setting, achieving full competence in both home and target community languages exists only potentially and other factors play a role.

The mismatch of attitudes towards L1 and L2 learning by Polish language speakers in language majority situation (in Poland) and in immigrant language learning situation (in the USA) may be an indication of integrative and instrumental motivations (Gardner and Lambert, 1972) by which these two groups are driven. In the case of Polish immigrants to America, the research findings cited above seem to suggest that parents wish their children to join in and affiliate with English-speaking majority. As suggested by Gardner and Lambert, integrative motivation is an important factor in predicting the success of L2 learning, but which, on the other hand, might be counterproductive as far as L1 maintenance is concerned. Though no precise data is available, in Poland the linguistic majority may be more instrumentally motivated towards L2 learning: parents wish their children to have better job prospects, access to education abroad, travel opportunities, etc. In this sense, bilingualism (or multilingualism) is perceived as an asset only if it denotes proficiency in the mother tongue *and* an additional language or languages.

Another explanation for this apparent lack of interest in maintenance of home language and culture by the Polish language minority may be due to educational policies in the USA towards immigrant and culturally diverse communities. As argued by Cummins (1984, 2000), linguistic, cultural, racial and religious diversity, segregationist and assimilationist policies prevail:

Whereas neo-fascist groups advocate expulsion of immigrants or at least exclusion from the mainstream of society (e.g. in largely segregated schools and housing areas), more liberal groups advocate assimilation into the mainstream of society. (...) Assimilationist policies in education discourage students from maintaining their mother tongues. If students retain their culture and language, then they are viewed as less capable of identifying with the mainstream culture and learning the mainstream language of the society. While students may not be physically punished for speaking their mother tongue in the school (as they previously were in many countries), a strong message is communicated to them that if they want to be accepted by the teacher and the society, they have to renounce any allegiance to their home language and culture.

Cummins, 2003:2@

Though L1 maintenance for linguistic-minority students³⁰ is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that similar arguments are voiced in Poland and elsewhere against bilingual education for language-minority children, is similar to arguments against an earlier start to L2 instruction for majority language students. It is feared that the development of skills in one language necessarily involves a parallel decrease in proficiency in the other language. (I refer to what is known as the ‘balance effect’ and the ‘time-on-task’ principles in section 2.2.)

In sum, most people would concur that learning an L2 in the classroom is not the same as learning in a natural acquisition context. The major difference between the two lies in their overall instructional focus, the type and the amount of input, type of corrective feedback, and motivation to use the newly acquired language. There is some evidence to suggest that learners who have access to natural settings achieve greater functional proficiency than those who are limited to educational settings. This is not to say, however, that natural acquisition of two languages always results in ‘full’ or ‘balanced’ competence in one language and another. Since multilingual settings often operate within majority/minorities structure, the relationship between setting and learning outcomes is an indeterminate one, reflecting the interplay of different social factors (Ellis, 1994). Often, factors such as linguistic and cultural mismatch between home and school, inferior quality of education offered to minority students, lower socio-economic status, lack of exposure to the home or school language, and most importantly, disrupted power majority/minority relations that are operating in a wider society (Cummins, 2000), are responsible for learners’ underachievement in L2 and/or undermining their proficiency in L1. Consequently, not all children are likely to be able ‘to reap the cognitive benefits of their bilingualism’ (Cummins, 1979:73). Some caution must be therefore exercised in voicing opinions that learning ‘on the street’ is most effective. As I will argue below, proficiency is not tied to any one particular factor. There appear to be some aspects of proficiency that are dependent on the environment (including the context itself and the effect of formal

³⁰ Though Poland is regarded as a fairly monolingual country, there are about twenty ethnic and linguistic minorities, about five per cent of the population (Mistarz, 2001). Changes in the Education System Act (MoNE, 1998a, 1999a) oblige state schools in Poland to support minorities in their efforts to maintain students’ ethnic, linguistic, and religious identity. Special provision in minority language, culture, history and religion education should be made available on parents’ request, who also decide about its form (i.e. segregation, maintenance or immersion). Status quo of education for linguistic minorities in Poland is provided in the Special Issue (6/2001) of *Języki Obce w Szkole* [Foreign Languages at School] quarterly.

instruction on L2 learning); others, however, rely on learner's cognitive skills and personality variables.

2.2.2. Models of early L2/FL provision

Various teaching approaches are currently available to young learners. They differ in three aspects: 1) the amount and intensity of time devoted to FL learning, 2) expected goals of the programme, and 3) level of integration of FL study with other mainstream subjects. From this perspective, three broad types of programmes are distinguished: **immersion**, **traditional FL subject teaching** (often referred to as FL elementary schooling—FLES) and **FL experience (exploratory) programmes (FLEX)**. Figure 2-3 shows typical programme formats within these categories and their goals.

Programmes also vary in the level of entry. For example, immersion programmes for language majority students in Canada are classified as early (begin in kindergarten), delayed (4-5th year of elementary schooling) and late (final years of elementary school) (Genesee, 1987). Elementary school bilingual programmes for language minority students are generally of three types: early-exit (or transitional), late-exit (or maintenance) or immersion/dual-language immersion (McGroarty, 2001). Both delayed and late programmes may be preceded by one or several years of traditional FL instruction (Schinke-Llano, 1985). Similarly, distinction is made between 'partial' and 'total' immersion to reflect the proportion of time devoted to L2 in the initial years of a programme (as opposed to the time spent on studying via an L1).

With respect to the number of new languages that are entered in the programmes typically include one-way and two-way (dual or double) immersion programmes, depending on the number of languages used as a medium of instruction. Genesee and Lambert (1983) report on concurrent immersion instruction in Hebrew, French and English. These models are not self-contained and various combinations are possible. In actuality, however, single immersion programmes predominate; while early programmes are either total or partial, there is a tendency for delayed and late programmes to be partial (Schinke-Llano, 1985).

Figure 2-3 Amount/intensity of early FL programmes and their goals

		HIGH		MEDIUM		LOW	
Amount of L2	Programme type	TOTAL IMMERSION	TWO-WAY IMMERSION / BILINGUAL EDUCATION	PARTIAL IMMERSION	CONTENT-BASED FLES / EMBEDDED FL TEACHING	FLES / FL SUBJECT TEACHING	AWARENESS FLT / ENCOUNTER FLT / FL EXPERIENCE
Amount of time spent on FL	Study per week	100-50 % of class time is devoted to learning a foreign language (100% time is spent learning a subject matter through the medium of an FL).	At least 50% of class time is devoted to learning a foreign language (100% time is spent learning a subject matter through the medium of an FL; language learning per se incorporated as necessary throughout curriculum). Student population is both L1 and FL speakers.	approx. 50% of class time is devoted to learning a foreign language (100% time is spent learning a subject matter through the medium of an FL)	15-50% of class time is devoted to learning a foreign language (only some time is spent learning a subject matter through the medium of an FL)	5-15% of class time is devoted to learning an FL (time is spent learning a language per se)	1-5% class time devoted to sampling one or more languages and/or learning about the language (no subject matter)
Goals		To become functionally proficient in the FL. To master subject content taught in the FL. To acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures.	To become functionally proficient in the FL that is new to the student. To master subject content taught in the FL. To acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures.	To become functionally proficient in the FL (although to a lesser extent than is possible in total immersion). To master subject content taught in the FL. To acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures.	To acquire proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing the FL. To use subject content as a vehicle for acquiring FL skills. To acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures.	To acquire proficiency in listening and speaking the FL (degree of proficiency varies with the programme). To acquire some proficiency in reading and writing the FL (emphasis varies with the programme). To acquire an understanding of and appreciation for other cultures.	To develop an interest in foreign languages for future study. To learn basic words and phrases in one or more FL. To develop cultural awareness. To develop linguistic awareness.

SOURCE: compiled from Curtin and Pesola, 1994:30ff; Johnstone, 1994:5ff.

In terms of the student population who enter the programme, two-way immersion programmes, unlike regular (single) immersion, includes native speakers of two languages (e.g. Spanish and English). Thus, all students learn subject matter through their native language as well as through the L2, and both language groups have the benefit of interaction with peers who are native speakers of the language they are learning (Curtain and Pesola, 1994).

With regard to the levels of integration of FL study with other mainstream subjects, frequently a distinction is made between **content-based** instruction, i.e. teaching a part of regular curriculum at a given level via the medium of an L2/FL (as in total and partial immersion), and **content-related** instruction, in which concepts taught in FL classes are enriched with the content derived from other subjects, not necessarily from the regular curriculum at a given level (Curtain and Pesola, 1994). The latter is frequently referred to as theme-based model, that is instruction in which 'selected topics or themes provide the content from which teachers extract learning activities' (Snow, 2001:306) or embedding or cross-curricular FL teaching. Since the distinction between content-based and content-related not clear-cut, recently the term CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has been increasingly used to encompass a wide range of initiatives in which both L2/FL(s) and other subjects are taught (see Marsh, 1998 for details).

As far as various forms of FLEX are concerned, Curtain and Pesola (1994:36-37) list three options:

1. **General Language Course** (awareness)—an introduction and orientation to the nature of language and language learning, which also includes the goal of cultural experiences. Courses often familiarise students with modern and classical languages available for later study, increase students' awareness of the existence of language families and their relationship to one another, or examine artificial languages, such as Esperanto, computer language, or Morse code.
2. **Language Potpourri** (world language study)—courses which make a brief acquaintance to one or more additional languages. Since the effectiveness of such courses would be heavily limited if one teacher is responsible for teaching all languages, courses are usually team taught, using specialists in each language.
3. **Single Language Offering** (language sensitising)—option which provides a limited, introductory exposure to one language that students may later be able to choose for sequential study.

As for popularity of these three broad options, in 1997 in the USA, where all three have been widely available since the 1980s, programmes which aimed at various kinds of

introductory exposure to the language (FLES and FLEX) were among the most popular options, while only 21 % of programmes (intensive FLES and immersion) had overall proficiency as one of their goals (Rhodes and Branaman, 1999, see also section 2.3).

The practice also shows that programmes, whose goals go beyond mere raising awareness of the FL and culture, usually allocate more time to FL study since it is usually argued that language proficiency outcomes are directly proportional to the amount of time spent by students in meaningful communication in the target language (Curtain and Pesola, 1994).

Since the elementary school curriculum is already overloaded, these programmes gradually shift towards a cross-curricular teaching, embedding an FL into the rest of curriculum, or, providing subject-matter instruction partially or fully through an L2 as in intensive FLES or immersion (Lipton, 1998). This tendency seems to be in agreement with the overall philosophy of whole-language, holistic teaching that is often promoted as a good primary practice (see discussion in section 2.3).

As is evident from the discussion in this part, there are various early FL options programme models available to Polish educational authorities, policy planners and school administrators. Regrettably, however, as indicated in Chapter 1, only traditional FL subject teaching and what may be classified as Single Language FLEX³¹ are currently offered in Poland. Different models lead to different results due to diverse intensity of exposure to the target language and the amount of time devoted to instruction. They also differ with regard to resources and budgetary and staffing requirements. For example, prototypical immersion teachers are bilingual in their students' L1 and L2 medium of instruction as well as being qualified as elementary school teachers. This would create a real challenge on the side of Polish teacher education system if, of course, early CLIL instruction is to become more available in Poland. FLES and FLEX models, on the other hand, do not impose such high expectations on a teacher since an FL is usually taught in isolation. Yet due to the fact that the current trend in EY pedagogy is towards more holistic, cross-curricular teaching, even if a programme employs a separate FL specialist, the teacher must be familiar with EY education curriculum. I am addressing these issues in section 2.8.

³¹ Minimum time allotment for a programme to be classified as FLES is 30 minutes three times a week (Curtain and Pesola, 1994). To my knowledge, there are many children courses in Poland where learners spend only 45-minutes (a typical lesson framework in Poland) once a week or even less. This the reason that I have not classified these offerings as FL subject teaching.

2.2.3. Current provision in selected countries

As a result of the gradual process of integration in Europe in the economic, social and political fields, described already in section 2.1.3, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the school systems in Europe underwent numerous reforms which affected different areas and levels depending on the country concerned (EURYDICE, 1995a). One of them concerned the issue of what should constitute the minimum core curriculum, or in other words which ‘basic key skills’ acquired in the process of compulsory education are essential to young people’s positive development within complex contemporary societies (*ibid.*). As a result of this redefinition, several subjects have received greater emphasis in the curricular reforms of the various countries. As far as FLs are concerned, the common directions of change in Europe have included:

- Ever earlier integration of FLs into courses
- The increasingly important position that FLs occupy in school curricula and the time devoted to teaching them.
- The range of languages studied is decreased in favour of English.
- The percentage of students learning more than one languages varies according to the stream chosen at secondary level (European Commission/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2000).

According to *Key Data on Education in Europe 1999/2000* (European Commission/Eurydice/Eurostat, 2000, reprinted in Appendix B), in the EU, on average, half of the primary school children follow FL courses. The percentages observed do not depend on whether it is compulsory to teach a language at a certain stage of school life. In fact, in some countries, almost all primary school children learn an FL although it is not compulsory in the first years (*ibid.*).

In the majority of European countries, pupils start to learn an FL between the ages of 8 and 10. This is compulsory for pupils in Belgium, Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Liechtenstein, and Norway. In the other Member States, FL is optional (left to school autonomy) or is to a greater or lesser extent at a pilot stage (France, Germany, Portugal and the United Kingdom).

As for what counts in Poland as pre-school education (children aged 6 and below), five countries attempt teaching FLs at this stage: Austria, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, and Norway. Ireland is quite exceptional since it does not introduce compulsory FL teaching at

any level of schooling. However, pupils take Irish and English throughout the period of compulsory education.

In the EU newly accessed countries, FL starts around between the age of 9 and 11. Attempts to introduce FL teaching at the earlier age have been observed in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia (*ibid*). Parents who want to introduce their children to FL at earlier age may also look outside the state education system. As in Poland, in some countries with the growth of private elementary schooling, FL is used as a magnet for attracting pupils.

In contrast, some countries (Estonia, Latvia, Romania, and Slovakia) have in recent years actually raised the age at which an FL is learnt for the first time. This is because they have abandoned the teaching of Russian as the main foreign language which pupils formerly started learning when they were very young indeed (EURYDICE, 2001b). In Denmark and the Netherlands, the countries with a well-established reputation of multilingual competence of its citizens, compulsory teaching of the first FL starts relatively late, at the age of 10.

Despite the desire expressed in official texts to conserve the multilingual character of Europe, English is everywhere the language studied by the greatest number of young people at primary school in the EU: on average, more than one child in three learnt English in 1999/2000. The second most popular FL is French with the score of about 3% of primary pupils learning it. In the new EU countries, too, the most popular FL is English. In some cases, less-spoken languages are offered to young children, e.g. Dutch in the French-speaking Community of Belgium; Russian, Serbian, Polish and Czech in Germany; Croatian, Czech, Hungarian, Slovene and Slovak in Austria; Italian, German and Spanish in France, French, Croatian, Slovene, Czech, Hungarian and Slovak and Austria (Doyé and Edelhoff, 1992:117-118). In some countries this is explained in part by the choice of the decision-makers to make this language compulsory for all pupils (European Commission *et al.*, 2000). Quite often, however, the choice is made on a regional level and reflects the varied linguistic background of local communities.

A variable proportion of primary school pupils learns one FL. Two FLs are available to or compulsory for primary pupils in Finland, Iceland and Estonia. Luxembourg introduces two FLs as part of compulsory primary schooling and additional third FL as part of secondary level, which clearly indicates a unique multilingual opportunities in this country.

In most European countries, an early start is provided as a separate subject with short time allocated. Most of the countries allocate less than 10% of recommended annual hours of teaching to FL study. Again, Luxembourg is an exception here since pupils around the age of 7 spend c25% of their curriculum learning an FL and around the age of 10 this number increases to c40% (*ibid.*). There is, however, a growing phenomenon to use an FL as a medium of instruction in other mainstream school subjects (bilingual or immersion education) (Beatens Beardsmore, 1993; Fruhauf *et al.*, 1996).

As already mentioned in the previous section, there is a wide spectrum of aims and approaches to FL teaching in primary schools in European countries (Johnstone, 1994). Some projects aim at establishing basic competence in L2, developing interest and cultural awareness whilst others treat FL learning as a serious foundation for further language study. Nevertheless, as Edelenbos and Johnstone (1996b) note, at least two commonalities can be detected among all European early FL projects. First, the emergence of a strong role for national or federal state ministers in validating and promoting FL provision within their particular countries. Since the beginnings in the 1980s, FL initiatives have moved from small scales projects of interested parties, e.g. local authorities, universities, parents or schools, to more formal national projects. Nowadays, the national educational bodies, supra-national structures and organisations, such as the Council of Europe and the British Council undertake most of the initiatives. The second observation of the authors is that there is the enormous problem of actually implementing a policy for FL teaching across all primary schools in a given country. It takes years of gradual development to train staff, develop curricula and implement FL at a national level.

2.2.4. Conclusions and implications

The recent upsurge of interest in FL teaching and early FL provision in particular reflects a changing geo-political situation in the world. As evident from the discussion in this chapter, early FL provision is far from being a monolithic block. There are various programme models, which have been adopted to fit the educational needs of the countries involved and which may be implemented in Poland. Of course, different countries operate within diverse linguistic, historical and political contexts that often influence their FL provision choices, therefore, it would be misleading to equate the situation in Poland to any of them. It seems that Poland must find its own solutions based, on the one hand, on the educational needs of its citizens and, on the other hand, on a careful assessment of budgetary and staffing options available.

Due to Poland's membership of the EU, an early start to FL learning has become one of the educational aims declared on various occasions by educational authorities in Poland. Yet, apart from the arguments of 'following European trends' or 'complying the Council of Europe's recommendations', very little has been written in Poland to justify investing time and effort in teaching FL to children at a younger age. In the subsequent section I will focus on the changing rationale for early FL instruction and the gains that an earlier start to FL learning may produce.

PART 2 The 'WHY' issues

Are children better language learners than older learners? Is early childhood an optimal time for starting learning a second language? What are the benefits? Do they justify the costs? These and other questions are the themes of this section.

One may, of course, question the need for providing any rationale for an earlier start to FL learning. 'The younger the better' dictum is, after all, rarely doubted. Stern (1982) may be right saying that parents, educators, course administrators, politicians, and other groups with a stake in implementing language programmes and courses for children are rarely aware of the lack of evidence for an early start.

They [educators and parents] believe it is 'obvious' that early is better, and they are so convinced of this that they regard any questioning of this as flying in the face of 'scientific' evidence or as a smoke-screen for retrograde policies on the part of educational authorities. They automatically applaud an early start as right and 'progressive'.

Stern, 1982:9

Curtain and Pesola (1994) warn that too many programmes of the past and present were launched for fundamentally flawed reasons or without clarity about the rationale or aims that the early instruction was purported to serve. Consequently, many administrators, parents and teachers had unrealistic expectations in terms of student achievements and consequently suffer much disillusionment when the promised miraculous fluency to be achieved in months or weeks was not reached. The first lesson learnt from this time is that school boards and parents need reasons and evidence before they make a commitment of time and resources to early FL instruction (*ibid.*).

And yet, providing a sound rationale proves difficult. Despite over fifty years of on-going research and a great volume of literature published on the age factor in L2/FL acquisition, studies yield conflicting evidence.

Lack of consensus on the issue partially lies in the difficulty of comparing findings from various research. Not only do studies differ in their length (short-term vs. longitudinal), design (experimental vs. naturalistic research) and settings in which studies were conducted ('natural' vs. 'educational' settings), but also the extent to which other factors affecting L2 learning, such as language aptitude, motivation, language learning strategies, previous and experience with language learning were considered. It is precisely because of a variety of learner characteristics and environmental factors operating together that

adequate comparison of children and adults as L2/FL learners proves difficult (Ellis, 1994). if not impossible. Moreover, as some writers (Harley, 1986; Long, 1990; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow, 2000) argue, quite a substantial number of research suffers from flaws in design and/or analysis, which calls into question the validity of findings. Finally, as Nunan (1999a) remarks, many of the claims in favour of an early start to FL learning have been based on the research conducted in naturally bilingual or multilingual settings and so one may question their applicability to contexts such as Poland, in which L2 study is confined to formal classroom settings only.

Bearing all these difficulties in mind, precisely because some of these research results are so often put forward by both enthusiasts and detractors of an early start in FL learning, I shall therefore briefly summarise the debate.

To untangle research results, I have followed Sharpe's (2001) taxonomy of aims associated with the idea of teaching FLs to young children by presenting six arguments as follows:

1. **The 'young learners are better learners' argument**—An early start exploits the linguistic and cognitive flexibility of young children.
2. **The 'young learners are more eager and malleable' argument**—An earlier start exploits the attitudinal and motivational flexibility of younger learners.
3. **The 'higher standards' argument**—Beginning FL instruction at the elementary school level will provide a longer sequence of FL instruction, increase the number of exposure hours devoted to that language and is likely in the long run to produce a higher level of proficiency in an FL. It may also create opportunity and time to master more than one FL throughout child's compulsory education. An early-acquired FL may be later on used as a medium of instruction in other subject areas.
4. **The 'primary context advantages' argument**—An early start exploits the opportunities presented by the particular circumstances of the context of primary schooling for promoting language awareness and L2 acquisition.
5. **The European/global citizenship 'entitlement' argument**—Early FL instruction provides young learners with an important and enriching experience which will better equip them to understand the realities of life in the third millennium.
6. **The 'social and economic benefits' argument**—An earlier start helps to equip the next generation with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes, which will enable them to function effectively in international contexts.

I shall consider each in turn.

2.3. 'The younger the better' argument

2.3.1. The effect of age on L2/FL learning

One rarely hears people over the age of 20 complain that they would be far more competent drivers if they had not waited until their teens to get behind the wheel. Nor do adults frequently lament that they would be much better managers if only they had begun taking business classes at age 5. Yet when it comes to starting a second language, there is a widespread belief that adults will inevitably have problems and will certainly never become fluent, while children are supposed to pick up languages with ease.

Marshall, 2000:1[@]

Indeed, two of the most frequently quoted arguments in favour of teaching FLs early is that children are better language learners or that the younger one starts to learn an FL the easier and faster it is. The relationship between age and language learning is one of the most highly-researched topics in applied linguistics and psycholinguistics (see Harley, 1986; Singleton, 1989, 1995, 2001, 2003; Long, 1990, Scovel, 2000 for comprehensive reviews). Unfortunately, the issue is extremely complex and the results of studies comparing child and adult L2 learners have not provided educators with a definite answer whether there exists a child advantage in L2 learning.

Some researchers argue for the existence of some maturational constraints at least in the area of the acquisition of a native-like accent (Seliger 1978; Scovel, 1988; Johnson and Newport, 1989; Long, 1990; Patkowski, 1990). Others believe that the data is mixed and ambiguous (Stern and Weinrib, 1977; Hatch, 1983; McLaughlin, 1984; Singleton, 1989, 1995). A third group of researchers believe that the findings show a clear advantage, at least in the short term, for adults and older children over younger ones in all aspects of L2 learning (Neufeld, 1978; Snow, 1983; Ellis, 1985; Flege, 1987; Major, 1987; Genesee, 1988).

Since most of the studies seemed to yield conflicting results, a useful distinction has been put forward by Krashen, Long and Scarcella (1979) between short-term (rate) and long-term (ultimate attainment) studies. With this distinction in mind, they made the following three generalisations from the literature available:

- (1) Adults proceed through early stages of syntactic and morphological development faster than children (where time and exposure are held constant).
- (2) Older children acquire faster than younger children (again, in early stages of morphological and syntactic development where time and exposure are held constant).

- (3) Acquirers who begin natural exposure to second languages during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than those beginning as adults.

Krashen et al. , 1979:573-74

I will now summarise the key research studies in relation to these two aspects: 1) the effect of age on the rate of acquisition, and 2) the effect of age on the ultimate attainment. The third issue discussed refers to the effect of age on the processes of L2 learning. Even though the major focus is on instructional settings, short discussion of research findings from naturalistic contexts is also included since there are frequently put forward by proponents of early FL provision in Poland (e.g. Arabski, 2000; Wieszczyńska, 2000a).

Rate of acquisition

With reference to the first and second of the Krashen et al.'s (1979) generalisations, most studies support the idea that adults are faster than children in L2/FL learning. Four studies are often quoted in support. Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle (1978a) investigated the naturalistic acquisition of Dutch by three English-speaking groups (8-10-year-old children; 12-15 adolescents, and adults) over a ten-month period. The learners' proficiency was measured on three separate occasions (after three, six, and ten months). With regard to morphology and syntax the adolescents did best, followed by the adults, with the children last. The initial advantage of older learners in pronunciation and grammar diminished over time as younger children began to catch up.

Similar results were obtained in experimental studies. Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle's (1977) laboratory study involved the repetition of five different Dutch words, by subjects aged 5-31 with limited or no familiarity with the L2. The researchers found linear increase in pronunciation according to age: older subjects performed the best, and the youngest performed the worse. Similarly, Olson and Samuels (1973) found American English-speaking adolescents and adults performed significantly better than children after ten 15-25 German pronunciation sessions. In Ekstrand's *English without a book* experiment, two groups of learners (aged 8-9 and 10-11 respectively) were taught English in 10-minute sessions twice a week; an audiovisual method was used and a teacher's role reduced solely to operating a tape recorder with sound tapes. When after 18 weeks the groups were tested on pronunciation tests, the performance almost linearly increased with age (Ekstrand, 1978). These studies seem to generally confirm Krashen *et al.*'s general conclusion that that adults and older children in general initially acquire the second language faster than younger children.

Evaluating the significance of this type of research it could be said that it is limited in many ways. First of all, research findings collected from these studies refer mainly to syntax and morphology ignoring other domains of language learning. Secondly, the learning outcomes of these short-term studies seem temporary: the superiority found in adults disappears for most skills after a few months. Finally, as argued in Long (1990) research design or assessment methods in some of the research studies of this type are biased against younger learners. They potentially favour older learners because of their 'teach and test' format (Johnstone, 1994). Some methodological limitations of age-related research is discussed in greater detail below.

Ultimate L2 achievement in naturalistic settings

Several researchers (Singleton, 1989, 1995; Long, 1990; Ellis, 1994) believe there some good evidence in support of the third of the Krashen *et al.*'s generalisations, namely that in natural settings child starters outperform adult starters in the long run.

In short-term studies comparing immigrants in natural settings, the level of ultimate attainment in L2 is predicted by age of arrival to the target community (Birdsong, 2002). For example, in one of the largest and most carefully conducted research, Oyama (1976) looked at the pronunciation ability of 60 male Italian immigrants to the USA. Her subjects entered the USA at ages ranging from 6 to 20 years and lived there for different periods (ranging from 5-18 years). Oyama found a clear effect of the age of arrival and no effect of the length of residence or motivation. Child arrivals performed in the range of native speaker ('no foreign accent') controls; whereas foreign accents were evident in those older than 12 on arrival and in some who had arrived earlier than 12. Asher and Garcia's and Oyama's results are consistent with numerous studies (see Asher and Garcia, 1969; Krashen and Seliger, 1975; Seliger, 1978; Krashen, Long and Scarcella, 1979; Miller, 1981; Fathman, 1975; Tahta, Wood and Loewenthal, 1981; Harley, 1986; Scovel, 1988; Johnson and Newport, 1989; Patkowski, 1990).

At the same time, however, research of Neufeld (1977, 1978, 1979, 1980), Ervin-Tripp (1974), Flege (1987), and more recently, Ioup, Boustagui, El Tigi and Moselle's (1994) refute the claims about children superiority over older learners for acquisition of pronunciation and provide the evidence of the contrary. Neufeld's research in particular requires a word of commentary since critics of the critical or sensitive period notion in L2 learning frequently rely upon his findings. The results of the 1974 study, for example, imply that adults do not lose their ability to perceive and produce novel sounds (Neufeld,

1978). Another in the series of research (Neufeld, 1980) involved competence and productive performance of 7 non-native and 3 native speakers of French who were judged by 85 French Canadians. The results of the study show adult L2 acquirers can 'pass for native' and attain a native-like command of phonological rules, prosodic features and articulatory skills in their second language. Neufeld concludes that inability to get rid of a foreign accent when speaking L2 is rather a psychomotor rather than psycholinguistic problem: 'While adult students may know what their second language should sound like, many may find it difficult to get their vocal apparatus to obey cerebral instructions (Neufeld, 1980: 296).

In like manner, research on the acquisition of morphology and syntax produce similar controversy. Most studies report an advantage of older learners over younger learners in morphology and syntax (Fathman, 1975; Ervin-Tripp, 1978; Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1978a, 1978b; Genesee, 1978; Swain and Lapkin, 1989; Patkowski, 1980). Other studies (Johnson and Newport, 1989; Johnson, 1992), however, show that younger learners have better abilities to acquire the rules of a language (a native grammatical competence) and that this ability decreases with age.

Unfortunately, little research that has investigated other aspects of L2 learning is available. Long (1990) provides a review of available published studies in domains of lexis, collocations, discourse and pragmatics. He concludes that findings to date suggest that age related learning effects might be discernible in these areas, though definitely more empirical work is needed. Conversely, in a more recent review, Singleton (1995) concludes that in relation to L2 vocabulary learning there does not seem to exist any maturational point after which acquisition of new vocabulary disappears or becomes radically impaired. Yet, the data does seem to confirm Krashen *et al.*'s conclusion that while older learners get an initial advantage in language lexical acquisition, young children do better in the long run (Ellis, 1994; Singleton and Lengyel, 1995).

All in all, as evident from the discussion in this section, even in natural settings the evidence does not univocally support the claim that younger learners attain higher levels of L2 competence. Lack of consensus may be partially due to the fact that these studies are generally extremely selective, looking at a small subset of the features of one aspect of the a target language (Nunan, 1999b). When, however, in addition to the effect of age of immigration other intervening features are analysed, the research studies produce different results. For example, in a more recent study, Hakuta, Bialystok and Wiley (1999) have

analysed census data on age of arrival and (self-reported) English language proficiency for 2.3 million immigrants with Spanish or Chinese language backgrounds who had resided in the USA for at least 10 years. What emerges from the report is, on the one hand, a steady linear decline in English proficiency as age of arrival increases. In addition to the effect of age of immigration, these data show the importance of socioeconomic factors, in particular, the amount of formal education, in predicting the learning of English by immigrants.

As has already been stressed at the beginning of this section, most of the research on the rate and ultimate attainment in L2 learning has been conducted among immigrants or in naturally bilingual environments, so their findings cannot be extended to formal FL teaching contexts. It has to be remembered that what Krashen *et al.* and Long define as ‘early stages’ (i.e. ‘short term’) attainment is anything from 25 minutes to one-two years of exposure to L2 in natural setting. ‘Ultimate attainment’ (‘long-term’), on the other hand, means achievement after several years of natural exposure. As it is easy to calculate, when a child is exposed to an FL for two-three hours per week in a formal learning situation (quality and continuation of instruction guaranteed) it will not be until his/her adult years when the actual results of an early start might be apparent. In other words, a formal setting simply does not provide enough time (measured in terms of the amount of exposure to an FL) needed for the age advantage of younger learners to emerge (Singleton, 1989).

With this distinction in mind, I will now turn to the studies that concern the teaching of an FL in a classroom situation.

Ultimate L2 achievement in classroom settings

The two studies that are most often cited in this context are Oller and Nagato’s (1974) study of the FLES programme in Japan and the NFER study of the *Primary French Project* in Britain (Burstall *et al.*, 1974).

Oller and Nagato’s (1974) studied the long-term effects of a FLES programme in a private school for girls in Japan that provides for six year sequence of early English programme (FLES) in addition to a six year sequence of English as an FL at the junior high school and high school level. Since not all the students in the junior high and high schools have come from the elementary school’s own intake, some students were FLES some were non-FLES students. The results of three tests (at grade 7, 9, and 11) indicated a highly significant difference between FLES and non-FLES students at the 7th grade level. This difference

was reduced by the 9th grade and at the 11th it was insignificant. Oller and Nagato's conclusion is that 'under certain conditions FLES may not be of lasting benefit' (p.18) since non-FLES students can learn as much in five years as younger beginners can in 11.

Another study, possibly the one whose findings have been most influential in Europe, is the work of the NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research) team (see Burstall *et al.*, 1974) who evaluated the effectiveness of so called the *French from Eight Project*, already referred to in section 2.1.2. The evaluation covered the period of 1964–1974 and focused longitudinally on three age groups of pupils attending participating 125 schools. In total 6,000 students were involved out of 17,000 in the region. When early starters (age 8) were compared to the later starters (age 11) at the age 13, the early starters scored significantly higher than the control pupils on the Speaking and Listening tests, but they were equal or worse on the Reading test and on the Writing tests (Burstall *et al.*, 1974: 123). By age 16, despite the there extra years of exposure, the early and late starters differed only on the listening test. These 'diminishing returns' (*ibid.*) were also observed even when amount of exposure to French was controlled, namely, the older learners were consistently superior to the younger children in all tests.

Many of the other findings of the NFER study are less well known, though nevertheless of considerable interest. For example, it was found that girls scored significantly higher than boys; pupils in small rural primary schools scored higher than those in large urban schools; and pupils' higher socio-economic status (as measured by parental occupation) coincided with greater success in learning French (*ibid.*: 29-32). The study has also revealed that paradoxically, instead of increasing opportunities for the learning of a second modern language (such as Spanish, German or Russian), which the original project had aimed, secondary schools which catered for pupils from the project primary schools often restricted their FL offering to French only (*ibid.*: 242).

Even though, Burstall *et al.*'s and Oller and Nagato's study has been criticised on various grounds (for summary, see Singleton, 1989; Khan, 1991; Johnstone, 1994), there is substantial evidence to support the notion that the head start that early FL learners initially have usually erodes as those who start later catch up. Nonetheless, in both experiments some differences in FL proficiency (e.g. in listening comprehension) still persisted at higher grades. Granted a rate of advantage of older children, we still need to ask why in the school setting early-starts failed to maintain even their initial achieved advantage? In other words, why contrary to Krashen *et al.*'s assertion, 'younger is not better in the long run'?

One explanation has centred on the inadequate coordination and articulation across levels of instruction, i.e. that when students were transferred to post-primary L2 programmes they were mixed indiscriminately with the non-project (late starters) students (Stern, 1982). Several doubts have also been raised about the appropriateness of the syllabus, teaching methods, and resources, the qualifications of the teachers, and monitoring and assessment of the entire project (Bennett, 1975; Buckby, 1976; Stern, 1982; McLaughlin, 1985; Khan, 1991). These factors are fully described in section 2.3.2.

In the similar vein, several of the studies described above have been questioned on methodological grounds:

- **Control of variables:** In cross-age comparisons, the most difficult problem is how to control all variables so as to make fair, accurate, and equitable comparisons across the age groups. For example, in Ekstrand's (1978) study one may question whether the use of the audiovisual method and limiting a teacher's role solely to operating a tape recorder with sound tapes was equally fair for both 8-9 and 10-11-year-old learners (McLaughlin, 1985). Johnstone (1994) questions the very fact whether in this type of research controlling all variables is possible. It is difficult to draw conclusions about one factor, precisely because factors such as age, time spent learning, distribution of time, teaching approach, etc. operate together and are interconnected. Similarly Nunan (1999b:42) argues that the major shortcoming of some age related experiments is that 'they are generally extremely selective, looking at small subsets of the features of one aspect of the target language'.
- **Methods of assessment:** Long (1990) and Johnstone (1994) argue that short-term studies probably favour older learners because of their 'teach and test' or laboratory interview formats. For example, one may easily question whether a task involving testing subjects' ability to imitate target language sounds of nonsense words (Snow and Hoefnagel-Höhle, 1977) was equally accessible to children aged 5 and young adults aged 17. Both in Scovel's (1981) and a series of Neufeld's studies (1977, 1978, 1980) subject's phonological competence was judged on hearing a small, careful speech samples (Long, 1990).
- **Dubious test validity:** In Neufeld's studies and Scovel (1981) the representativeness of both subjects and judges drawn for these studies are questionable (Long, 1990). As for the NFER study, Bennett (1975) points out that

percentage results, they argue were therefore not based on original numbers but on shrinking samples (from 11,300 in 1964 to 1,227 in 1975). He also argues that the results would have been different had the cohort and control groups been matched on three crucial variables: gender, type of school and social class. Buckby (1976) questions tests' content validity since they did not assess the skills pupils had focussed on most in primary school, i.e. pronunciation or conversational ability.

- **Bias in data interpretation:** Marinova-Todd *et al.* (2000) claim that in many cases researchers misinterpreted, misattributed or misemphasised L2 performance of adult learners. On the contrary, in the NFER report (Burstall *et al.*, 1974), there is little clarity about how researchers interpreted the meanings of terms such as 'balance of opinion', 'success', 'mastery', 'substantial', and 'profits'. This terminology, as Buckby (1976) maintains, was a decisive factor in the evaluation of the project as a whole. Similarly, the conclusions drawn from the report seem biased. Instead of following the recommendations of the NFER team and improve the primary/secondary articulation, staffing, teaching methods and syllabus, the LEAs chose to terminate the project on the basis of the very last sentence of the report (Brewster, Ellis and Girard, 1992).

In projects where some of the problems listed above have been successfully addressed, the results have been completely different. For example, in his longitudinal study of early English teaching in Germany, Doyé (1980) reports that at the end of 5th, 6th and 7th grade, students who has started to learn English in the primary school (grade 3) achieved higher levels of competence in listening comprehension, speaking, reading comprehension, and writing than those who had started in the secondary school (i.e. from the 5th grade onwards, students aged 10-11). The difference was greatest in the 5th grade and decreased slightly in the following two years, but was still significant in all four skills at the end of the 7th grade.

More recent studies seem to support Doyé's key finding about only slight linguistic advantage of children who started FL study in primary school over these who started later, in secondary, especially in oral communication (see Low, Brown, Johnstone, and Pirrie, 1995; Blondin, Candelier, Edelenbos, Johnstone, Kubanek-German, and Taeschner, 1998; Moon and Nikolov, 2000).

The instructional studies exemplified here refer to the kind of programme in which students are taught the new language in brief daily lessons. As already indicated (section

2.1.2), in Canada various types of immersion programmes, in which French is taught to majority English-speaking children, have become a popular alternative. Of course, French is not a foreign language in Canada, yet students outside the predominantly French-speaking areas have little exposure to it outside the classroom. In this sense, therefore, the conditions under which L2 is learnt are often similar to FL instruction. A distinctive feature, however, is that immersion programmes offer much more time for learning and use a communicative-experiential approach to instruction since not only French language arts but also other school subjects are taught in French (see detailed description in section 2.4). Learning outcomes of Canadian immersion can be summarised as follows:

- **Learning outcomes in L1:** In the first few grades, immersion classes receive lower average scores than English comparative groups on some standardised measures of English literacy skills. Soon after the introduction of English language arts, the students obtain equivalent results and in some instances have outperformed the comparison groups at grades 5 and 6 (Swain and Lapkin, 1982; see also discussion on cross-linguistic language transfer in section 2.2.1.2). Some problems arise, however, if students in early grades transfer out of immersion (Harley, 1991).
- **Learning outcomes in L2:** Students develop excellent listening and reading skills, in some cases achieving scores on global listening comprehension tasks that have been equivalent to those of French speaking comparison groups. They also manifest strong discourse skills in French (Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Swain and Lapkin, 1982, 1989; Harley, 1991). As for productive skills (speaking and writing), especially in respect of grammatical correctness, students have clearly not approached native speaker standards. Hammerly (1989, 1992) points out that in some cases, possible due to lack of formal instruction in grammar, students develop a sort of 'classroom pidgin' instead (see, however, the response to Hammerly in Collier, 1992 and discussion in on optimal learning conditions in section 2.2.3).
- **Academic achievement:** Students taught subjects in French generally do as well students taught the same subjects in English (L1), with the most consistent results coming from early total immersion students (Swain and Lapkin, 1982; see also discussion on cognitive benefits of bilingualism in section 2.2.1.2)
- **Access and suitability:** Evaluations of immersion and non-immersion students with lower levels of academic ability, language disability, lower socio-economic

status, and ethnic minority status have shown that such students have reached the same levels of L1 development and academic achievement as similarly disadvantaged students in the regular English programme while at the same time learning more French (Genesee, 1987; see also discussion in section 2.2.2). However, some caution must be exercised in interpreting these findings since immersion programmes frequently draw enrolment from higher socio-economic groups and precise data is not available.

- **Time factor:** Early immersion students are more proficient in French than both middle (delayed) and late immersion students at the end of elementary school (grade 8) (Genesee, 1988; Swain and Lapkin, 1982, 1989; Lapkin, Hart and Swain, 1991). However, simply increasing the amount of exposure does not produce higher linguistic outcomes (Genesee, Holobow, Lambert and Chartrand, 1989; see discussion in section 2.3.2).

Though the results of immersion programmes are frequently quoted in favour of an early start to FL instruction, the problem is however to assess whether these outcomes are actually due to the starting age only or rather a mixture of components such as the amount of exposure to L2 or, generally speaking, more favourable learning conditions that immersion programmes offer. My opinion would rather incline to the latter. Thus, as I will argue in section 2.4, if similar outcomes are targeted in Poland, especially in terms of high levels of FL proficiency, then comparable learning conditions should be created. These would include the amount of exposure to an L2, teaching methods, resources, continuity and progressing, and above all, highly qualified teachers. If, however, the goals are more modest, then ‘costs vs. returns’ should be carefully considered. Lightbown and Spada (1999) suggest that where native-like mastery of an L2 is the goal, then learning benefits from an early start, but when the goal is basic communicative ability in an FL, the benefits of an early start are much less clear. To put it simply, ‘one or two hours a week will not produce very advanced second language speakers, no matter how young they were when they began’ (Lightbown and Spada, 1999:68).

Route of acquisition

Studies about route of learning examine whether the order in which learners learn things differ depending on their age. For example, they investigate whether children, adolescents and adults learn the same grammatical or syntactical structure at different points in their learning career (the so called morpheme studies).

Ellis (1994) concludes from his review of the available literature that the process of acquiring L2 grammar is not substantially affected by age, but that of acquiring pronunciation may be. As for far as the acquisition of phonology is concerned, Ellis refers to two research studies (Riney, 1990; Tarone, 1980 in Ellis, 1994), which did show the process differences between child and adult learners.

With regard to acquisition of grammar, Ellis (*ibid.*) provides evidence from Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1974) who investigated the order in which adults acquired the same set of grammatical morphemes studied by Dulay and Burt. They found that the acquisition of morphemes in English was the same in adult and children learners. Also the research comparing learners from very different L1 backgrounds (e.g. Spanish and Chinese), appeared to acquire a set of grammatical items in English in virtually the same order (Dulay and Burt, 1973, 1974 cited in Bailey *et al.*, 1974). Similarly in the detailed investigation of early and late immersion learners in Canada, for example, Harley (1986) has found similar patterns in the two groups' acquisition of the French verb phases. Ellis (1994) concludes from these L2 learners appear to process linguistic data in the same way, irrespective of age.

Singleton (1989, 1995, 2003), however, treats such evidence with caution and argues that the evidence coming from studies on age-related differences in the process of acquiring an L2 is by far inconclusive. With regards to morpheme studies, he argues that morpheme studies do not give any striking counter-evidence to the hypothesis that younger and older learners exhibit a similar 'internal syllabus' and there is not any finding which more generally shows major-related differences in L2 process (Singleton, 1989).

All in all, the popular claim that it is better to start learning another language early in hope that the mental process of learning an FL will resemble that of the L1 acquisition does not seem to be well supported by the literature. On the contrary, the available evidence often supports the view that adults and children pass through essentially the same developmental stages in the acquisition of linguistic forms. This is not to say, however, that adult and children learn in the same way. As it will be argued in section 2.3.3, there is some evidence that link age-related differences in L2/FL learning to differences in cognitive maturity of younger and older learners.

Accounting for age differences in L2/FL learning

The disparity of success achieved by L2/FL learners of different ages, on the one hand, and an almost univocal success of child L1 acquirers, on the other, has drawn the attention of researchers as to the causes of this phenomenon. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991:328) have posed an interesting question: ‘Why is it that all individuals with normal faculties acquire their first language but meet with different degrees of success when they attempt to master an L2?’ Likewise, why child immigrants are more likely to approach native-like L2 proficiency than is the case with older immigrants. As evident from the previous section not all differences between child and adult L2/FL learning can be attributed to the age at which language learning starts.

A variety of explanations have been put forward as to the causes of age-related differences in L2/FL learning (Singleton, 1989; 2001, 2003; Long, 1990; Scovel, 2000). They can be clustered into three broad categories, depending on the aspect of human behaviour they emphasise: 1) biological and neurological, 2) cognitive-developmental, and 3) social/psychological/affective factors.

In the sections that follow, each type of explanation will be analysed in turn.

2.3.2. Biological and neurological explanations

One of the most popular arguments in favour of teaching FLs early is that the ability to learn a language is limited to the years before puberty after which this ability disappear and a person will not subsequently achieve native-like or higher levels of L2 competence. Another variant of this belief is that child brain is uniquely capable of acquiring language, and consequently, FL instruction should take advantage of this unique and fleeting capacity. In discussion, reference is often made to ‘critical’, ‘sensitive’ and ‘optimal’ periods. Notwithstanding the specific differences in connotations and interpretations between these terms (see Bialystok, 1997, for discussion), in essence these constructs all refer to ‘a biologically determined period in life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire’ (Brown, 2000:53).

The original claim was based on neurological evidence. Penfield and Roberts (1959) carried out research into the recovery of speech after brain damage. They observed that

children recovered more quickly than adults. They argued that the cerebral cortex has a plasticity before puberty that it subsequently loses. This led Penfield and Roberts to conclude that adults are inferior language learners since they learn through structures that have lost their flexibility, and that the best age for language learning had to be in the early years of life.

[Before the age of nine] a child is a specialist in learning to speak. At that age he can learn two or three languages as easily as one. [However, after the age of nine] for purposes of learning languages, the human brain becomes progressively stiff and rigid.

Penfield and Roberts, 1959:235-36

Later Lenneberg (1967) gave some support to this view with his theory on lateralisation of the brain. According to this view the human capacity for language acquisition is constrained by a critical period beginning at age two and ending around puberty; the period coinciding with the specialisation of the dominant hemisphere of the brain for language functions. After the process of lateralisation is completed, automatic acquisition from exposure to language disappears and languages have to be learned through conscious effort. He also speculated that before adolescence the two hemispheres are not 'lateralised' or specialized, and thus young learners would use a whole-brain approach to learn languages (*ibid.*).

Though the original claims made by Lenneberg applied only to L1 development, a commonly drawn corollary of the critical period hypothesis is that any language learning that occurs after the age of puberty will be slower and less successful than normal L1 learning. He himself addressed the issue of FL acquisition stating that since languages are similar to each other, once the learner mastered one language, acquisition of another language is possible at any age at any age.

A person can learn to communicate in a foreign language at the age of forty. This does not trouble our basic hypothesis on age limitations because we may assume that the cerebral organisation for language learning as such has taken place during childhood and since natural languages tend to resemble one another in many fundamental aspects the matrix for language skills is present.

Lenneberg, 1967:176

However, he also points out that once the lateralisation of brain functions is complete, learning of another language is usually characterised by an accent which is difficult to overcome.

In recent years, however, the idea of such critical period for language learning has been more or less discredited (see McLaughlin, 1984; Harley, 1986; Singleton, 1989; Singleton

and Lengyel, 1995). Though researchers generally agree that the critical period possibly exists for L1 acquisition (and there are strong and weak versions of it, see Singleton, 1989 for discussion), however, there is little conclusive evidence that there is such an age-limit beyond which mastering a language is problematic. Claims have included 5 years (Krashen, 1982a), 6 years (Pinker, 1994), 12 years (Lenneberg, 1967), and 15 years (Johnson and Newport, 1989). Other researchers (Bialystok, 1997; Bialystok and Hakuta, 1999; Hakuta, Bialystok and Wiley, 1999), however, argue that there is no such a cut-off point at which mastering an L2 becomes seriously handicapped or totally ineffective, but rather decline in L2-learning capacity is a gradual and continuous process within which the ultimate level of L2 attainment becomes variable.

Consequently, there is a growing preference among researchers for 'sensitive period' or 'optimal age' since the connotations of the original term seemed too absolute and implying all-or-nothing events (Oyama, 1978). Given that people continue to learn throughout their whole life and L2 acquisition is possible at any age, many researchers seem to concur that there are maturational constraints to L2 learning. Researchers mostly agree that such maturational constraints exist at least in the area of the acquisition of a native-like accent (Seliger 1978; Scovel, 1988; Johnson and Newport, 1989; Long, 1990; Patkowski, 1990). Seliger (1978), on the other hand, supports the idea of 'multiple critical periods' for language acquisition. He believes that 'the ability for a particular acquisition is dependent on the remaining plasticity for this acquisition in the brain. Such states of plasticity may be referred to as critical periods' (Seliger, 1978:12). Similarly, Long (1990) suggests that there may be different critical or sensitive periods for different aspects of language acquisition: one for phonology, one for morphology and syntax, and so on.

Such conclusions seem to be supported by more recent research in neurobiology and neurolinguistics (see Begley, 1996; Lach, 1997; Nash, 1997; Wolfe and Brandt, 1998; Bruer, 1999 for overview) when new brain-imaging technologies have enabled scientists to revisit the issue of the existence of such favourable periods, or 'windows of opportunities', when learning of certain functions seems to be easier and more effective. It is now argued that the 'learning window' of opportunity for language learning is indicated from birth³² to

³² Some researchers argue that the 'path leading to languages' may even begin prenatally and diminishes ever since (Aslin, Pisoni and Jusczyk, 1983, cited in Kielar-Turska, 2002:290). In this light, the claim that it is never too early to start teaching an FL to your child, one may well start off before s/he is born, has gained on popularity, (especially in mass media and popular press (Smolińska, 2002, personal communication).

10 years (Begley, 1996). Other researchers even claim that the ‘path leading to languages’ may begin even prenatally and diminishes thereafter (Aslin, Pisoni and Jusczyk, 1983, cited in Kiehl-Turska, 2002:290).

Given the image of neurological science and the seemingly concrete nature of neurophysiological studies, the conclusions in favour of lowering a starting age for FL study have often been readily accepted by the public. Such a view is, again, not without its critics. Marinova-Todd, Marshall and Snow, for example, referring to overly reported study of Kim, Relkin, Lee and Hirsh’s study (1997), argue that

Neuroscientists have often committed an error of misattribution, assuming that differences in the location of two languages within the brain or in speed of processing account for differences in proficiency levels and explain the poorer performance of older learners.

Marinova-Todd et al., 2000:14

This kind of interpretation that the causal relationship may be in fact reverse, i.e. that differences in brain are as likely to reflect the different kinds of learning experience as to determine these experience, is gaining momentum among researchers (see, e.g. Bialystok and Hakuta, 1999).

As for reasons why that learning potential changes at that maturational stage, a variety of explanations have been offered. Lenneberg’s theory explaining the lateralisation of language functions (1967) has been widely criticised by researchers. For example, Krashen’s (1973, cited in 1982a) reinterpretation of clinical data indicates that most aspects of language processing are lateralised to the left hemisphere in early childhood (some even prenatally). He also argues that the development of lateralisation may not mean the establishment of an absolute barrier to successful and natural L2 acquisition and offered some alternative explanations for child-adult differences in L2 rate and attainment (see discussion earlier in this section).

Some of the physio- and neurobiological arguments are summarised in Figure 2-4 (overleaf), the cognitive, affective and input factors will be discussed separately (see below). Some caution in interpreting these claims should be exercised since not all research findings in question and/or their interpretation are unanimously accepted (see Long, 1990; Marinova-Todd et al., 2000; Singleton, 2003, for a critical review).

Figure 2-4 Physiological and neurophysiological constraints to L2 acquisition

TYPE OF EXPLANATION	MAIN ARGUMENT
Lateralisation	Language learning may be more difficult after puberty because the brain lacks the ability for adaptation. It is because the language functions of the brain have already been established in a particular part of the brain (Penfield and Roberts, 1959; Lenneberg, 1967; Scovell, 1988).
Early programming	From birth to puberty, the child's brain produces an excessive number of synaptic connections, which unless used, wither. The learning experiences of the child determine which connections are developed and which will be eliminated (Chugani and Phelps in Nadia 1993; Begley, 1996).
Plasticity loss due to other cerebral changes	Language learning may be more difficult after puberty because of different aspects of cerebral maturation such as myelination, thickening of the corpus callosum, and intrahemispheric specialisation (Seliger, 1978; Long, 1990; Pulvermüller and Schumann, 1994).
Brain metabolism	During the first decade of life, when the synapses are forming, the cerebral cortex undergoes a dramatic curve of energy (glucose) consumption. From age 4 to 9 years brains are at their best to process new information and they learning capacity is maximal. After that period, brain activity in cortical areas declines constantly to the low levels of adulthood. Brain volume, on the other hand, is already 95% of adult levels in the ninth year of life (Chugani, 1998).
Wiring of the auditory cortex	<p>Infants are born 'citizens of the world' in that they can distinguish among sounds (temporal, spectral, and duration cues) borrowed from all languages. They are ready to learn any language they hear, but by 12 months of age, they start to discriminate sounds that are not significant in baby's own language (Kuhl in Begley, 1996).</p> <p>The wiring of the auditory cortex starts prenatally. The infant recognises and learns with more ease the language or languages it heard during the prenatal development (with a stronger preference to the language spoken by mother) (Aslin, Pisoni and Jusczyk, 1983 in Kiehl-Turska, M. 2002).</p>
Storage of L2 information	Different areas are activated during language processing, depending upon the age when the language was learned. When L2 is acquired in adulthood, L2 is spatially separated in brain from native language(s), whereas when two languages are learnt simultaneously from infancy, native and L2 are stored in a common frontal cortical area (Kim, Relkin, Lee and Hirsh, 1997).
Aural acuity	The language learning capacity of adults is impaired by gradual deterioration in their ability to perceive and segment sounds in an L2. From birth to puberty, the initial acuity of the sensory cells in the organ of Corti and ability to receive various sound vibrations from the middle ear and send them on to the brain via the auditory nerve starts to diminish.
Plasticity of larynx	Around puberty some structural changes in the larynx occur: it becomes less plastic and adaptable to pronunciation of foreign sounds. Vocal apparatus become less supple to 'obey cerebral instructions' and enable post-pubertal learners reproduce sounds faultlessly (Neufeld, 1980; Singleton, 1989).

A general conclusion may be that despite inconclusive evidence concerning a ‘cut-off’ point after which L2 learning is hindered or impossible, research provides substantial support for at least the existence of ‘sensitive’ periods for learning additional languages. This has practical implications for education. The first one would be to start L2/FL learning early (at best before the age of six or at least before puberty) so as to make use of the ‘open window’ for language learning. As summarised by Newberger (1997:7):

Many reports on brain research point out to the implications for the introduction of second-language learning during the early years (...). We now know that if children are to learn to speak a second language like a native, they should to be introduced to the language by age 10. Mastering an additional language is still possible after this point, but the window of opportunity for easy acquisition is gone.

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The second and more important implication as far as the present study is concerned would be that of setting goals for language classrooms, and being realistic, for example about the acquisition of native-like pronunciation by adult learners. In the Polish context, we cannot assume that FL teachers of young learners (FLTYLs) will be, as a rule, proficient target language users. Rather, they themselves are likely to learn an FL as adults and would require considerable time and effort to master an FL to the level of providing a good linguistic model for their young learners. This is may be attributed to the critical period, if hypothesis holds, since teachers’ own ‘window of opportunity’ for language learning has been long since slammed shut.

2.3.3. Cognitive-developmental explanation

As already argued, the critical period hypothesis and neurobiological differences do not provide sufficient explanation for child-adult differences in L2 learning. Neither the critical period hypothesis alone can serve as a decisive argument for lowering the starting age for FL study. A number of writers have made a point that there are cognitive and developmental factors, in addition to the neuro-biological ones already referred to, that in some circumstances favour younger learners (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1981; Krashen, 1982a, 1982b; McLaughlin, 1984, 1985; Long, 1990).

On the surface, it may appear that teenage and adult learners have an advantage in language learning over young learners since their capacity for understanding and logical thinking is greater. They may have developed a number of learning skills and strategies that allow them, especially in a formal classroom situations, to make up for limited contact with the language. Cognitive maturity should also allow them to deal more effectively with the abstract nature of the language (Taylor, 1975).

Several authors (e.g. McLaughlin, 1978; Krashen, 1982a) have attempted to relate 'linguistic puberty' to an important event in the development of cognition. Piaget labelled this 'formal operations' (Inhelder and Piaget, 1958), which generally occurs around the time of adolescence (11-16 years). It is here that a person becomes capable of abstraction and formal thinking, i.e. the child is able to relate abstract ideas to each other without resource to data directly given to him/her (Wadsworth, 1998). At this stage, 'new concepts normally derive from verbal rather than concrete experience' (Ausubel and Ausubel, 1971, cited in Twyford, 1987/1988:2[@]). The ability to think abstractly about language and conceptualise linguistic generalisations is an additional aid for language learning especially in formal learning situations. This may help to explain the initial advantage for older learners, especially in production tasks (speaking and writing) and in learning syntax, morphology, grammar, as many researchers have found.

Furthermore, according to Krashen (1982a), at the formal operational stage, adolescents gain potential access to conscious knowledge of the language. In Krashen's terms, the Monitor, allows the adult learner to operate in a different 'mode' and accounts for faster initial progress by adults than children. Adult learners simply rely on surface structures of their L1 to add some morphology and help repair word order where it differs from L1. This

helps the learner to participate in conversations early which means obtaining more input and consequently raises the rate of progress in adults in early stages.

In classroom situations, Ausubel believes (1964) that adults benefit from certain grammatical explanations and deductive thinking that are obviously pointless for a child. Vocabulary acquisition in L2 may be facilitated by adults' concept of development which is far in advance of children. For adults learning new vocabulary means appropriate attachment of labels to already existing concepts (*ibid.*).

However, the adults' capacity for problem-solving and logical thinking may be just what prevents them from attaining full competence. As Twyford (1987/1988:2[@]) argues:

This advantage for older learners often flip-flops as the natural acquisition strategies of younger learners become more powerful. Only when conscious knowledge is called for, as in monitoring tasks that require grammatical analyses (...), do older learners keep a long-term advantage over younger learners.

This can perhaps explain children's superiority in naturalistic settings where the language is not only taught in the classroom but it is also the language of the community in which they live. Adversely, 'the degree to which one has become a formal thinker may relate to the success one has in formal language learning, on the other hand, formal operations may be at least partly responsible for fossilisation of progress in subconscious language acquisition' (Krashen, 1981:77).

Rosansky (1975) explains how certain characteristics of children's cognitive development facilitates their learning and explains their ultimate superior attainment in language learning. She says that the preoperational child (in Piagetian terms, 2-7 year-old) is still cognitively open to any non-native language. At the same time, since children lack meta-awareness, they are not 'aware' that they are acquiring a language. Adults, on the other hand, have a strong metalinguistic awareness, recognise both differences and similarities between L1 and L2, and they are aware of societal values and attitudes places on one language or another, which, in turn, may have an inhibiting effect on their learning. I will return to the affective factor in the next section.

Rosansky (*ibid.*) also suggests that cognitive differences predict that adult language acquisition is fundamentally different from child language acquisition, which seems to contradict the research findings, already mentioned, on similar child and adult language processing. She, however, argues that the process may produce language behaviour that appears, on the surface, similar to the results of child language learning. Rosansky,

specifically pointing to Piagetian formal operations stage, suggests that ‘adults **do** learn language via an alternative route, namely as “known”, and (...) they most likely require instruction in the ‘subject’ [L2]’ (1975:99). This argument is echoed in Krashen’s ‘acquisition’ (i.e. implicit knowledge **of** the language) vs. ‘learning’ (i.e. implicit knowledge **about** the language) distinction (1981, 1982b) As already indicated (see p.62), according to Krashen, the former is developed subconsciously through comprehending input while communicating, while the latter is developed consciously through deliberate study of L2. Both claims are controversial. So, too, is Krashen’s claim that the two processes are totally separate; in other words, that learning could not become acquisition (see Ellis, 1994 for a review).

Another type of explanation accounting for child-adult differences in L2 learning has been offered by Alptekin (1999). Referring to the two different types of adaptation (accommodation and assimilation), as formulated by Piaget, at the cognitive level, he argues that:

In second language acquisition, while children create new representations or revise the existing representations to adapt the input to their schemata [accommodation], adults normally consolidate their native language schemata [assimilation], trying to establish similarities between native and foreign language rules.

Alptekin, 1999:47

In other words, superior performance of younger learners may be explained by the fact that children learning an FL constantly revise and modify their linguistic representations in the light of the new input.

Ellis (1985) relates older learners’ inferiority in such linguistic domains as pronunciation to the fact that this is the aspect of language learning that is the least amenable to conscious manipulation. At the same time, the neurobiological explanation presented in the section 2.3.3 that pronunciation is bound to muscular movement and habit of producing a certain number of sounds in a specific way in the everyday use of an L1, seems equally plausible.

Interesting hypotheses accounting for superior achievement of various age-groups of learners, have been put forward by Aitchison:

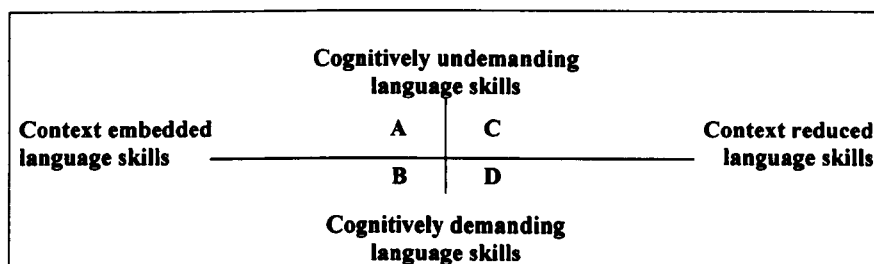
The idea of a critical period (for mother tongue acquisition) is now disputed. (...) Yet most people find it easier to learn languages when they are young, so a sensitive period may exist. (...) A ‘natural sieve’ hypothesis is an idea put forward to explain this. Very young children may (...) automatically filter out complexities. (...) Later learners may have lost this built-in filter. (...) A ‘tuning-in’ hypothesis is another possibility. At each stage a child is naturally attuned to some particular aspect of language. Infants may be tuned in to sounds, older children to the syntax, and

from around ten onwards the vocabulary becomes a major concern. Selective attention of this fits in well with what we know about biologically programmed behaviour.

Aitchison, 1999, cited in Sharpe, 2001:34

Finally, on the question of cognitive development and language, I will turn to Cummins' views. Cummins (1979, 1980a) argues that individuals develop two types of language proficiency: basic interpersonal language skills (BICS) and cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP). This distinction was later elaborated by Cummins (1981a) into two intersecting continua which highlighted the range of cognitive demands and contextual support involved in particular language tasks or activities, and which are diagrammatically presented in Figure 2-5. There are four quadrants in the diagram. Quadrant A relates to context-embedded, cognitively undemanding use of a language (BICS). Language that is cognitively and academically more advanced (CALP) fits into quadrant D. As Cummins points out, BICS emerge from interpersonal situations (e.g. verbal fluency and accent) or some aspects of socio-linguistic skills, CALP is related to the development of cognitive attitudes and aptitude for reading and writing in a school context and underlie the capacity to respond to the cognitive and academic demands imposed on pupils in the educational system.

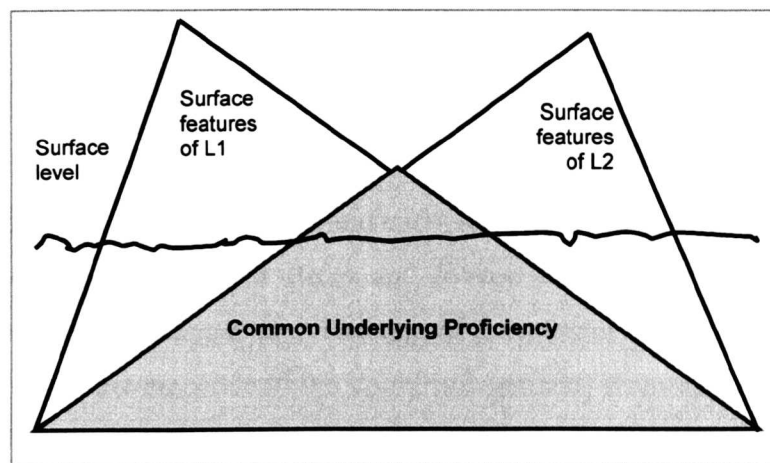
Figure 2-5 Cummins' types of language proficiency



SOURCE: adapted from Cummins, 2000:68

Cummins (2000) claims that cognitive maturity interacting with the accumulation of experience in the more sophisticated, literate uses of the L1 (e.g. reading) greatly facilitates the acquisition cognitive-academic skills in L2. Cummins (1980b, 1984) explains this phenomenon with his interdependence principle—the claim that beneath distinct surface features of L1 and L2 (mostly in terms of phonology, syntax and lexicon), there is cognitive/academic proficiency that underlies academic performance in both languages. The interdependence theory is often illustrated in the analogy of a dual iceberg (Figure 2-6).

Figure 2-6 Cummins' 'dual-iceberg' representation of bilingual proficiency



SOURCE: adapted from Cummins, 1984: 143

Above the surface, the two icebergs appear to be separate. This is how two languages are visibly different in conversation. Below the surface level there is the area of cognition and the storage of a person's two languages occurs. This is where associations between concepts, and representations (e.g. words and images) that belong specifically and separately to the two languages are stored. The shaded area indicates the area where the two icebergs are fused. There is a 'central processing system' called Common Underlying Proficiency that in both languages can contribute to, access, and use (Baker, 2001).

This is also to say that all aspects of linguistic proficiency develop at the same speed. Cummins refers to the research evidence suggesting that many minority students can develop communicative skills in a new language within two years, while lagging behind in other areas of proficiency, which might take up to seven years to develop to the appropriate level attained by monolingual peers (Cummins, 1980a). Part of the reason why conversational skills are acquired more easily is because they are context embedded and children learn these aspects of language through interaction with peers.

Five implications derive from Cummins theory to this thesis:

1. Bilingualism and multilingualism are not a burden for the brain. Children have the capacity to store and function in two or more languages with ease.
2. Promoting skills in an FL does not, as it is sometimes feared (The Balance Effect Theory), lead to a decrease in proficiency in L1 (Cummins, 1981b). In agreement with the interdependence principle, some cognitive/academic proficiency that underlies academic performance in both languages is cross-lingual: once learned it

can be transferred across languages. 'Cognitive functioning and school achievement may be fed through one monolingual channel or equally successfully through two well-developed language channels' (Baker, 2001:166).

3. Learning some language subskills takes years. Thus it would be 'counterproductive to devote primary school and early secondary years exclusively to the shorter-term proficiency levels in BICS and X-type [context-reduced/low cognitive demand] activities. A longer-term strategy of progression that sows the seeds of CALP and Y [context-embedded/high cognitive demand] from early stages is also called for' (Johnstone, 1994:38).
4. The development of 'surface fluency' (conversational fluency) in L2 requires 'acquisition rich' environment, i.e. exposure to the FL language, the motivation and opportunities to use it. All three elements are often difficult to obtain in formal language classrooms (Johnstone, 1994:36). However, it is not the necessary condition for development of L2 CALP. In this case, 'it makes sense to establish L1 literacy skills and thinking skills in the initial years of primary school, so that comparable skills in the L2/FL may be gradually developed' (*ibid.*: 37).
5. Speaking, listening, reading or writing in the L1 or L2/FL helps the whole cognitive system to develop.

In the discussion so far I concentrated on cognitive advantage that younger learners may have in learning another language. This is only one side of the story. While it is certain that people familiar with more than one language and culture can communicate more effectively with people of other countries and cultures, it is also possible that through learning another language and culture, people become more effective problem-solvers because of an increased awareness of a wider set of options. Several authors (e.g. Curtain and Pesola, 1994; Lipton, 1998; Marcos, 1998) mention that learning an L2/FL may be beneficial for children's cognitive growth. In short, some research studies that report improved cognitive skills (Cummins, 1977; 1981a, 1981b; Curtain, 1990), analytic thinking and problem solving skills and creativity (Landry, 1973; Bamford and Mizokawa, 1991). Other studies suggest that bilinguals score better at verbal and nonverbal intelligence test (Bruck, Lambert and Tucker, 1974; Hakuta, 1986; Weatherford, 1986). Cummins (1981a:22) suggests that full bilingualism has positive effects in five areas: '1) ability to analyse and become aware of the language; 2) overall academic language skills;

3) general conceptual development; 4) creative thinking; and 5) sensitivity to communicative needs of the listener'. Yet, one has to be careful not to overemphasise the role of bilingualism in cognitive growth, as quite frequently it is dependent on the degree to which a child thinking skills are equally developed in both languages as well as other learner- and non-learner-related factors (Cummins and Swain, 1986).

The research findings presented in this section have implications for FLTYL training. According to some researchers adults are better and faster L2 learners. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1981) suggest that formal operations allow the development of the conscious grammar. For example, adults appear to be more easily able to name the rules of the grammar, use the patterns of their L1 and insert L2 words into the slots than children. The rate advantage, however, is only temporary and 'faster' does not necessarily mean 'better'. Young starters who acquire a new language subconsciously frequently surpass those who are dependent on conscious rules, despite older learners' head start. The issue arises, however, if teachers who, at least in Poland, are trained to teach older learners will be able to make use of children's ability to learn without relying on L1 strategies in learning an FL. All too often, teachers attempt to equip young children with the memory techniques and other strategies that older learners use to learn new grammatical rules and vocabulary, rather than making use of children's ability to learn subconsciously. It is important therefore to raise teachers' awareness to cognitive differences between language learning in children and adults, thus equipping them with understanding of inductive strategies more conducive to FL learning in young pupils.

All teachers need to know something about how children learn a second language. Intuitive assumptions are often mistaken, and children can be harmed if teachers have unrealistic expectations and an inaccurate understanding of the process of second language learning and its relationship to acquiring other academic skills and knowledge.

McLaughlin, 1992:1@

2.3.4. Input factors

Apart from cognitive factors, some researchers point to input factors as a possible explanation of age-related differences in rate and ultimate attainment.

Hatch (1978b) suggests that children and adults differ in the type of input they receive. Young learners receive better tuned, linguistically less complex input (i.e. simpler and shorter sentences, concentration on 'here-and-now' and extra-linguistic clues, which facilitate language acquisition), providing them with more and clear samples from which to

learn the target language. In contrast, ‘adults are typically exposed to conversation about topics whose referents are not obvious from nonlinguistic context’ (Dulay, Burt and Krashen *et al.*, 1982:95). From her wide inspection of available data, Hatch (*ibid.*) infers a general tendency regardless of context in which FL/L2 is learnt that speech directed to children in any language and from any source to be more concretely oriented and context-embedded than speech directed at adults.

However, Scarcella and Higa’s research (1982) points to the fact that in natural settings children receive ‘simpler’ input; older learners, on the other hand, are more actively involved in conversation and experience more negotiation in meaning and therefore, ‘better’ input.

Ur (1996:287) also notes that ‘because children have not as yet developed the cognitive skills and self-discipline that enable them to make the most of limited teacher-mediated information; they rely more on intuitive acquisition, which in its turn relies on a larger volume of comprehensive input than there is time for in lessons’. Even in natural setting younger age of arrival in the target language country and more input received through longer exposure, does not in itself guarantee higher achievement (see description in section 2.5).

Finally, the quality and quantity of input that children receive in a school setting depends heavily on the teacher’s expertise and use of that language in the classroom. Producing ‘teacherese’ in one’s own language seems to come ‘naturally’ but might be difficult to transfer when a teacher him/herself learnt the language at school and his/her competence in the language is rather low. It seems vital therefore for FLTYL training to include a component that would support the development of modified speech competence by teachers.

2.3.5. General conclusions on the ‘younger the better’ debate

Three important points have to be emphasised in conclusion.

First, there is no univocal evidence that children learn languages more quickly and more easily than adults do. As hypothesised by McLaughlin (1977, 1978) anecdotal and impressionistic evidence that children are superior in second-language acquisition most likely stems from factors such as amount of exposure, motivation, lack of inhibition, and other social, psychological, and situational factors, rather than any biological

predisposition to learn languages. Some of these non-linguistic and non-biological factors are discussed in the subsequent section.

Second, in research studies that compare older and younger learners in the same situation and under the same conditions, older learners are consistently better, with a small advantage in the area of pronunciation. An interesting question arises, how **important** an ability to achieve a native-like pronunciation is in the setting like Poland? Though overly quoted in favour of an early start to FL teaching (Brzeziński, 1987; Komorowska, 1992; Wieszczezyńska, 2000a), children's ability to excel in FL pronunciation is rarely considered in terms of 'value for money'. Namely, were faultless pronunciation the only benefit that an early start to FL learning offers, it would not be an economically sound argument for a possible expansion of FL teaching to all pre-school and EY children.

Still another matter is how children are supposed to attain native-like accent if taught by teachers, who in vast majority learnt L2 as adults and, following the line of reasoning provided in this section, have had little chances for acquiring native-like proficiency? In Begley's words, the implications of the latest research on maturational barriers in language learning are at once 'promising and disturbing':

They suggest that, with the right input at the right time, almost anything is possible. But they imply, too, that if you miss the window you're playing with a handicap.

Begley, 1996:42

Third, the belief that the younger a child begins FL study the better, does not have empirical support. On the contrary, several research studies imply that older children and adults do equally well or even better on almost all aspects of language acquisition, the acquisition of phonology being a possible exception to the rule. Quoting Singleton (1995) on this matter:

The available research evidence cannot be taken to license the simplistic 'younger = better in all circumstances over any timescale' version of the CPH [Critical Period Hypothesis] that one finds in folk wisdom and that seems to underlie some of the 'classic' treatments of age and second-language learning. (...) Both research and the informal observations of those who are in daily contact with second-language learners suggest that an early start in a second language is neither a strictly necessary nor universally sufficient condition for the attainment of native-like proficiency.

Singleton, 1995:4

This is what Stern calls overcoming the discrepancy between the 'myth' commonly held by the public, that children possess a 'special' language ability enabling them to learn

quickly and effortlessly, and the ‘reality’ of language teaching which simply does not meet this expectation.

We must avoid the danger of creating a false dichotomy between Penfield and the theory of early language learning, and the Burstall and the theory of later language learning, and of having to make a clear choice between them. On developmental grounds each age in life has probably its peculiar advantages and disadvantages for language learning. (...) In the sixties the mistake was made of expecting miracles merely by starting young. The miracles have not come about. Starting late is not the answer either.

Stern, 1976:292

An important message for educational authorities and policy makers in Poland is that it is a ‘myth’ that an earlier start to FL learning will open the door to the bilingualism. Teaching younger learners does not in itself guarantee higher linguistic attainment in the future. Neither does an earlier start to FL learning compensate for defects in FL teaching at higher levels, since as pointed out in this section, prolonged exposure to an FL does not automatically result in higher proficiency. Initial linguistic advantage that early starters have is largely, though not completely, eroded as those who start later begin to catch up. It is the quality of experience—the ‘reality’ of everyday teaching at pre-school and EY level—that matters. I will return to this point in Part 3, in which I am describing optimal conditions for FL learning in childhood.

2.4. *‘The young learners are more eager and malleable’ argument*

A number of writers (Dulay, Burt and Krashen;(1982, Krashen, 1982a) have claimed that success and failure in L2/FL learning is largely the result of affective factors. Variables, such as attitude, motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, empathy, self-esteem, ego-permeability, and perceived social distance may play a role, by ‘acting as a ‘filter’ or a ‘mental block’ (Krashen, 1982a).

Krashen (1982a) suggests that precisely because children are pre-operational thinkers, their affective filter is naturally low. He believes that levels of motivation, self-confidence and anxiety impede or facilitate delivery of input to the language acquisition device. He adds that children’s superiority in ultimate attainment is due to the fact that their affective filter is much lower compared to that of adults. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) argue that younger learners tend to have less negative attitudes toward foreign cultures and languages, lack the self-consciousness, shyness and awkwardness which later make them

potentially uneasy and constrained in their relationship with the teacher and the group. In general, children appear more able to achieve the open mental state necessary for language acquisition. The adolescent, on the other hand, due to the ability to think abstractly can 'conceptualise his own thoughts' (Elkind, 1970, cited in Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982:92). This capacity, as already mentioned, may be a gift enabling older learners to benefit from conscious learning of grammar. Yet, at the same time, the ability to imagine what others are thinking about may result in hypercriticism, self-consciousness, feelings of vulnerability and lower self-image, causing teenage and adults to 'filter' out more of the available language than children do.

If children are indeed easier to influence in terms of their feelings, attitudes and values than older learners, then non-linguistic aims, such as those currently advocated in various EU documents (see section 2.1.3), are arguably more efficiently achieved with an early start.

Teachers seeking to promote tolerance and cross-cultural understanding through MFL work in their classrooms may find more fertile ground among pre-11 pupils than post-11 pupils, whose prejudices, albeit assimilated from the parental home, the media and the general cultural background, may be firmly established and consequently more difficult to change.

Sharpe, 2000:35

The age of ten is often regarded as a crucial time in the development of attitudes towards nations and groups perceived as 'other'. Singleton (1989) quotes Gardener and Lambert (1972) who say that children around ten are less likely to be hostile to other cultures. After or before that age they tend to associate the idea of 'different' with 'bad'. They also add that 'if students are highly ethnocentric and hostile (...) no progress will be made in acquiring aspects of language' (Gardner and Lambert, 1972:134 cited in Singleton, 1989). For them, affective influences are not strictly related to maturation. Parental unfavourable attitude can also influence child's affective filter and inhibit acquisition.

Singleton (1989) and Brown (2000) refer to the views of Guiora (1972) and his concept of the 'language ego': the identity that a person develops in reference to the language s/he speaks. He argues that in the early stages of development language boundaries are in a state of flux, they are permeable. As the child grows older, they become more static and so individuals lose their ability to partially and temporarily give up their identity and take on a new one. Guiora contends that 'once the boundaries of language ego become set (...) the ability to approximate authentic pronunciation will be drastically reduced' (cited in Singleton, 1989:196). To learn a new language means taking a new identity and some people are not willing to do that. Because pronunciation is one of the most critical aspects

of self-representation, it is most resistant to change. In this way the children's superiority in accent-free acquisition can be explained.

Motivation is another factor that should be considered. It is frequently argued that a positive early introduction to language learning, well done, will give children the confidence to make a success of language learning throughout their lives. Early success will promote enthusiasm for language learning and positive attitudes to languages and cultures other than their own. In this sense, as argued by Sharpe (2000), 'the early start is seen as a kind of immunization against later negative attitudes which might emerge after puberty' (p. 35).

Still, the concept of what 'motivation' is and how children's interest in FL study can be 'sparked and sustained', to use Williams and Burden's words (1997), are by far very complex issues. As Ur argues:

In a sense, this is true: you can raise children's motivation and enthusiasm (...) more easily than that of older, more self-reliant and sometimes cynical learners. On the other hand, you can also lose it more easily: monotonous, apparently pointless activities quickly bore and demotivate young learners; older ones are more tolerant of them. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that younger learners' motivation is more likely to vary and is more susceptible to immediate surrounding influences, including the teacher; that of older learners tends to be more stable.

Ur, 1996:288

Since the 1990s numerous authors have proposed alternative ways of conceptualising motivation (see Dörnyei, 2001, for revision). Dörnyei (1994), for example, proposes a three-level categorisation of various components involved in FL motivation:

1. The **language level** including various orientations and motives related to aspects of the FL, e.g. the culture and the community, and the usefulness of the FL, which on the other hand, influence the goals learners set and the choices their make related to FL study.
2. The **learner's level** involves individual characteristics that the learner brings to the learning task, such as need for achievement and self-confidence.
3. The **situation level** encompasses components related to the course, the teacher and the group dynamics.

Dörnyei's formulation is helpful because it highlights a point that motivation is a multifaceted construct which will be strongly affected by situational factors. He also stresses the importance of teachers as act as 'key figures who affect the motivational quality of the learning process' (Dörnyei, 2001:35).

The multiple influences teachers have on student motivation have been organised by Dörnyei (2001:35-36) into four interrelated dimensions:

1. **Teacher's personal characteristics** (e.g. commitment, warmth, empathy, trustworthiness, competence etc.).
2. **Teacher's immediacy**, which refers to physical and psychological closeness between teacher and students (e.g. addressing students by name, using humour, moving around the class, including personal topics and examples, etc.).
3. **Teacher's active motivational socialising behaviour**, such as modelling, task presentation, feedback/reward system.
4. **Teacher's classroom management practices**, including teacher's ability to set and maintain group norms, and the teacher's type of authority.

Lacking some of the above mentioned qualities, on the other hand, teachers may act as demotivators (see Dörnyei, 2001, for discussion).

Dörnyei (*ibid.*) also argues that there is a close relationship between teacher motivation and student motivation. The first example given in support is that teacher's expectation about the students' learning potential seems to affect the students' rate of progress, functioning to some extent as a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' with students living up or 'down' to their teachers' expectations. Secondly, Dörnyei cites the research providing support that there is a link between teacher enthusiasm to teach on learner enthusiasm to learn; namely that commitment towards one's subject matter becomes 'infectious':

The best way to get students believe that it makes sense to pursue knowledge is to believe in it oneself.

Csikszentmihalyi, 1997, cited in Dörnyei, 2001:178

In other words, if early FL study, as declared, is to initiate and sustain students' lifelong interest in FL study, teachers must demonstrate their own enthusiasm and commitment towards FL learning. This on the other hand may be heavily influenced by training programmes that teachers have been involved in (see discussion in section 2.16).

To sum up briefly, it can be argued that affective factors have a marked effect on L2 learning. However, the fact that children appear to have a naturally low affective filter should not be taken for granted. In the natural milieu, motivation is continually sustained by the real need for communication and social pressure. This may also account for impressive progress in L2 learning that younger learners usually make (Krashen, 1989). In formal learning situation, the 'survival' motive is absent, and therefore the desire to learn,

to understand, to make an effort needs to be awakened and sustained (Brewster *et al.*, 1992). As one of the reasons for an increased affective filter is lack of motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, teachers have to be sensitive that whilst it is relatively easy to raise children's motivation and enthusiasm, it is also easy to lose their interest and motivation due to inappropriate methods of teaching (Krashen, 1985) or inadequate assessment practices (Cameron, 2001).

2.5. 'Longer sequence of instruction' argument

The major factor in the rationale for beginning FL instruction at the elementary school level is that starting L2/FL in elementary school simply increases the number of exposure hours devoted to that language and is likely in the long run to produce a higher level of proficiency. As for 'the longer the better' debate, indeed, there is a considerable amount of evidence that there is a direct correlation between the amount of time devoted to language study and the language proficiency that students attain (Vocolo, 1967; Carroll, 1975). However, the two studies that are frequently quoted in this context, Oller and Nagato (1974) and Burstall *et al.* (1974), already referred to in section 2.3.1, found almost no significant difference between early and late starters (see discussion).

The most conclusive evidence comes from evaluations of the various early FL programmes in the USA and Canada. There is little doubt as to relative efficacy of the three programmes (FLES, partial immersion and full immersion) in terms of L2 proficiency. By far, full immersion students outperform the two other groups (Campbell, Gray, Rhodes and Snow, 1985). Similarly, differences are evident when the French of the children in the Canadian immersion programmes are compared with that of the children who only received short daily periods of FL instruction (e.g. Barik and Swain, 1975; Genesee, 1987). Yet, the common sense expectation that early immersion students should also outperform middle and late immersion students is supported by research evidence (Swain, 1981; Harley, 1986³³). As it was argued in section 2.2.2, the initial advantage of early starters deriving from a higher number of hours devoted to L2/FL study is largely, though not always completely, eroded as those who start later quickly begin to catch up due to their greater cognitive maturity (Genesee, 1978)

³³ See counterevidence in Lapkin, Hart and Swain (1991).

Moreover, the results of the comparative evaluation of the three alternative L2 programmes for English-speaking majority in Montreal (early total immersion, a delayed immersion and all-French schooling) indicate that simply extending the amount of exposure to the target language does not automatically produce higher levels of proficiency (Genesee, Holobow, Lambert and Chartrand, 1989). The authors hypothesise that ‘an upper limit may exist to the L2 proficiency that can be attained in school programmes that do not provide substantial opportunity for peer interaction in the second language’ (p. 260). In other words, no matter how extensive opportunities for communication between students and staff may be, teachers and adult educational professionals do not seem to provide sufficient language models for L2 learners.

Nevertheless, as argued by Genesee (1978:150), ‘duration of instruction is indeed an important predictor of second language learning’. Those students who start FL study early gain benefits both from an early start, even if only an extended exposure, and from their growing efficiency as language learners. In other words, ‘the advantages which derive from the late instruction will also be conferred on the learner who begins early’ (*op.cit.*:153).

Besides, it also depends on what level of proficiency is expected to be the final outcome of compulsory education. If the present provision and time made available to FL study is insufficient, beginning at a younger age and thus increasing the number of years devoted to FL study may allow students to develop a real functional level of proficiency (Johnstone, 2002). This, however, will not happen if, as it is the case in many countries, instead of the increased overall exposure, children actually study less as the hours for FLs are being cut down in secondary school (Nunan, 2002). There is, of course, an implicit assumption here that the extra time spent on the language in the elementary school can more easily be ‘spared’ than can be later on.

At this point it may be useful to quote a survey done by the Council of Europe (1988, cited in Weiss, 1991) that after 7000 hours of instruction students still unable to communicate, There seems to be considerable agreement that most students need at least 12000 hours of classroom instruction to communicate effectively. ‘In Europe’, Weiss claims, ‘the amount of time spent on foreign language teaching is simply insufficient in the majority of cases to ensure that students will achieve **such** levels of proficiency’ (Weiss, 1991:30)

It also frequently argued that an early start to a first FL permits the inclusion of subsequent FLs at the higher levels of education. Their first FL will become ‘an apprentice foreign language which will facilitate the learning of any other’ (Brigstocke, 1994). The European Commission White Paper (1995:47), *Teaching and Learning: Towards a learning society*, declares it clearly:

In order to make for proficiency in three Community languages, it is desirable for foreign language learning to start at pre-school level. It seems essential for such teaching to be placed on a systematic footing in primary education, with the learning of a second Community foreign language starting in secondary school.

The European Commission also recommends secondary school pupils should study certain subjects in the first FL learned, as is the case in the European schools (*ibid.*). Similarly Titone points to the possibility of using ‘an early-acquired FL subsequently as a medium of instruction in other subject areas, and thus of enhancing the integration of language education with other dimensions of the curriculum’ (Singleton, 1989:243). Numerous studies in various CLIL programmes demonstrate that children can successfully master subject-matter content through the medium of an L2 with no detriment to their academic achievement (see Genesee, 1987; Beatens Beardsmore, 1993; Fruhauf, Coyle and Ingeburg, 1996; Johnson and Swain, 1997).

Immersion children consistently perform at or above grade level scholastically, are on par with their peers at monolingual peers in English language [L1] development, and by the end of the elementary school, become functional bilinguals.

Snow, 2001:305

As it will be discussed later (section 2.4), integrated language and content instruction or CBI has been shown to be beneficial at any level of schooling (see p. 86), yet teaching other subjects through the medium of a FL is easier at EY education level because content is not so conceptually advanced and FL instruction may significantly enhance both content and language learning.

2.6. The ‘primary context advantages’ argument

Numerous educators point out that early childhood offers some favourable conditions for FL learning (Vilke, 1979; Schinke-Llano, 1985; Curtain, 1990, 1993; Brumfit, 1991; Curtain and Pesola, 1994; Dunn, 1998; Lipton, 1998; Marcos, 1998). Children generally have more time for learning, as they are not preoccupied with the worries and responsibilities that older learners have (Brumfit, 1991; Johnstone 1994). Besides, in agreement with the age-appropriate teaching methodology, there is no clear-cut boundary

between learning and play. Children have a great capacity for enjoying themselves, get absorbed in activities and events, and are not always aware that they are actually learning language. This, on the other hand, creates a more positive attitude towards learning an FL in general and desire to continue (Moon, 2000).

Another argument in favour of lowering the starting age for FL study is that the context of primary (in Poland, Early Years) schooling may provide a better learning context for FL learning than both the higher years of primary and secondary school (Brewster *et al.*, 1992; Curtain and Pesola, 1994; Sharpe, 2001). Since this point is discussed in detail in section 2.4, I will summarise the major points:

- Children are in a secure and familiar environment, with a teacher and other children whom they know well. The child typically spends the whole day with one classteacher, who covers the whole curriculum.
- The primary teacher can exploit many opportunities to use an FL in everyday classroom routines (such as calling the register), and in parts of lessons such as maths and physical education (such as counting in the foreign language). Aspects of the foreign culture can be explored across the curriculum - in art, music, L1 language work, etc.
- The primary school teacher can embed the FL into the whole school experience and by integrating it into the whole primary curriculum on the top of the systematic teaching provided (Curtain and Pesola, 1994; Driscoll and Frost, 1999).
- FL learning should 'become a part of basic literacy, like reading and writing the mother tongue, to offset the unilingual, ethnocentric, and often parochial character of early schooling' (Stern, 1967:284).

2.7. The 'social and economic benefits' argument

As already indicated in section 2.1.3, bilingualism and multilingualism are currently viewed as desirable societal skills. There is an increasing awareness of the usefulness of foreign language training in a number of seemingly diverse areas. The development of modern information and communication technologies (satellite and cable TV, DVD, the Internet, and e-mail), the internationalisation of the market place, and a greater mobility of people created by inexpensive travel options, have resulted in considerably greater crossnational and crosslinguistic contact. As argued by Wieszczyńska (2000a), young

children grow surrounded by foreign languages and the ability to speak one or more FLs has become a part of rudimentary education.

On individual grounds, one way to enhance career potential is to combine fluency in an FL with skills in another field. Business and government need skilled professionals with FL competence and the demand for such individuals continues to exceed supply. This does not only concern popular languages such as English, German, French or Spanish. In the USA, the need is particularly critical in languages such as Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Arabic (Curtain, 1993). By possessing 'a tool' that is useful for future study or work abroad, individuals grow better equipped to compete in the work force by opening up additional job opportunities (Marcos, 1998).

Within the EU the political intention declared on various occasions is to make a reality of the border-free Single Market in which there is unconstrained mobility. If, however, citizens of the European Union are to benefit from the occupational and personal opportunities open to them, proficiency in several Community languages has become a precondition (European Commission, 1995)³⁴.

This language proficiency must be backed up by the ability to adapt to working and living environments characterised by different cultures (*ibid.*). Speaking of the importance of plurilingual competence for individuals at the Council of Europe conference in Strasbourg in 1997, Domenico Lenarduzzi, European Commission Director of Education said:

This is not a mere wish but an absolute necessity. Without sufficient linguistic knowledge there will be no mobility, no dialogue and no understanding. (...) Each citizen should be in position to know two other languages. If you people do not have languages they will be confronted by discrimination. (...) Whether we like it or not, all our member states must make efforts to adapt their teaching.

Lenarduzzi cited in Sharpe, 2001:22

Languages are also 'the key to knowing other people' (European Commission, 1995). The tool with which we can combat xenophobia, national stereotypes, racial prejudice, and intolerance (Council of Europe, 1999). Without it, promotion of 'unity in diversity' – the diversity of cultures, traditions, national identities and languages of the peoples of Europe – declared on various occasions³⁵ will remain an empty slogan.

³⁴ At the same time, some politicians have advocated an idea of so called 'leading language', a standard language used in the European Union. The critics of this concept are afraid of the dominance of one language (presumably English), which would jeopardise linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe (Brusch, 1994, cited in Wieszczyńska, 2000a).

³⁵ 'Unity in diversity' has become a motto of the Constitution of the European Union (draft form).

Proficiency in languages helps to build up the feeling of being European with all its cultural wealth and diversity and of understanding between the citizens of Europe. (...) Multilingualism is part and parcel of both European identity/citizenship and the learning society.

European Commission, 1995:47

2.8. *Conclusions and implications*

Throughout this section I have considered the arguments and counterarguments in favour of early FL learning (Figure 2-7). I also analysed implications of research on L2/FL learning in children for teachers, teacher trainers and policy makers. In summary I shall highlight the salient issues:

1. There is no single immutable dictum ‘the younger = the better’ in all circumstances over any timescale. Data on the effect of age on L2 learning is mixed and ambiguous, and many factors contribute to success and failure in learning a new language. An important implication of research findings is that

We need not to be panicked about exposing young children to other languages, on the grounds that they must learn early or not at all. While foreign –language instruction in an elementary school certainly can produce some learning, it is not a magical tool for creating perfect second-language speakers.

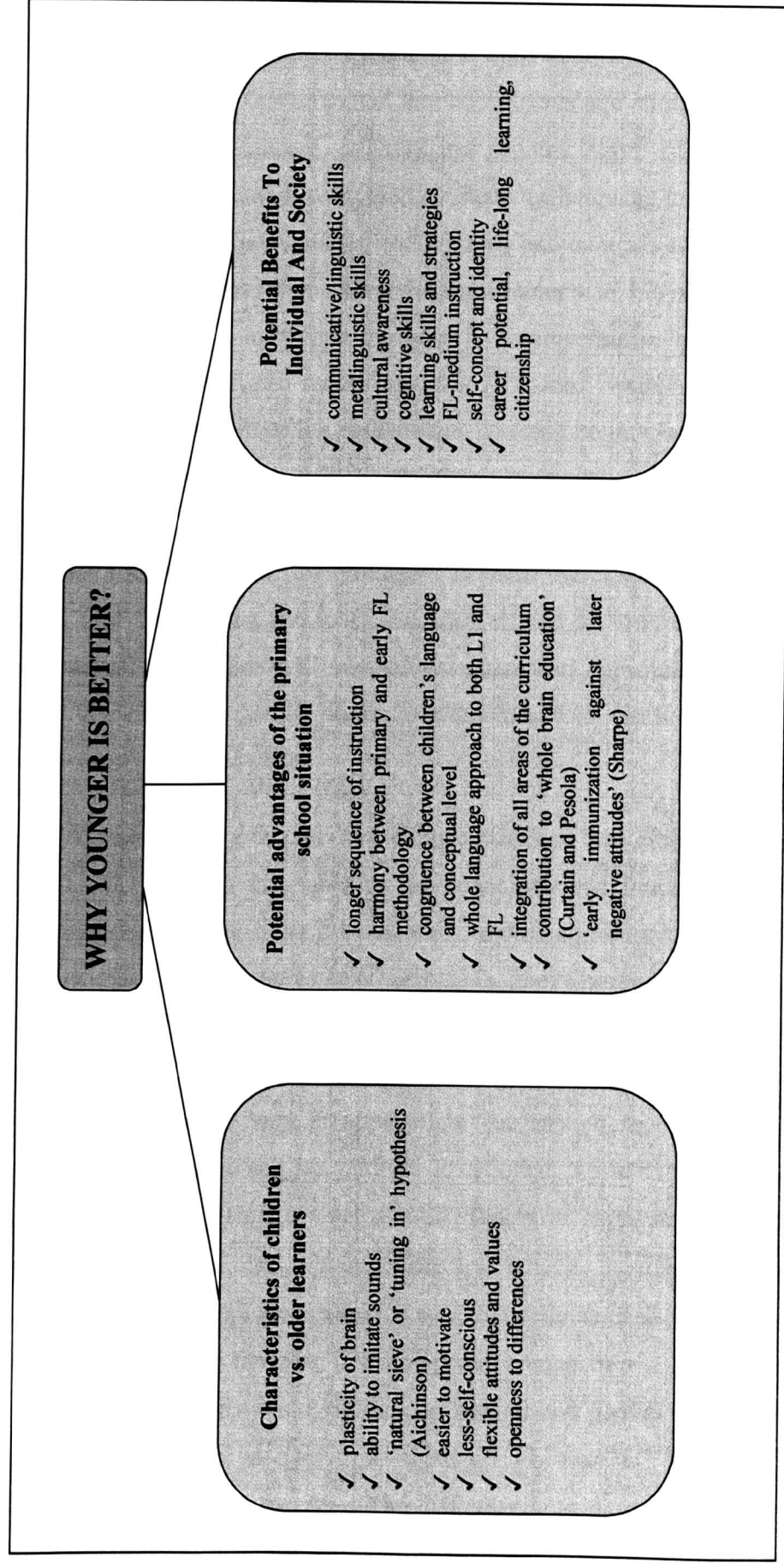
Marshall, 2000:4@

2. Research findings from neurobiology suggest that children’s great capacity for FL learning a new language (a window of opportunity) potentially and eventually exists. In other words, there no single stage in life that is optimal in general. As suggested by Stern (1976) instead of deliberating or searching for an answer whether it better to start earlier or later, we should concentrate on creating optimal learning conditions instead.

Neither early or late second language learning are of themselves likely to be effective. This third theory, then, places much more onus on the environment to create conditions under which learning can occur. It does not assume that older learners **automatically** have an advantage by virtue of being older nor does it assume that younger learners automatically by virtue of being younger. Each age of language learning has its own particular advantages and disadvantages. Therefore rather than asking whether language learning at such an age is effective, the question should be: How can one create an environment in which effective language learning can occur?

Stern, 1976:291(emphasis in original)

Figure 2-7 Summary of arguments in favour of early FL teaching



3. Experimental research in which children have been compared to older learners in L2 learning has consistently demonstrated that adolescents and adults perform better than young children in all language skills except pronunciation. Lightbown and Spada (1999) reconcile the argument over the age factor in language learning by reminding us to consider the different needs, motivations and contexts of different groups of learners. They imply that when native-like proficiency in L2 is the goal, then it is beneficial to start early, but when the goal is communicative ability in an FL, the benefits of an early start are much less clear. Besides, even higher proficiency in pronunciation the sole gain of the earlier start, it would be unwise to base FL teaching policy in Poland on this premise only. Staffing issues such as the minimal number of native speakers or the shortage of highly proficient FL teachers may also be problematic and the gains for younger learners minimal. In other words, the agreement that the starting age to FL learning should be lowered in Poland implies that educational authorities will support adequate and appropriate teacher training. Preferably the objective should be to train teachers with native-like FL proficiency and excellent pedagogical skills.
4. The lack of conclusive evidence and counterevidence that children are superior to adults in L2/FL learning may also be the result of some fundamental problems of adequate measurement of program outcomes and of appropriate research design. In some older comparative studies (e.g. Burstall's and Ekstrand's) both experimental (younger learners) and control groups (older learners) were taught in a much the same way. Johnstone (1994) rightly points out that it is very doubtful if teaching different age groups in the same way is appropriate for any of them. Also, the type of assessment used in some studies may be questioned. As already mentioned in this section, some testing techniques (cloze test, filling in gaps, repetition of unknown foreign words) may definitely favour older learners. If, as suggested by Johnstone (1994), younger pupils are assessed in a way that reflects classroom activities of the kind with which they are familiar, between-group comparison on any larger scale may pose questions of reliability and validity. In natural and formal L2 learning settings, multiple variables, such as age, time spent on FL learning, distribution of time, teaching approach, operate together. The difficulty is to draw conclusions about any of them, 'precisely because the factors are so interconnected' (Johnstone, 1994:55).

This is another important message for educators in Poland, for whom it will probably be tempting to rely on the 'product' (i.e. linguistic attainment achieved by the students), whilst equally important is to get some consideration of processes.

5. Apart from linguistic gains, there are manifold other benefits that an earlier start may offer. Johnstone (1994:54) remarks:

Any major experience of a foreign language at primary school must surely have an educational value as well as a purely instrumental aim (here of developing competence in a language). In this sense, a foreign language at primary school has enormous 'added value' to offer.

It is therefore vital that teachers are aware of possible ways in which young children may profit from earlier exposure. The way they structure, deliver and assess a programme should reflect not only strict linguistic aims, but also cultural, educational or personal objectives of FL study. To enable young students to benefit from early exposure to FL culture, teachers should not only be competent in the language taught, but they themselves should be aware of the target language culture.

Nunan (1999a), however, offers an alternative word of caution. He argues that in addition to acting on behalf of teachers, and possibly other parties (e.g. parents) who advocate teaching FLs to young learners, we need to consider the rights of the learners. 'All individuals have the right to an education in their first language are, and this right might be violated by too premature introduction of English into elementary education' (p.3). Though voices like these are rare and unpopular, they nevertheless require careful consideration. Stern (1969:7) reminds that

Stressing the value of second languages, however, should not be misinterpreted as an invitation to neglect the first. (...) The local and national languages will and should remain one of the foundations of education, so long as they are not made a vehicle of aggressive nationalism of the kind that so frequently marred this part of education until recent decades ['It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue' (UNESCO,1953)] But the education centring round the vernacular must be matched by an international component which helps communities to cross barriers of language and national or local culture and tradition in a much more thorough-going way than traditional language teaching has permitted.

PART 3 The 'HOW' issues

In this section I am addressing the question, 'Is there a best way to teach an FL to young learners?' On the basis of a very interesting comparison made by Brewster (1991) of what lies in the heart of so called 'good primary practice' in Britain as opposed to primary ELT, I have made a similar comparison for Poland. I have particularly wanted to see to what extent recent guidelines on what constitutes good EY education practice overlap with what is advocated in the area of teaching foreign languages to young learners (TFLYL).

2.9. Views on child learning

In recent years, experts from outside the field of FL teaching have exerted great influence on some of the practitioners and the way methods and curricula are shaped. In order to understand what may be regarded as good practice in early FL teaching we have to take a look beyond L2 acquisition theories. We have to be clear about the different ways of looking at a child, how s/he learns and thinks, and how to promote his/her learning (Brewster, 1991). However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis even to attempt to present a complete picture of the many complex issues involved in children's language and cognitive development and do justification to the works of Chomsky, Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Donaldson, Wells and others. The following is therefore merely a very brief summary of some of the major views on looking at child learning.

As summarised in Figure 2-8 there are three major stances on how children think and learn. On one side of the spectrum we have the view of empiricists, who like Locke, Watson or Skinner view a child as '*tabula rasa*', a blank slate or an empty vessel to be filled. The whole teaching/learning process resembles moulding a child like clay, very much as in the way portrayed by Watson (1925, cited in Bruce, 1997:8):

Give me a dozen healthy infants, well formed and my own special word to bring them up in and I will guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select—doctor, lawyer, artists, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggarman and thief—regardless of their talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities and vocation, and race of his ancestors.

As evident from this quote, in this approach children are seen as are passive recipients of instruction. Parents or teachers, on the other hand, are pictured as rational tutors who could mould the child the way they wished, through careful instruction, effective example, and rewards (praise and approval) for good behaviour (Berk, 1997).

Figure 2-8 Different views on child learning

PHILOSOPHY	MAJOR SUPPORTERS	KEY IDEAS
EMPIRICISM John Locke (1632-1704)	Watson (1878-1958) Skinner (1904)	<p>The child is an empty vessel to be filled, or a lump of clay that can be moulded into shape</p> <p>Habit formation is important. Learning/ teaching is broken down to simple steps from a complex sequence(an accretion view of learning)</p> <p>Learning is seen as hierarchy from simple to complex.</p> <p>Knowledge can be transmitted from one person to another e.g. teacher/parent to another child/group.</p> <p>There is emphasis on the influence of experience and socio-cultural aspects.</p> <p>The adult leads the child’s learning and dominates it.</p>
NATIVISM Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)	Gessell (1880-1961) Erikson (1902-1994) Chomsky (1928-)	<p>The child is pre-programmed for development to unfold. This is determined by genetically pre-programmed maturational mechanisms.</p> <p>The socio-cultural aspects influence, for example, the language a child speaks. If a child hears Chinese then the child learns to speak that language, but the mechanisms for learning language are already there.</p> <p>Adults observe children to monitor progress and emphasise milestones of normal development and check for readiness, such as in learning to read.</p> <p>The child is seen as leading his/her own learning, with the adult there as facilitator.</p>
INTERACTIONISM Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)	Piaget (1896-1980) Vygotsky (1896-1934) Dunn (1939-)	<p>This approach integrates empiricism and nativism. It recognises that there are biologically pre-programmed ideas to development, but it places just as much emphasis on the socio-cultural context in which the child grows up (the people and the material world, the culture).</p> <p>The context varies greatly according to the culture and the physical environment in different places, in one country or trans-globally.</p> <p>People are very important in this approach, both other children and adults. Sometimes the adults lead the child’s learning and sometimes the child lead.</p> <p>It is a bit like a conversation. Different people can start conversations but the different speakers need to listen to each other and respond to what each says appropriately and relevantly.</p>

SOURCE: from Bruce (1997:12-14)

As far as language learning is concerned, it is in no way different from any aspects of learning, such as learning how to tie one’s shoes or how to sing a song, and the whole process is basically habit formation. Habits are formed when a child responds to stimuli in the environment and subsequently have their responses reinforced so that they are

remembered (Ellis, 1994). Learning is broken into meaningful sequences, which are taught through step-by-step instruction and repeated till sufficiently mastered. The language, on the other hand, is viewed as consisting of chunks that can be taught in hierarchical order from simple to more complex. Teachers, if driven by this vision of child FL learning, will possibly make the use of direct teaching of specific components of the language, stress the importance of rote learning (through, for example, excessive teaching of songs and rhymes) and imitation. A teacher's role is to model the language used in the classroom, select appropriate experiences and transmit them to a child.

On the opposing side of the spectrum, we have the nativist theories of language acquisition, suggesting that humans are biologically pre-programmed. Nativists regard the development as maturation and gradual 'unfolding' of capacities driven by a genetic 'blueprint', not learning (Wood, 1998). This view is nicely captured by Erickson (1963:11) in his much-quoted remark: 'If we only learn to let live, the plan for growth is all there'.

From a linguistic point of view, Chomsky (e.g. 1968) reasserts this stance by claiming that children possess innate propensity to develop the use of language. Chomsky rejects the view that children are 'taught' how to understand and use the language, nor do they 'learn' a language by imitation. Rather they 'acquire' their mother tongue(s). The environment dictates which language is learnt, but the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a genetic part of a human. Chomsky has described the LAD as an imaginary 'black box' or 'mental organ' which contains all and only principles which are universal to language learning, whatever the language used, whatever experiences are available to the child, and whatever the context. In the area of second language acquisition (SLA) theories, this special in-built capacity to learn a language is often referred as Universal Grammar—a set of principles that are common to all languages (for discussion on UG and age-related differences in FL learning,; Scovel, 2000, Singleton, 2001, 2003; for general discussion on UG, see e.g. Ellis, 1994Brown, 2000; Kurcz, 2000, for discussion).

The nativist stance is the dominant influence in the early FL teaching tradition. As evident from the previous section (2.3.1), numerous researchers share the view that only younger children possess a similar innate device for learning L2 as they do for L1, and that this ability diminishes with age. In this tradition a child is capable of learning other languages 'naturally', i.e. in more or less the same way as s/he has learnt his/her L1. However, some recent research suggests that learners have continuous access to Universal Grammar (see Ellis, 1994; for summary). Given the immense cognitive and affective differences between

children and adults, the picture derived from these studies is quite striking in terms of similarities in the language learners, regardless of their age, produce. This may suggest that one may learn an FL ‘naturally’ at any age, and the borderline between ‘naturalistic’ and ‘formal’ learning is delineated by the environment in which L2 is learnt. Puppel (2001), for example, suggests that Chomsky’s radical rejection of the behaviourist theories as untenable and irrelevant in accounting for the process of emergence of L1 in children, ‘has been considered too hasty’ (Puppel, 2001:99). Psycholinguists basically agree that environmental stimulation (i.e. an individual’s exposure to external linguistic and non-linguistic stimuli) does play a role in L1 acquisition, especially during the sensitive period (*ibid.*)

At present, many psychologists and educators incline towards a third position that combines the elements of both nativist and empiricist and adds some new elements. Interactionist position stresses the importance of both biological path of child development as well as the role of environment in which the child grows up and develops. In this view the role of adults is critical, yet they are no longer perceived as mere transmitters of knowledge and skills. Instead, teachers and parents are seen as means, the ‘mechanisms by which children can develop their own strategies, initiatives and responses, and construct their own rules which enable their development’ (Bruce, 1997:10).

Interactionist position, strongly advocated by Piaget (e.g. 1968), also rejects the behaviourist position of knowledge being imposed on a passive child. According to Piaget’s cognitive-developmental theory, children actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world, and their cognitive development takes place in stages. Similarly Donaldson in her seminal work *Children’s Minds*, stresses that

From a very early point in life, the child] actively tries to make sense of the world (...), asks questions (...), wants to know. (...) Also from a very early stage, the child has purposes and intentions: he wants to do.

Donaldson, 1978:86

This vision of children as actively making sense of other people’s actions and language is clearly visible in still another ingenious work—Wells’ *Meaning Makers* (1987).

According to Piaget’s theory children undergo a series of stages—sensimotor (birth to 2 years), pre-operational (2-7 years), concrete operational (7-11 years) and formal

operational (11 years onwards)—before they are able to perceive and reason in mature, rational way³⁶. Teaching viewed in this way, can only influence the child's intellectual development if s/he is ready to move onto the next step. This part of Piaget's work was widely interpreted as suggesting that it is impossible to teach children some things unless they are 'ready', meaning that there are limits to child learning abilities at certain stage. However, Donaldson (1978) has called this part of Piaget's theory into question. On the basis of a series of experiments, she has concluded that this is the matter of the child being unable to learn or to be taught something prior to a given cognitive stage, but rather the unfamiliarity of the task which s/he is given to assess information processing skills that often lead to failure. Similarly, Bruner (1966), in his now famous statement, argues that it is possible to teach children anything at any stage in an intellectually honest way.

Despite the fact that in recent years his theory has been challenged, the fact remains that this part of Piaget's work has left us with legacy of low expectations for primary-aged children (Gipps, 1994). Piaget's influence on education has also given an impetus to the development of educational philosophies and programmes that emphasise individualised learning, discovery learning, holistic education, and direct contact with the environment (see Berk, 1997). All these hold many implications as far as curriculum design and timing of formal instruction is concerned.

A strongly interactionist view, so called the sociocultural theory of human development processing, was developed by Lev Vygotsky. While referring to general development, Piaget, and similarly, Vygotsky (1962, 1978, 1986) and Bruner (1966), maintain that the quality and quantity of social interaction a child receives can markedly affect the rate of development. However, they differ in their views on the role that language plays in the process. It is now widely accepted that Piaget under-estimated the role of language in learning and over-estimated the role of play (Gipps, 1994). For Vygotsky, on the other hand, language and communication (and hence, instruction) lie at the core of intellectual and personal development (see Wood, 1998, for discussion). He argues that at the beginning speech serves a regulative, communicative function; yet with time it transforms the way children think, learn and understand. In Vygotsky's view speech is an instrument or tool of thought, rather than a mere 'code' or system for representing the world, and is

³⁶ See section 2.3.3. for the discussion on Piagetian formal operations stage vs. child-adult differences in L2 learning.

also the means by which 'self-regulation' comes about. He believed that these higher order mental processes are strongly influenced and developed out of social interaction.

It is through a special tenet of his theory, the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) that Vygotsky makes it clear how instruction, social interaction and communication lie at the very heart of human development:

The Zone of Proximal Development is the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

Vygotsky, 1978:86.

In other words, the ZPD refers to these functions that are beyond child's current capabilities and which s/he learns to perform through joint activities with more mature members of society. When a child engages him/herself in cooperative dialogues with adults or mature peers, s/he takes the language of these dialogues, makes it a part of his/her private ('inner') speech, and uses this speech to organise their own independent efforts in the same way (Berk, 1997). Consequently, the role of parents and educators is to 'guide children's learning through explanation, demonstration, and verbal prompts, carefully tailoring their efforts to each child zone of proximal development' (Berk, 1997:250).

Bruner (1966, 1977) goes even further. He maintains that a good educator is one who can anticipate a child's intention and act accordingly. In order to foster a child's development, an adult has to 'scaffold' a teaching session, i.e. adjust the assistance s/he provides to fit a child's current level of performance. When a task is new an adult offers direct instruction, less help is provided and eventually scaffolding is removed when competence increases. In this way, there is a gradual transfer of responsibility for learning from the teacher/adult to the child. As Bruner (1977:xiv) explains it:

Scaffolding the task is a way that assures that only those parts of the task within the child's reach are left unresolved and knowing what elements of the solution the child will recognise though he cannot perform them. So too with language acquisition, as in all forms of assisted learning, it depends massively upon participation in a dialogue carefully stabilised by the adult partner.

So much of learning depends upon the need to achieve joint attention, to conduct enterprises jointly, to honour the social relationship may between learner and teacher, to generate possible worlds in which prepositions may be true or appropriate, or even felicitous; to overlook this functional setting of learning whatever its content is to dry it to a mummy.

In a similar vein, Halliday (1975:139) supports the interactionist view:

As well as being a cognitive process, this learning of mother tongue (and subsequent languages) is also an interactive process. It takes the form of the continued exchange of meanings between self and others.

Thus, Vygotskian type of early FL teaching practice is based on assumption that the secret effective learning lies in social interaction between two or more people with different levels of skill and knowledge. The role of the teacher therefore is to find ways of helping the students to move into and through the next layer of knowledge, skill or understanding (Burden and Williams, 1993). Like Piaget, Vygotsky also assumes that children do not go through different levels of cognitive development at the same pace. The teacher is no longer seen as the only source of knowledge, but interaction with peers (student-student, rather than only teacher-student/s) is regarded as vital to the process of learning. A few of methods and techniques developed out of his theory, such as assisted discovery, imaginative play, and most importantly, cooperative learning and reciprocal teaching are among the most important Vygotskian educational innovations that have been used by educators to assist children in their development.

However, Vygotsky's theory, like Piaget's, has not gone unchallenged. Berk (1997) quotes here the results of such studies as Rogoff and associates, which indicates that not all cultures rely equally on verbal dialogues for scaffolding children's efforts. Rather, in some environment when children are actively involved in daily activities of adult life, they would depend heavily on demonstration and gestures.

In summary, as evident from this short discussion, manifold theories have been put forward by philosophers, educators and psychologists on how children learn and think. All these diverse views on the nature of children's involvement in learning and the role that adults play in this process have an impact on teachers' practices. Of course, I am not suggesting that teachers apply these theories directly into their teaching, some of them may possibly be not aware that their classroom is, for example, Skinnerian or Piagetian like. Instead, many educators avoid committing themselves to one theory only. They try to apply a more eclectic approach to educating children based on a view that children learn in many different ways. The next section discusses the way some of these theories have been translated into EY education practice.

2.10. Defining good Early Years practice

The 1999 educational reform of EY education in Poland has grown up from a general disillusionment with teacher-centred, didactic, 'chalk-talk' teaching tradition, characteristic of the 1970s and 1980s. It was said that as national and social needs had changed the education system in Poland had to review its goals. The whole question of what constitutes

‘good practice’ has been vigorously debated. In discussion the so called ‘collection’ approach has frequently been juxtaposed with ‘integrated’ approach to teaching.

As portrayed by Hanisz (1995:515ff) in the collection model of education pupils are expected to ‘collect’ knowledge presented to them during different school subjects. Schoolwork is formally cut into little pieces of different subjects, which are separate and autonomous. The knowledge and skills gained in this way resemble a kaleidoscope of tiny incoherent pieces and students are usually not able to see beyond the subjects studied and the world as one, unified whole. The curriculum states precisely what and how should be learnt. The main emphasis is given to the scope of the knowledge ‘collected’ (‘I know that...’) rather than its depth. The content to be learnt is highly factographic and encyclopaedic, rather than based on skills and practical application of the knowledge gained. Consequently, the students assessment is based on formalised tests and examinations measuring how well the ‘collection’ has been mastered. Moreover, the intellectual growth of a student rather than other domains such as affective or physical is seen as the most important and therefore, analytic thinking based on the right brain hemisphere functioning is given priority. The informal relations between teachers and students are impossible. The teaching process is teacher-oriented, teacher-initiated and teacher-directed. The student, on the other hand, is seen as a recipient of knowledge or subject to external didactic influence. This model of education is highly hierarchical, ritualised, routinised, and overly didactical (Misiorna, 1999). The bedrock of this approach is based on the principle that a school cannot change and thus it is the duty of a student to adapt to the school as an educational institution and not vice versa.

Critics of the collection approach to learning maintain that such a view of the learning process curbs creativity and self-expression, ignores cognitive processes, and overlooks personality traits of the specific learners (Hanisz, 1995). As a result of this criticism, elementary education pedagogues have proposed the so called Integrated Early Years Education (*Zintegrowana Edukacja Wczesnoszkolna, ZEW*) offering a more holistic and child-centred models of EY education. The Polish MoNE asserts:

The main idea of education is to show children the holistic picture of the world, that is, to enable them to examine facts, phenomena, processes and events from different points of view. This requires skilful integration of the content and methods used in teaching all school subjects; starting from a child's experience and gradually extending it.

MoNE, 1992

As stated, education is to grow from children needs and interests, which on the other hand, are no longer confined to the cognitive sphere but include moral, physical and emotional wellbeing of children.

In this sense EY education is 'no longer about education, but about the happiness, growth, and future of our children' (Lewowicki, 1997). In the same vein, the new Core Curriculum (*podstawy programowe*) (MoNE, 1999b) states that the main objective of the first stage of elementary education is to promote broad and harmonious development of children and prepare them for the further systematic work.

Moreover, traditional approaches to teaching and learning are to be replaced with more individualised learning. The key terms of the educational reform is to increase the role of children creativity, spontaneous activity and creative play, their cooperation in shaping their own education, and making children education closer to their home environment and neighbourhood. Traditional National Curriculum divided into prescribed set of school subjects was replaced by the Integrated EY Education Framework Curriculum, which treats the body of knowledge and skills holistically. Also, the role of the teacher has been portrayed differently. S/he is no longer to be an executor of prescribed curriculum but should be autonomous to shape the classroom practices so as to cater for the needs of children in the best way. These main directions of changes from the 'collection' to 'integration' model of EY education are summarised in Figure 2-9.

Figure 2-9 Directions of change in the EY education in Poland

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptive learning learning denotes internalising and reproducing desired knowledge and skills; educational content is viewed as static and inert; a blueprint to follow 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intentional learning learning is conscious and purposeful, geared by the need to complete a certain task; open to discovery and innovative ways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subject teaching knowledge is decomposed into component parts which are then transmitted in isolation from each other; learning is assumed to progress in hierarchical manner starting with simple elements and progressing to more complex 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Integrated teaching illuminating the wholeness, unity and interconnectedness of things
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instructive methodology based on explanation, description, providing information 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heuristic methodology based on problem-solving, discussion, dialogue, 'learning by doing'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Homogeneous learning where activities are standardised and uniform for all children 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individualised learning where children are free to work on their own level and pace
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lesson-based scheduling of all activities based on 45-minute units and division into school subjects 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activity-based no fixed timetable, scheduling according to child capabilities; a daily schedule divided into activities and tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Curriculum designed as a set of rules to follow; one prescribed scheme of work for all schools 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Framework Curriculum designed as a proposal to choose from; based on teacher's autonomy to shape the work in accordance with students' needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traditional teacher-student contacts contacts are one-sided: teacher-initiated and teacher-directed; didactical, instructional, assessment-based relationships 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive teacher-student contacts reciprocal, 'give and take': sometimes the child leads an activity, sometimes an adult; education is not imposed on a passive, reinforced child, but s/he is actively participating in the process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher-as-an-arbiter imposes, orders, instructs, decides, evaluates 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher-as-a-mediator co-operates, co-directs, mediates, facilitates, encourages, guides
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher educational needs geared by the need of how to comply with ministerial guidelines, execute curricula and resources, searching one uniform scheme of work 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher educational needs geared by the need for new ideas, new pedagogical trends; need how to cater for children needs and interests in the best way
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assessment grade and test-driven; a tool of selection and assessing the child's worth; 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evaluation based on observation and description of individual achievements; a diagnosis of child progress and direction for further work
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational space classroom as an auditorium 	➤	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational space classroom as a laboratory, workshop, atelier, a space with 'educational corners'

SOURCE: compiled from Filipiak and Smolińska-Rębas (2000: 13ff)

The 'new face' of EY education owes a lot to educational theories, such as those described in the previous section. Its roots also go back to the pioneering work of such educators as³⁷:

- **J. Dewey:** child-centred education: begin with and build upon the interests of the child; stressing the interplay of thinking and doing in the child's classroom experience ('learning by doing'); the teacher as a guide and co-worker with the pupils, rather than a taskmaster assigning a fixed set of lessons and recitations; 'teach the child, not the subject';
- **R. Froebel:** emphasis on the child's inner development, and providing scope for, and encouragement for his/her spontaneous activity; the school's goal is the growth of the child in all aspects of his/her being including the physical, spiritual, emotional and cognitive spheres ('whole-child education'); each child is born with a certain inner qualities and propensities, and it is the job of an educator to 'make the inner outer'; start with what children can do, rather than with what they cannot ('start where the child is'); 'self-activity' and play are essential in child education;
- **M. Montessori:** 'make the program fit each child instead of making each child fit the program', 'simple-to-complex' curriculum design; children learn more by touching, seeing, smelling, tasting, and exploring than by just listening, teacher's role is to assist rather than instruct ('help me do it myself'), create dynamic, interactive learning environments that encourage each child to cooperate, collaborate, negotiate, and reason in order to understand; educating whole-child: autonomous individual, competent in all areas of life, not merely someone with the 'right' answers;
- **O. Decroly:** cooperative learning, classroom as a workshop, 'centres of interest' in each classroom (e.g. book corner);
- **R. Steiner:** education helps the child to see unifying concepts in different contexts; 'never go against the temperament of the child but always go with it'; stressing the importance of the whole environment (family, school, peers) in child education;
- **C. Freinet:** children learn by making useful things ('pedagogy of work'); trial and error method involving group work (enquiry-based learning, cooperative learning).
- **B. Otto and K. Linke:** 'joint teaching' (*Gesamtunterricht*) as a transformational stage from pre-school 'global' education to subject-based teaching at later stages of education; *Heimatkunde* curriculum incorporating the themes related to the child immediate environment: starting from the closest ones such as family and neighbourhood, and gradually moving to more distant phenomena.

In Poland, too, the idea of integrated EY teaching is hardly new. The theoretical principles of integrated teaching practice, as well detailed conditions and ways of putting them into

³⁷ Information based on *Encyclopædia Britannica* at <http://www.britannica.com>, Więckowski (1993), Bruce (1997); ICEM (2000), and Filipak and Smolińska-Rębas (2000).

practice as were devised by Wilczyna in 1968 and incorporated into the official Primary School Curriculum in 1978. However, most of Wilczyna's ideas (1968) had remained on paper and the practical guidelines of how to adapt cross-curricular teaching into the everyday work of an overcrowded and insufficiently financed Polish school, had not been developed (Jakowiecka, 1987). As a result the old 'collection' approach to teaching continued till the 1990s when the reform movement rediscovered her ideas and adapted into the new model—the Integrated Early Years Education.

The understanding what is meant by 'integration' has evolved, too. Traditionally, this term was only used to denote a special organisational form of teaching based on building cross-curricular links between the different subjects taught. More recently the term started to be used to encompass various models of integration (Cackowska, 1992; Hanisz, 1995; Misiorna, 1999; Jakóbowski and Jakubowicz-Bryz, 2002):

1. **A monodisciplinary model** of integration, in which a teacher builds a holistic vision of the world within one subject taught. In this way s/he 'enriches' a subject-matter content via incorporating content derived from various disciplines. It may also involve integrating skills taught during one subject (e.g. whole language approach).
2. **A multidisciplinary model** of integration, in which a given problem, phenomenon or event is discussed via a diverse viewpoints represented by different disciplines. It involves correlating corresponding topics around one common theme in the form of cross-curricular teaching, and emphasising parallel and reciprocal relations between facts, phenomena, processes and events presented during different lessons or subjects. This model may involve **cross-subject correlation** (*korelacja międzyprzedmiotowa*)—integrating related topics taught during different subjects; **synchronised correlation** (*korelacja synchroniczna*)—correlating topics to occur at the same time, and **asynchronised correlation** (*korelacja asynchroniczna*)—relating material taught now with the one taught previously.
3. **An interdisciplinary model** of integration, in which each subject builds upon knowledge and skills acquired earlier in a different subject, broadens it and highlights cause-effect relationships. The teacher teachers 'holistically', i.e. emphasises the vision of the world as a whole, analyses processes and phenomena

from different perspectives rather than segregated parts. The knowledge and skills acquired in this way are the most comprehensive and all-around.

Cackowska (1992) also suggests that the structure of education should reflect child's cognitive development and provide a natural flow from a completely joint teaching in the kindergarten and first grades of elementary school to correlated teaching in grades 2-5. Gradually more emphasis will be given to the uniqueness and separateness of the way each discipline approaches given problems, and in this way correlated teaching will provide a transition stage to separate subject teaching at higher grades of primary and secondary school.

Więckowski (1993) points to the language as the main integrative element of diverse school subjects. He says a child has a natural need to express his/her feelings and emotions when exposed to reality as an entity. Education therefore should support students' language growth in all its aspects:

It is imperative that early years education promotes, (...) enriches, and develops child linguistic skills. A child should learn various means of expression: verbal means of communication, the language of mathematics, music, arts and body movement.

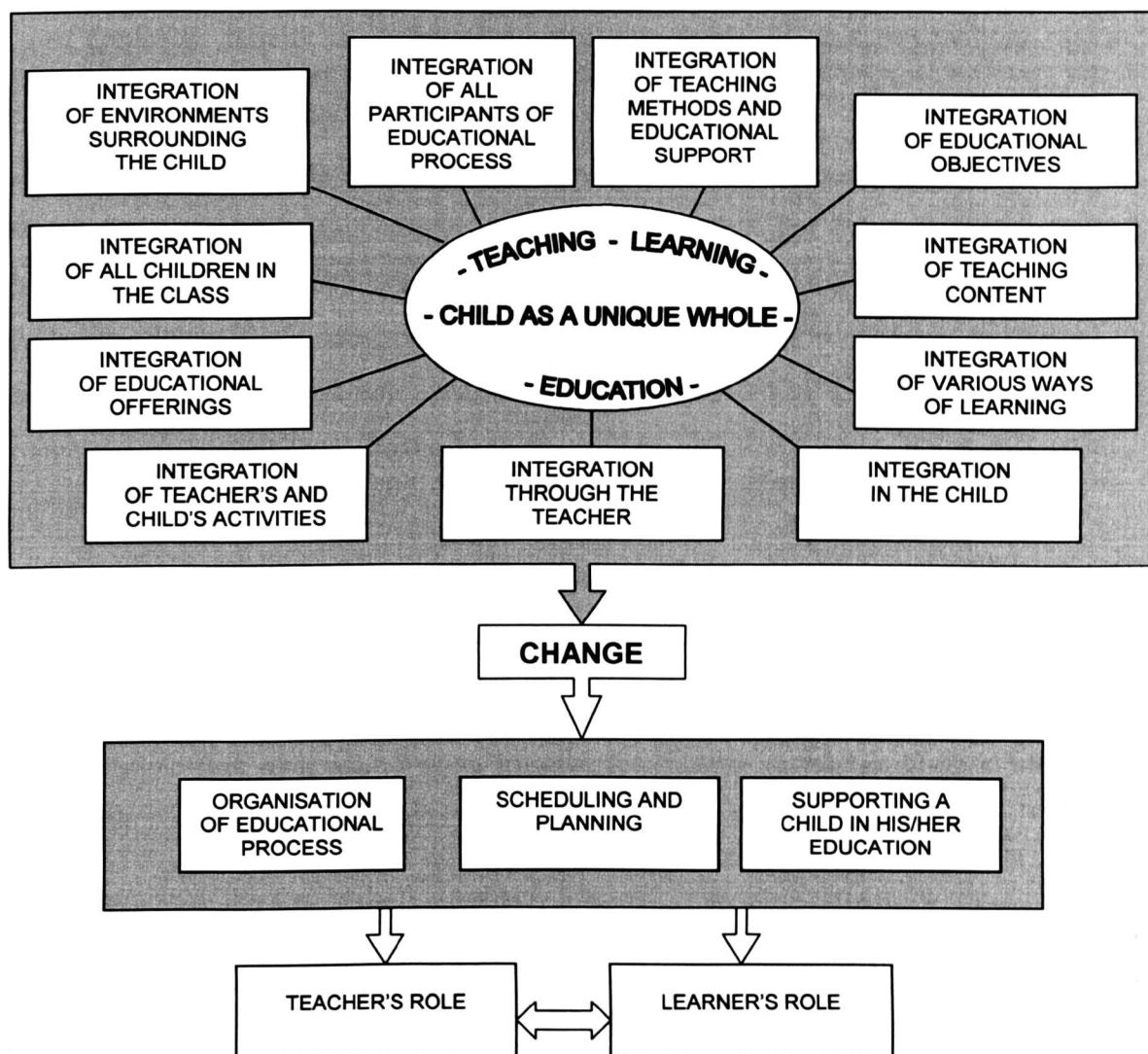
Więckowski, 1993:202

In such a view language learning is no longer confined to Language Arts but various language skills are developed in relation to their other uses in the total school curriculum, particularly in the content area rather than in isolation from the school curriculum (so called language across the curriculum). And vice versa: the development of child's linguistic skills influences his/her ability in which s/he can handle and manipulate subject-matter content.

Więckowski (1993), however, reminds us that idea of integrative learning should not be narrowed down to the integration of content, methods and organisation of pedagogic process. Rather, 'integrated EY education' is an umbrella term for the type of education in which various elements constitute a whole. As also noted by Misiorna (1999), the new model of education demands more than 'cosmetic changes' such as restructuring of curricula and didactic processes. Most importantly, it requires a complete rethinking of traditional and relationships between teachers, learners, parents and other participants and the roles they play in child education. In this model (Figure 2-10) integration encompasses content, educational goals, teaching methods, and organisation of teaching process. It also involves the process of uniting diverse educational environments (home, school,

neighbourhood), various participants (learners, parents, teachers, other school staff), and different stages of education (e.g. pre-school, classes 1-3 and higher grades of elementary school).

Figure 2-10 Misiorna's model of integration in EY education



SOURCE: Misiorna (1999: 68)

Yet, for the new model of education to be successful, several requirements have to be fulfilled. Jakowiecka (1987) points to four consequences that integrated teaching bears if applied on the wider scale:

1. Initial teacher training must include both core subjects didactics and cross-curricular teaching training, e.g. planning, teaching and assessing integrated subjects lessons;
2. Proper planning and realisation of pedagogical and educational objectives of integrated curriculum must be popularised among primary school teachers;

integrated curricula must be written to help teachers in their own planning of school work;

3. 'One classteacher per one class' throughout the whole period of elementary education must be secured in all schools; the situation in which core curriculum courses are taught by many teachers must not be tolerated;
4. Purpose-built primary schools should be constructed and the existing ones gradually rebuilt in accordance with the needs of this age group; special classrooms, suitable for integrated teaching must be created to make different forms of pupils' activity possible.

One of course cannot help but have the impression that EY education in Poland is going through the process of change as some countries earlier on³⁸. For example, the new model EY education mirrors what was regarded as a good primary practice in Britain between the 1960s and 1980s. The same type of criticism of traditional, over-didactic approaches to teaching was observed and new 'progressive' methods advocated (see Simon, 1994, for synopsis). What happened there, however, is that there was a grave discrepancy between the rhetoric of government reports and the actual classroom practices.

The great mass of primary schools did not suddenly transform themselves—far from it. Surveys have shown that the old-established emphasis on 'the basics' continued in most schools, that the traditional narrowness that marked elementary education still persisted.

Simon, 1994:13

It seems ironic that what once was an impetus for change—emphasis of child individual needs—has now become the main target of criticism.

The Plowden Report (1967) (...) has been criticised for the emphasis given to the uniqueness of each child, and therefore for too great stress on the need to **individualise** the teaching-learning process. If each child has to be treated individually, it is argued, the complexity of classroom organisation becomes overwhelming, while, at the same time, it becomes impossible to develop effective pedagogic means relevant to the needs of children generally.

Ibid. (emphasis in original)

As a result the return to the more directly didactic approaches of the past, subject teaching, whole-class teaching, and more rigorous assessment and testing, has been suggested. Hence, will the Polish reform of EY education succeed where the British one failed? Of course, the longer term outcomes of the new educational practice are not known yet. However, it is already visible that some of the preconditions for the successful integrated teaching put forward by Jakowiecka (1987), such as preparation of teachers, proper planning and

³⁸ For discussion on the two competing educational orientations 'conservative' (or 'banking') vs. 'progressive' (or 'liberal') ideologies, see Cummins, 2000; Gibbons, 2002.

implementation, adapting of school buildings, have not been met. Majcherek (2000) already warns that innovative ideas may smash against fossilised structures of the old system since it requires more than Orange or Blue Papers (i.e. the colours of the official reform booklets) to change teachers' thinking and practices. Reformist changes are often heard of but, at least so far, rarely seen.

Some authors also question the whole reform foundation based on 're-animated educational ideas of Dewey' (Wolniewicz, 1998). They claim that that British or American state schools, with all their emphasis on practical skills, integrated blocks and individualised learning, provide mediocre education for their students, and are in fact, much worse than in 'old-fashioned' and traditional Polish schools (Wolniewicz, 1998). The British own dissatisfaction with progressive methods used in their schools and the plea to return 'back to basics' does not help this situation either. As a result critiques in Poland often repeat that 'it seems like a gloomy joke that the elements of British education has been set as models for the Polish educational reform' (Rybarczyk, 1998:24).

Yet, as pointed out by Kruczkowska (1998:25), it is not a good idea uplift one's spirit by comparing ones bad situation with practice that is equally faulty. Bad practice, she argues, exists everywhere and so does evidence that progressive methods create a more positive environment for child learning. In the same way she disagrees with some criticism that Polish educators 'are buying out educational scrap from abroad'. The reform was not launched in order to bring about some foreign ideas based on the assumption that 'the grass is greener on the other side'. She also says that a good side of the present 'belated' reform is the very fact that we can learn out of mistakes of others. It is impossible to simply 'borrow' and 'replant' an educational system from anybody. Yet looking from a perspective of a different tradition and structure provides a necessary distance that enables a critical look at our own system.

Possibly one such lesson that can be learnt from the British experience is to avoid dogmatism in education. Gibbons (2002) argues that in reality both transmission and progressive orientations exist in schools, sometimes together in one classroom, which in her opinion, may point to inadequacy of either of the models. Similarly, Sharpe (1997, 2001) argues that neither 'traditional' nor 'progressive' methods are good in themselves. The dichotomies such as teacher-centred vs. child-centred classrooms, formal vs. informal learning, direct vs. indirect teaching; instructional vs. negotiated, often lead to nowhere. In his opinion

Teacher educators need to transcend these unhelpful dichotomies, they need to bear in mind what the essential business of primary schooling is about, and they need to be clear what it is that lies in the heart of education. The Plowden Committee (...) famously declared that the answer to this last question was 'the child'. This cannot be right. 'The child' lives in naturally occurring social contexts such as 'the family', 'the peer group', and 'the community', and in these contexts 'the child' learns in natural, spontaneous and unsystematic ways. The school is not a naturally occurring context; it is a deliberately constructed social institution created for the specific purpose of education. Within its boundaries, 'the child' becomes 'the pupil', and pupils are by definition social individuals subject to systematic teaching designed to promote particular, consciously intended, learning outcomes. Teachers do not have natural relationships with pupils: the only rationale for the relationship at all is that the one should teach and the other should learn, they have no other business interacting with each other outside this purpose. Thus in reality what lies in the heart of education is the teaching-learning process. This is the entire *raison d'être* of schooling in any society.

Sharpe, 1997:87

In the light of these last comment, Polish educators may be advised to exercise some scepticism that a mere replacement of one education ideology by another, will bring miraculous results. It may be true what Shape points out that apart from 'collection' (traditional) approach on one side and 'integration' (progressive) approach on the other, there is a middle-point stance that combines the strengths of the two of them.

Nevertheless, before a new vision emerges, FL teacher educators have to come up with some solutions how FL teaching should respond to the new learning environment advocated by the reformers. The new EY education ethos, with its 'whole child' approach, child-centred curriculum and methodology, the emphasis on holistic learning, activity and experience, and the changed role of the teacher in the educational process have numerous consequences as far as FL teaching in elementary school classrooms are concerned.

So far, however, very little has been said in Poland how early FL teaching should adapt to this new situation. It seems that there is 'Integrated EY education' on one side and religious education and FL teaching on the other. The two subjects have been removed from an integrated structure of EY education as if the same rules of holistic teaching have not been applicable to them. The reason for this, at least in the case of FL teaching, might be pragmatic. Namely, that the expertise required for teaching an FL is beyond skills and competencies of many EY teachers. Yet, it may also be true that early FL teaching contradicts some philosophical underpinnings of EY education, for example Pestalozzi's argument that every individual has a right to an education in their first language (see section 2.1.1). Hence, EY educators are not able to 'fit in' FL teaching into their practices. In the next section I argue that the principles of early FL teaching are in fact the same no matter if we refer to mainstream subject teaching or to teaching an FL. In the same way as EY educators claim that language (i.e. child's L1) is an integrative element of various

subjects taught I will argue that the same role may be played by an L2. By the same token, subject matter content integrates both L1 and L2, and therefore, it should be used as a vehicle for teaching an FL.

2.11. Defining good FL practice

As noted by Halliwell (1992), children never come to the language classroom empty-handed. They bring with them an already well-established set of instincts, skills and characteristics which help them to learn another language. These common characteristics and abilities typically include (Komorowska, 1992; Vilke, 1995; Dunn, 1998; Lipton, 1998; Pamuła, 1998):

- Children's memory span is short; they learn quickly, but also forget quickly.
- Children's attention span is short; they are very fickle and moody they need frequent simulation and change of activity.
- Children learn through their minds, bodies, senses, experiences, abilities, and feelings.
- Children are good at interpreting meaning without necessarily understanding the individual words; frequently learn indirectly rather than directly.
- Children are very imaginative, they take delight in mixing reality and fantasy.
- Children take great pleasure in finding and creating fun in what they do.
- Children concentrate more on 'here and now' – a concrete present situation or activity.
- Children are more interested in an activity than its result.
- Children like artistic activities: singing, drawing and painting.
- Children need to be working within clear familiar contexts and need meaningful and purposeful interaction.
- Children are prone to criticism and embarrassment, especially in front of their peers.
- Children at this age become emotionally attached to the teacher who is quite often for him/her an unquestionable authority.

Consequently the answer to the question, 'How to teach FL to young learners?' usually provides a suggestion to take account of these young learners' characteristics and act accordingly (Szulc-Kurpaska, 1998). Another answer usually comprises a list of techniques such as songs, plays, games, stories that 'work best' with young learners. However, from the literature available it seems that the answer to the above question is far more complex.

In addition to the theories of how children think and learn, which have already been mentioned, many researchers draw upon research aimed at discovering how children acquire their L1 and attempt to draw analogies between L1 and L2/FL acquisition. For example, they claim that children learning L2 in natural environment seem to undergo the same ‘natural’ sequence in language learning as they did in L1 (the silent period, intermediate period and breakthrough) and that there are some universal processing strategies that are used for a language regardless the language learned (see, e.g., Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982). The first strategies used by a child are imitation, repetition, formulaic speech and incorporation (see Tough, 1991:223ff, for discussion). On the basis of this, it is frequently concluded that children learn L2/FL best when the conditions of learning are similar to the natural ones and it is the teachers’ role to use deliberately strategies that parents generally use quite intuitively. Those strategies include (Tough, 1991; Dunn, 1998):

- Concentrating on ‘here and now’—embedding a conversation in what is said and activity that a teacher and children are involved.
- Grammatical modification or simplification of talk—‘teacherese’.
- Repetition, rephrasing, elaboration, reformulation of ill-formed phrases.
- Supporting communication with gestures, facial expression and action.
- Responding to the meaning rather than determination to correct the child’s use of language.
- Attentive listening, encouraging children to talk; frequent interactions with individual children.

Likewise, Ellis (1984) in his attempt to describe what constitutes an ‘optimal learning environment’ has drawn upon the work of Wells (1987) researching the acquisition of English as an L1. He claims that in addition the ‘language acquisition device’ (as proposed by Chomsky in the 1960s), i.e. a biological ‘programme’ for language mastery, the input data are required to trigger the process by which discovers the rules of the target language. In other words biology is insufficient, we need the company of other people and communication with them in order to master the language. He suggested the following features are likely to facilitate L2 development:

- A high quantity of input directed at the learner
- Exposure to the high quantity of directives
- Exposure to the high quantity of ‘extending’ utterances

- The learner's perceived need for communication in the L2
- Adherence to the 'here and now' principle
- Independent control of the propositional content by the learner
- The performance of a range of speech acts
- Opportunities for uninhibited practice

As evident, some of these conditions are very difficult to meet in formal classroom situations, especially at secondary school level at which an FL is taught as a separate subject. In this case the learners' exposure to FL is extremely low in comparison to the normal linguistic environment (McLaughlin, 1977), and also opportunities for engaging students in meaningful and uninhibited practice are rather mediocre. This situation changes dramatically if an FL is used as a vehicle for teaching subject-matter content and not as a sole object of instruction. Content-based instruction in whatever form—partial or full immersion—has several advantages over traditional FL teaching. Let me briefly expand this topic.

2.11.1. Content-based early FL instruction

Regarding language as a medium of learning leads to a cross-curriculum perspective. We have seen that reading specialists contrast learning to read with reading to learn. Writing specialist contrast learning to write with writing to learn. Similarly, language education specialist should distinguish between language learning and using language to learn. Outside the isolated foreign language classroom, students learn language and content at the same time. Helping students use language and content requires us to look beyond the language domain to all subject areas, and to look beyond language learning to education in general. Therefore, we need a broad perspective which integrates language and content learning

Mohan, 1986:18

FL education for young learners has for long used themes of some sort as a vehicle for teaching. It has often drawn content from different sources, such as learners' everyday life, culturally specific themes, etc. In this section, however, I will refer to a specific type of schooling, i.e. the one in which children receive part or all of instruction via the medium of a language they do not know (at least at the beginning). In discussion I will use the term **content-based** instruction to distinguish it from other forms of instruction in which concepts taught in FL classes are only enriched with the content derived from other subjects (content-related FL instruction, embedding, cross-curricular teaching etc., see discussion in 2.2.2). The latter type of instruction is dealt with in the next section.

Though possibly much older in practice, the roots of learning through an FL date back to the 1960s when the first immersion programmes were introduced into kindergartens in Canadian Quebec. The first evaluations of this project and research studies that followed (see, e.g. Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Genesee, 1987; Swain and Lapkin, 1989) clearly demonstrated that teaching and learning for majority language children through the medium of another language is feasible and is beneficial for the students in terms of mastery of both functional French and school subject matter. Not only do students attain higher levels of proficiency in L2 than in any other school-based model of L2 instruction but do so with no detriment to their native language, academic, or cognitive development (see discussion in section 2.3.1). While immersion education has been a characteristically Canadian response to a uniquely Canadian language situation, its lessons are not confined to Canada. There has been and still is a significant interest throughout the world in Canada's accomplishments in this area of L2/FL teaching and learning. In fact, its methods are currently being used in many countries for teaching of French, Spanish, and other languages (see, e.g. Beatens Beardsmore, 1993; Johnson and Swain, 1997; Fruhauf *et al.*, 1996; Masih, 1999).

Various rationales have been put forward to support using an FL as a medium of instruction (see Grabe and Stoller, 1997; for a comprehensive review). At this point I will only concentrate on those that are most relevant to teaching an FL to younger children. Genesee (1998:103-104) lists the following:

1. For young children, language, cognitive and social development go hand-in-hand. Language is a primary vehicle for social and cognitive development during childhood. CBI maintains the integrity of these crucial components of development.
2. Few young learners are motivated to acquire language for its own sake. Foreign/second language instruction that uses meaningful and developmentally appropriate content motivates language learning.
3. Integrating language instruction with authentic content and communication provides critical cognitive and social substrates (sic!) for learning language. Language that is taught in isolation of authentic content and communication is learned as abstraction, devoid of real communicative and cognitive value.

4. Foreign/second language instruction that integrates authentic content, edges and maintains the domain-specific ways in which language is used in real world contexts. In other words, learners in content-based classrooms learn socially and culturally appropriate ways of using the target language.

In addition, two pragmatic reasons are mentioned (Curtain and Martínez, 1990; Met, 1991):

- CBI provides more exposure to FL. If all content subjects are delivered through the medium of an FL, the time spent on using the language increases significantly (in Polish context, it may grow from one to three 45-minute lessons to almost fourteen hours of instruction). On the other hand, in partial immersion, content-based FL classes may give additional time for mastering the content; some issues may be clarified, developed or tackled from a different perspective. Therefore, it addresses concerns about time and achievement and as pointed out by Singleton (1989), exposure time or, in Krashen's words, the minimal amount of comprehensible input.
- Since no extra lesson are added, CBI addresses a common concern that, in order to make a place for FL instruction in the EY curriculum, something else needs to be taken out, and thus achievement in the 'basics' can be jeopardized.

According to Krashen's (1982b, 1985) comprehensible input hypothesis L2/FL is most successfully acquired through extensive exposure to comprehensible input that is at or just above his/her proficiency level; not when the learner is memorising vocabulary or completing grammatical exercises. In Krashen's words, the focus of learning should be on meaning rather than on form; on '*what* is being said rather than on *how*' (Krashen, 1989:59). This suggests that the focus of the language classroom should be on something meaningful, such as academic content, and that modification of the target language facilitates language acquisition and makes academic content accessible to learners.

Based on many large-scale studies of Canadian immersion programmes, Swain (1985, 2000) argues that in order to develop communicative competence, learners must have extended opportunities to use the L2/FL productively. Thus, in addition to receiving comprehensible input, learners must be provided with opportunities to produce comprehensible output. She argues, that learners need to be 'pushed towards the delivery of a message that is (...) conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately' (1985:249). CBI fulfils this requirement since learners are constantly forced to use forms that are

appropriate from the point of view of the language and content. The use, however, is not only a linguistic exercise, but most importantly, it is purposeful and relevant to students' academic life and the input produced is meaningful.

Reassessments of Canadian immersion programmes, have revealed that students in French immersion in Canada, despite many years of L2 French input, develop limited L2 proficiency in the areas of speaking and writing, making numerous errors in their productive use of French (Swain, 1985, 2000; Hammerly, 1989, 1992). This led to a call to avoid a false dichotomy 'form-or-meaning (content)'. Rather, it is argued, content-learning should be supported with explicit focus on relevant and contextually appropriate language forms (*ibid.*).

More recently, sociocultural approaches which draw theoretical support from the work of Vygotsky (see 2.9) have been used to provide strong support for CBI. learners. Three Vygotskian-based concepts—the negotiation of meaning in the Zone of Proximal Development; private speech, and student appropriation of learning tasks—have been brought forward (Grabe and Stoller, 1997:7):

1. It has been argued that learners in CBI classes have many opportunities to negotiate the knowledge that they are learning (rather than simply interact or exchange information) and to extend their knowledge at increasing levels of complexity as more content is incorporated in to the lessons.
2. Students in content-based classrooms have many occasions to engage in private speech while learning language, sorting out input and rehearsing as they interact with more knowledgeable individuals.
3. Students have many chances to develop ways of learning from teachers and peers, thereby appropriating activities, strategies, and content inn ongoing cycles of learning.

A further theoretical justification for CBI is provided follows from Cummins' (1980a, 1981b; Cummins and Swain, 1986) BICS/CALP distinction (see Figure 2-5 and description in section 2.3.3). All too often in traditional language classrooms the tasks are cognitively demanding, but almost completely context-reduced, or vice versa:

Learners are frequently asked to engage in activities in the target language that are cognitively superficial and unchallenging, merely because [they do] not have a proficient grasp of the language, or in tasks that are boring, childish, too simplistic unrelated to their interests and often just insulting to their intelligence.

Williamsⁱⁱ, 1998:86-87

The challenge for elementary FL teachers is to move language practice from the quadrant of context-embedded but cognitively-undemanding tasks to the quadrant in which activities are context-embedded and cognitively demanding. CBI often fulfils this requirement. On the one hand, if the tasks are contextualised and language is supported through the use of simplified language ('teacherese') and paralinguistic or situational cues, such as gestures, facial expressions, props, realia, and visuals, then learners will have access to cognitively demanding work and thus challenge their thinking as well as their linguistic skills. On the other hand, by selecting content-based FL objectives and activities, classroom activities are cognitively demanding, and thus enriching student's cognitive development. In this way, integrated language and content instruction also strengthens the relationship between language and other aspects of human development. Researchers (Mohan, 1986; Snow, Met and Genesee, 1989; Met, 1991; Curtain and Pesola, 1994) emphasise the fact that 'language is thinking' and fostering students' language development, both in their first and second language, develops higher order thinking skills and that 'students may communicate about thoughts, not just words' (Met, 1991:282). Among the most commonly developed thinking skills developed during language and content matter classes are: predicting, hypothesising, remembering, comparing/contrasting, analysing, inferring, decision making, problem solving, and deductive thinking (Met, 1991; Curtain and Pesola, 1994).

The last (but not least) reason for combining content and language is that CBI meets the academic needs of the students. It gives opportunities for formal language work including that which requires the use of language that the student will face in his/her academic life. It provides a rich context for practising the traditional language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, since the emphasis in CBI is on subject matter content, it develops the fifth element – study skills (Snow, 1991). As in the parallel L1 development, children will gradually learn how to use an FL for academic purposes, for example how to extract information from reference books, collect and summarise information in the form of a chart or table, how to self-monitor one's progress, etc. In traditional teaching, these skills are possible taught in the mainstream classes. For example, it is not unusual for students at later stages to struggle with essay organisation when they are supposed to

transfer their writing skills from Polish language arts or use the information learnt in other subjects such as geography or history. In this way, CBI helps to overcome this persistent problem giving students opportunities for a meaningful use of the skills developed and transferring them into real life situations.

Positive as it is, teaching all or part of the curriculum through the medium of an FL is not sufficient without considering other conditions of successful language learning by children. It should be remembered that the same philosophy of child-oriented, holistic teaching is also applicable to CBI no matter whether content subjects are taught in L1 or L2. Little is justification for, for example, teaching science or environmental studies in English if it is going to be detached from the rest of children's school experience. With the overall philosophy of integration presented above it would be undesirable to remove any subject out of it. Thus, it seems advisable that teaching of the two languages is intertwined with each other as well as joined with other subjects. Typical techniques of integrated EY education, such as the Freinet's learning walk, free-writing, class journal and newspaper, cultural packages and school networking (see description of these techniques in Cummings and Sayers, 1995; ICEM, 2000), have very good rationale if used to foster proficiency in both languages.

What seems most practical, therefore, in the Polish setting is to advocate various forms of partial immersion or content enriched FL instruction. The teacher may for example decide to teach a part of curriculum, for example Arts, Music or PE entirely in an FL and make cross-curricular links to 'basics', and at the same time, preserve a time (e.g. an 'English hour') during which s/he will directly focus on the language. Such a solution is advisable in the light of what I have said earlier (see 2.3.1.) that immersion students achieve high proficiency in L2, yet they lack linguistic accuracy, and at some point they will need a more direct instruction on certain aspects of L2. It is also justified by the fact that a monolingual environment in Poland makes total immersion programmes highly difficult to implement. Some parents would object to a total absence of instruction in the mother tongue in the first years of school education, despite compelling research evidence showing no detrimental effect of CBI on child's L1. Others would possibly be afraid (again, conversely to the evidence from immersion programmes) that teaching subject-matter content entirely in L2, especially in the basic disciplines such as Mathematics or Science, will have a negative impact on students' performance in these subjects. The fact remains that a common problem in immersion is that at least initially students lag behind in

subject-matter learning, which may be problematic in the case of student withdrawal from the content-based FL programme and transferring to a Polish-medium class.

Whatever form early FL instruction takes, one has to remember that FL teachers' classroom practice will depend on external factors such as course planning and funding, or course coordination and articulation across levels of instruction and a good liaison between primary and secondary school, already highlighted in section 2.1.4. If, for example, a school decides to launch a partial immersion programme at EY level, it should also encourage CBI instruction in graded 4-6 of elementary school and make a liaison with middle and secondary schools so as to assure continuity. This seems particularly important since there are quite a few well-established bilingual secondary schools in Poland, yet so far few attempts have been made to extend this offering to primary or pre-school education, which as already pointed out seem much better placed to deliver subject-matter content via an FL.

Finally, promoting content-based instruction as a desirable model of instruction in EY education in Poland has far reaching implications for the present thesis. As argued, 'the professional development needs of immersion teachers are particularly important given the dual challenges of teaching a second language and teaching the subject matter through this language (Day and Shapson, 1996:117). As to this date, however, there are no professional development courses targeting this group of teachers in Poland. Neither EY nor FL teacher preparation courses provide instructional methodology in how, for example, to plan content-based activities through which FL skills can be acquired and practised (see discussion in Met, 1991); how language-learning objectives and content-learning objectives should be integrated (for conceptual framework see Snow, Met and Genessee, 1989); or how in accordance with Cummins' paradigm. Therefore, even though, as argued in this section, CBI is highly supported by both L2 acquisition theory, insights from psycholinguistics, and overall philosophy of EY education, lack of teachers may be the major hindering factor in its popularisation. I will elaborate on CBI teachers' professional needs in Part Four.

2.11.2. Content-related early FL instruction

Using an FL as the medium of instruction in other subjects is not the only possible option. Early FL teaching may also be successful if taught as a separate subject. Yet even in such a case, precisely because of the nature of child development and the way s/he acquired the

language, FL teaching should be linked (embedded) with other content areas. Widdowson, for example, as early as 1978, claimed relating FLs to other areas of the curriculum is the only certain means of language teaching as communication. He also recognised the importance of linking of FL teaching with students' everyday experience. This is particularly true for young learners for whom the school experience is totally new and who often have problems with absorbing so many new ideas, concepts, and information. In this sense, the FL learning

comes to make 'human sense' to young children. In particular, class teacher can normalize the foreign language by using it for ordinary everyday events and by bringing it into other subjects of the primary curriculum.

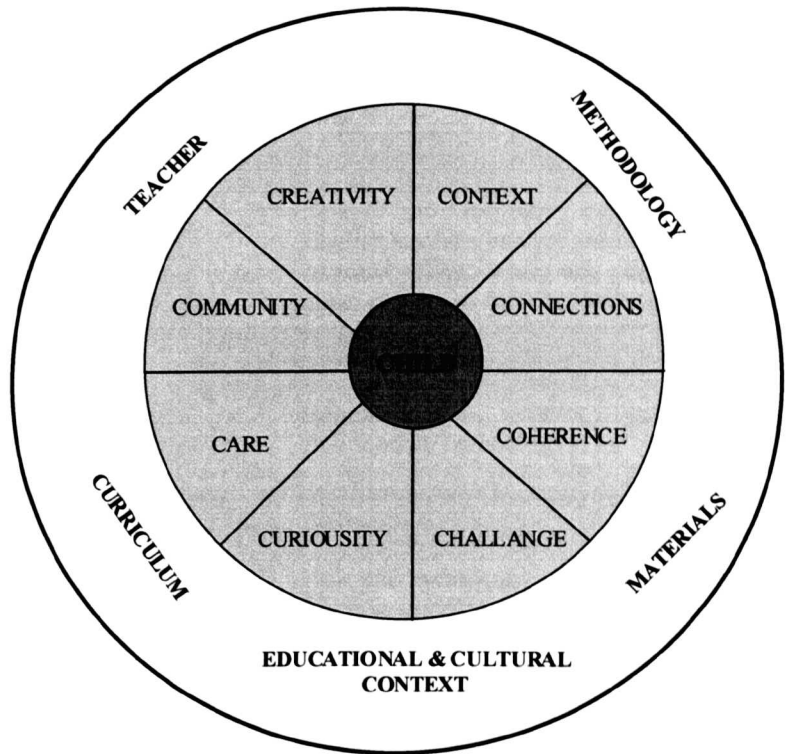
Sharpe, 2001:143

Similarly various researchers (Burden and Williams, 1993; Williamsⁱ, 1998; Read, 1999) argue that early FL teaching should foster 'whole learning' for children, quite similar in its principles to the Integrated EY Education propagated in Poland. (see 2.10).

Read (1999), for example, has offered a 'C-wheel' model illustrating how various factors contribute to such learning (Figure 2-11). The first factor is the **context** in which learning takes place. She cites Margaret Donaldson saying that children pay less attention to the linguistic form than to a whole situation they find themselves in. Therefore the learning context needs to be natural, understandable, allow for discovery and construction of meaning, as well as for active and experiential learning. Secondly, learning is made whole when we build **connections** between other areas of the curriculum, things that have and are to be learnt, and child's real life experiences. This is related to the third factor emphasising the **coherence**, patterns and interdependence among various chunks learnt. We also help learning whole when we set the level of **challenge** right for children. Tasks should be neither too easy since this causes boredom and demotivates children to learn, nor should they be too difficult for it may result in anxiety and frustration. Positive environment is also the one in which children are challenged not only to do things but also to think. Their natural **curiosity** to learn about things is fostered by interesting and enjoyable tasks. The whole learning is also full of **care** for children individual needs. It also recognises children's need for social interaction. A sense of **community** in the classroom is built by shared experiences and events, encouraging the children to cooperate, help and respect each other, and by fostering interaction with a wider social environment. Whole learning is the one in which children's **creative** thinking skills are developed. Finally, at the edge of the wheel Read has placed all various factors, such as educational and cultural context,

methodology, materials, the curriculum and the teacher, provide framework and shape the learning environment in which early FL takes place.

Figure 2-11 Principles of whole learning: Read's 'C' wheel



SOURCE: Read (1999:39)

Unlike in CBI, the 'content' in an embedded model is not limited to subject-matter content derived from the core curriculum at a given level, but may denote general communicative purposes for which speakers use an L2/FL, such as 'At a shop' or 'Making a kite'. Alternatively, teachers working within an embedded model find points of coincidence with the standard school curriculum, not necessarily at a given level. According to Brown and Brown (1996), these overlaps between FL and subject teaching may involve sharing the resources, topics, skills, strategies or issues (see Figure 2-12) and are similar to points of coincidence in EY curriculum offered in Cackowska (1992) and Misiorna (1999) described in section 2.10.

Figure 2-12 Points of coincidence between FL teaching and teaching of other school subjects

RESOURCES	where resources are shared by different departments	
	e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language teachers use source materials on the French revolution from the history department; Humanities and PSE teachers work with French newspaper articles from the language department on contemporary issues, such as the presidential elections or nuclear testing in the Pacific.
TOPICS	where two or more departments cover the same topic area	
	e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science and Geography departments cover the water cycle, English teachers analyse media coverage of droughts or floods or water-related issues and pupils in modern languages learn about climate or drinking water on a campsite.
SKILLS	Where the focus is on learning skills across the curriculum	
	e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication, numeracy, personal and social skills and Information Technology (IT).
STRATEGIES	Where teaching and learning strategies from different curriculum areas can be shared	
	e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Role play techniques in drama and languages; Using a timeline to develop sequencing activities in Science and English.
ISSUES	Where different curriculum areas share a concern to raise awareness of social and cultural issues	
	e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social justice in PSE and Religious Education (RE), race and gender issues across the curriculum.

SOURCE: Brown and Brown, 1996:3

By the same token, various experts in the field (Holden, 1980, 1988; Holden and Rixon, 1986; Boardman and Holden, 1987b, 1987c; Scott and Ytreberg, 1990; Ellis and Brewster, 1991; Halliwell, 1992; Phillips, 1993; Curtain and Pesola, 1994; Dunn, 1998; House, 1997; Reilly and Ward, 1997; Wright, 1997; MacNaughton and Williams¹, 1998; Moon, 2000) have put forward a set of methodological principles that should be applied when working with children:

- The teacher should involve pupils in meaningful and purposeful activities and allow children to be active participants in the learning process.
- Activities should be designed to enable learners to encounter challenges and risk taking on the one hand, and support and foster growing independence and autonomy of learners on the other.
- Grammar should be taught inductively through pictures and 'realia' objects and classroom surrounding, to enable children to make full sense of the things they learn.

- The early FL teaching should make excessive use of songs, rhymes, games and drama activities to promote memory work, and most activities involve movement and using senses.
- A teacher is encouraged to avoid routine and boredom in teaching, though s/he should take advantage of a 'class routine'—have the children know the rules and situations, repeat the games, songs or rhymes that are already familiar.
- A teacher should promote cooperation between the students and use competition wisely.
- Parents should be engaged in the progress of their children.
- Variety is a must—variety of activities, of pace, of student groupings and of class organisation.

Similarly, Burden and Williams (1993) have unidentified twelve ways in which a teacher can mediate in order to provide young learners with the most beneficial learning experiences:

1. **Intention** — The teacher should make his/her intention clear in presenting any task to the learners and make sure that the learners understood precisely what is required from them, and that they are able and willing to attempt it.
2. **Significance** — The teacher needs to make listeners aware of the significance of the task to them.
3. **Purpose beyond the here and now** — The teacher should make sure that any learning experience produces learning which beyond the learning or behaviour required by the task itself, that is, the child should learn something of more general value as well.
4. **A sense of competence** — It is the teacher's responsibility to develop in learners a positive self-image and a feeling of confidence, and to establish in their classroom a climate free of embarrassment and fear; where pupils' ideas and contributions are valued; and where activities lead to success, not failure.
5. **Control and behaviour** — The teacher needs to teach children to take a logical and systematic approach to solving problems.
6. **Goal setting** — The teacher needs to teach learners how to control their behaviour, set realistic goals, and how to plan ways of achieving them.
7. **Challenge** — Teachers needs to encourage in learners an integral need to respond to challenges, and to search for new challenges in life.
8. **Awareness of change** — The teacher should develop in their learners an ability to recognise, monitor and assess the changes in themselves as they learn.
9. **The belief in optimistic alternatives** — The teacher must encourage in learners the belief that even when faced with what appears to be an intractable problem, there is always the possibility of finding a solution.

10. **Encouraging sharing** — The teacher needs to encourage sharing behaviour by setting up tasks where cooperation is essential.
11. **Individuality** — at the same time, the teacher needs to encourage the development of individuality by making it clear that what the child brings to the class, and the opinion expressed are valued.
12. **Belonging** — The teacher should set up language activities that foster a sense of belonging to a group.

Such a learning environment is in close agreement with the theories of how children learn and think, already referred to. For example, making learning an interactive process and engaging children in collaborative talk and negotiating meaning mirror Piaget's, Vygotsky's and Bruner's theories. Many of the principles are also congruent with the central tenants of what constitutes good EY education practice discussed in the previous section.

Figure 2-13 (overleaf) provides further comparison of good mainstream primary practice and the recent developments in teaching FL to young learners. It seems that they are both based on the global approach to teaching, which aims at fostering the development of the whole child. Both emphasise learner-centredness and providing a supportive, non-threatening, and enjoyable learning environment. Both view language as integrated with the rest of mainstream curriculum. The model of the language does not rely on sets of structures, vocabulary, functions and skills to be acquired, but is oriented to topics and concepts. Tasks and classroom activities are designed to foster children's active participation in the learning process, engage them in challenge and risk taking while using the language creatively.

Therefore it may be argued that early FL practice shares more features with good EY mainstream practice than with classical FL teaching (see Brewster, 1991). More than that, elementary school classroom seems far more suitable for teaching FL for communication. As described by Sharpe (1999:178):

Hawkins (1987) has characterised the secondary situation, where the work of MFL [modern foreign language] teachers is isolated teaching periods is all too frequently deluged by all the other curriculum experiences delivered thorough the medium of the mother tongue, as 'gardening in a gale'. The image of delicate MFL seedlings swept away by a whirlwind of English need not be the picture in primary schools. Here the MFL can be integrated into the pupils' whole school and classroom experience, it can be valued and used as a real means of communication throughout the day, the week, the year, through both key stages.

Figure 2-13 Comparison of good primary and early FL practices

MAINSTREAM EY PRACTICE		EARLY FL TEACHING PRACTICE
Syllabus	Syllabus derived from topics and concepts; theme teaching, 'thematic blocks'	Use of projects and theme-based language work. Cyclical syllabus rather than linear allowing for plenty of practice and revision.
Methodology	Topics used to promote activity-based learning, including surveys, investigation and problem-solving, often involving small group work.	Development of task-based methodologies, teaching across the curriculum, content teaching. Using content and materials from other mainstream subjects and providing content and materials via the use of English. Using 'learning by doing' approaches, the project teaching approach, the Total Physical Response method, total immersion and natural approach to language learning. Use of pair and group work for surveys and problem-solving.
Language and Learning	Pupils' spoken and written products, e.g. written and taped stories, plays, instructions, pictures, provide the input for other pupils to work with. Display of children's work considered important for motivation.	Production of materials by learners with an audience other than the teacher, e.g. fellow pupils, pupils in other classes, pupils in other countries (e.g. Parcel of English project ³⁹). Increasing use of e.g. poster presentation, class magazines, 'an English corner' in the classroom.
Learner	Child-centred approach led to holistic view of the child's education, including a concern for creativity and self-expression through music, drama and art. Children treated as agents of their own learning, leading to promotion of independent learning, use of self-access places.	Interest in learner-centred curriculum and humanistic approaches. Use of roleplay, jazz chants. Development of learner-training (learning how to learn), development of procedural syllabus.
Teacher	Experiments in classroom practice led to the change of teacher's roles to include facilitator, prompter, counsellor, monitor, etc.	Growing interest in range in a variety of teacher's roles and teaching styles performed in the classroom.
Cultural	Child-centred approach led to a concern with cultural appropriacy and development of 'multi-cultural' education in its best sense, e.g. avoidance of tokenism or stereotypes.	Developing recognition of cultural issues in planning context-sensitive materials, training courses, etc.

SOURCE: adapted from Brewster, 1991:11, with some additions from Cackowska, 1994; Hanisz, 1995.

2.12. Conclusions and implications

- Optimal early FL practice is the one that is informed by strong theory and research evidence from psychology, second language acquisition theories, linguistics, and early childhood pedagogy. In order to be successful FL teachers have to consider both the abilities and characteristics of their young learners, what are the optimal conditions for their learning, but also a more general framework in which to work. This means that early FL practice has to fit into a local educational philosophy. In the Polish context this denotes an agreement with the current integrated EY education, with its child-centred curriculum and methodology, topic-based approach, and flexible timetable. What would be most advisable if L1 and L2 are used as medium of instruction with certain time devoted to a more directed instruction and skills development in, say Polish and English. In such a case it would be most practical that a classteacher is at the same time a FL teacher, too.
- Yet even if an FL is taught by a separate FL teacher, because of the specificity of teaching to young learners, i.e. that the language has to be linked with overall education that children receive, s/he has to be familiar with the mainstream curriculum, too. In this way I would argue that s/he has to be trained differently than their colleagues teaching FL to older learners.

I will now focus specifically on the type of training that the teachers involved in teaching FL to young children need, both for content-based classrooms and teaching an FL as a specific subject.

³⁹ The *Parcel of English* project was devised by the authors of *Cambridge English for Polish Schools* (Littlejohn, Hicks and Szwaj, 1997) to make learning more realistic and purposeful.

PART 4 The 'WHO' issues

In this section I am addressing the problem of who should teach an FL at EY level and what are the professional development needs of these teachers. I analyse how education authorities in selected European countries⁴⁰ attempt to cope with teacher supply for early FL teaching. I also overview the 'generalist' or 'specialist' debate, namely who is better suited to teach the FL at EY level: a specialist FL teacher who visits the class to teach the FL or their own generalist classteacher. Then, two aspects related to the issue of how FL teachers of young learners (FLTYLs) should be trained are dealt with: 1) **what** expertise these teachers need, bearing in mind the specificity and diversity of knowledge and skills that various early FL programmes require; 2) **how** FLTYLs acquire their professional expertise. This chapter is closed by a discussion of the literature related to the question of where the training should take place, and what role teacher trainers and teacher training institutions play in designing and delivering FLTYL training programmes.

Needs

Throughout the chapter I often refer to 'needs' *for* teachers (i.e. school staffing needs) and 'needs' *of* the teachers (i.e. FLTYL professional development needs), thus, it is useful to define the concept of 'needs' in the literature.

Both in English and Polish the term need/s (*potrzeba/potrzeby*) encompasses three lexical meanings⁴¹:

1. Something required or wanted; a condition in which something essential is required or wanted; necessity; obligation, a must: *Help yourself to stationery as the need arises. I don't think there's any need for all of us to attend the meeting.*
2. The state of having to have something that you do not have, especially something that you must have so that you can have a satisfactory life: *her emotional and spiritual needs are being met; a need for affection*

⁴⁰ Limited scope of the present thesis does not permit description of staffing arrangements in other countries. For description for the USA, see Rhodes and Branaman (1999).

⁴¹ *Słownik Języka Polskiego* (CD-ROM v.1.0, 2004, s.v. 'potrzeba'), *The American Heritage Dictionary* (CD-ROM v. 3.6a, 1994, s.v. 'need')

3. A lack of something required or desirable; a condition of poverty or misfortune e.g.

The family is in dire need.

The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (1983) defines the term as ‘a condition marked by the feeling of lack or want of something, or of requiring the performance of some action’. Psychologists often differentiate ‘needs’ from ‘drives’ (*potrzeba* vs. *popęd*). Needs are physiological (internal) or environmental (external) imbalances that give rise to drives, i.e. any strong stimulus or motive that impels an individual to respond or act (Silverman, 1971). Both concepts provide a framework for the analysis of motivation, seen in terms of the ‘press’, i.e. the urge, to release the tension and satisfy the needs. At this point, frequent reference is made to two early theories: 1) Abraham Maslow’s hierarchical model of human needs (ranging from physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, to self-actualisation needs), and 2) Carl Roger’s concepts of the ‘need for positive regard’ and the ‘need for self-actualisation’ (Hayes, 1998:321ff)⁴². In current research on human motivation the concept of a ‘need’ has been replaced by the more specific construct of a ‘goal’, which is seen ‘as the “engine” to fire the action and provide the direction in which to act’ (Dörnyei, 2001:25).

The concept of ‘learner needs’ and ‘needs analysis’ became leitmotifs of new approaches to syllabus designs which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Proponents of such approaches argued that ‘the content of language courses should primarily reflect the purposes for which the students were learning the language’ (Nunan, 1999b: 148). In Nunan’s words (*ibid.*), rather than fitting students to courses, courses should be designed to fit students. This process of ‘course fitting’ is mostly based on the analysis of various students’ needs through a range of instruments and techniques available. A distinction is often drawn between ‘objective’ (those that can be diagnosed by teachers on the basis of the analysis students’ language proficiency and patterns use) vs. ‘subjective’ needs, i.e. those which are often wants, desires, expectations, or other psychological manifestations of a lack (Brindley, 1984, cited in Nunan, 1999b). Another useful division is made between ‘content’ needs (topics, grammar, functions, vocabulary, knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc.) and ‘process’ needs (the selection and sequencing of learning tasks and experiences). Researchers also differentiate between ‘initial’ (before the course) and ‘ongoing’ (once a course has begun) needs of the learners (*ibid.*). In the same way as motivation for some

⁴² On current theories of motivation see, e.g. Williams and Burden (1997), Dörnyei (2001).

action may be overt (open) or covert (hidden), a person may her/himself unaware of certain needs. Though we are mostly aware of our needs when we lack fulfillment of them (i.e. when we are in a state of deprivation), when a need is not so acute or immediate, we may be well not cognizant of it (Silverman, 1971)

In a way, the present study is such need-based course design, which attempts at specifying various components and process options of FLTYL training courses. These are analysed, for example, from the perspective of the 'needs' of pupils, parents, and headteachers, defined as the imbalance between that FL learning or FL teacher they have and they would like to have. Similarly, the focus is also on what clients of FLTYL training courses (current and prospective FLTYLs) 'need', i.e. what they 'lack, want or desire' and what they might contribute to the course (e.g. prior experiences, attitudes, and expectations). In the same way as motivation for some action may be overt (open) or covert (hidden) (Silverman, 1971), I expect that a person may her/himself unaware of certain needs. Though we are mostly aware of our needs when we lack fulfillment of them (i.e. when we are in a state of deprivation), when a need is not so acute or immediate, we may be well not cognizant of it.

2.13. Staffing for early FL teaching: An overview of practices in selected countries

Theodore Andersson, one of the greatest advocates of early FL teaching in the USA, was disappointed with the decline of FLES movement after its heyday in the 1960s. In 1969, he wrote:

The greatest single obstacle to the growth of the FLES [Foreign Languages in the Elementary School] movement is the shortage of qualified teachers. (...) The deficiency is both quantitative and qualitative: there are not enough teachers and too many of those who teach are not fully qualified.

Andersson, 1969:170

However, as argued by Pesola Dahlberg (1998), these words could have been well written at the end of the 1990s since securing teachers for primary level FL education still poses a great problem in the USA. Also in Europe, combating acute shortages in FLTYLs has been the problem many countries had to face.

In the majority of European countries, all subjects at primary level are traditionally taught by a single classteacher. There is a growing trend for certain subjects, such as music, physical education and, increasingly, foreign languages, to replace these generalist teachers

by specialist teachers (EURYDICE, 2001a). In countries with an older tradition of early FL teaching (e.g. Luxembourg, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway), the relevant teaching skills have for a long time been included in training of primary school teachers. Such teachers have themselves acquired command of an FL (generally English) during their compulsory and upper secondary education and often consolidated their knowledge during teacher training (ibid.).

When countries new to language teaching at primary level revised their minimum curricula during the 1990s and started to offer early FL teaching; their generalist teachers typically lacked the special skills required. Some of these countries (France, Scotland) sought to remedy this through special in-service training designed to equip classteachers with the necessary linguistic and teaching skills. Others started to recruit specialist teachers originally trained for work at secondary level. This was the preferred strategy of the central and eastern European countries (Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Bulgaria), which faced the additional problem of providing instruction in a whole new range of FLs since Russian lost its dominant position. Now, at a time of integration with the European Union, these nations are seeking to improve their skills in the languages of their new partner countries. In order to combat the acute shortage of language teachers, many of them have started to recruit anyone with sufficient knowledge of the language and minimum qualifications in language teaching. Despite these actions, the problem of securing adequately trained FL staff is still severe (Moon and Nikolov, 2000; Nikolov and Curtain, 2000). For example, in the Czech Republic 76% of basic (elementary) school teachers in 1996/97 were unqualified and 57.1% of them had no official qualifications to teach an FL whatsoever (Faklova, 2000). In Hungary, 64% of primary school language teachers were Russian retrainees and often lacked the necessary language skills (Nikolov, 2000b).

Types of teachers involved in early FL provision

As regards the type of teachers to whom FL teaching to young learners can entrusted, the different alternatives followed in different countries included (Dickinson and Cumming, 1996; Rixon, 2000; Moon and Nikolov, 2000; Nikolov and Curtain, 2000; EURYDICE, 2001a):

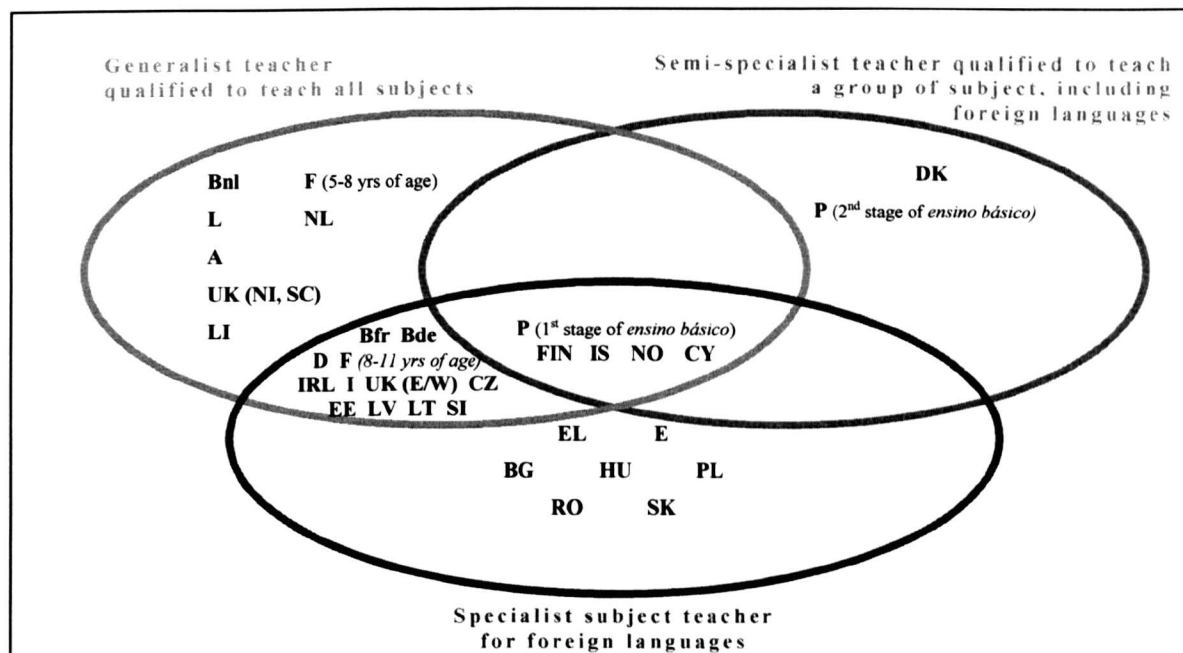
- **Primary (EY) trained teachers:** with or without FL qualifications; qualifications obtained a priori or in the course of FL teaching.
- **FL specialists:** with or without training for teaching young learners; visiting secondary school specialist or purposefully trained for early FL teaching.

- **Native speakers:** primary trained teachers, language teachers (e.g. TESOL/TEFL qualifications) or no teaching qualifications .
- **Staff with no formal qualifications:** 6th formers, university FL students, parents.

Taking into account only those FL teachers who possessed some professional qualifications to teach at primary level, three types of teachers are most widespread in Europe (EURYDICE, 2001a):

- **Generalist teacher (classteacher):** a teacher qualified to teach all subjects in the curriculum, including FLs;
- **Semi-specialist teacher:** a teacher qualified to teach a group of subjects including FLs; s/he may be in charge of FLs exclusively or several other subjects as well;
- **Specialist subject teacher:** a teacher qualified to teach one or several FLs.

Figure 2-14 Types of FL teacher at primary level in Europe (1998/99 school year)



Country codes

A = Austria; Bfr = Belgium – French Community; Bde = Belgium – German-speaking Community; Bnl = Belgium – Flemish Community; BG = Bulgaria; CY = Cyprus; CZ = Czech Republic; D = Germany; DK = Denmark; E = Spain; EW = England and Wales; EE = Estonia; EL = Greece; F = France; FIN = Finland; HU = Hungary; I = Italy; IRL = Ireland; IS = Iceland; L = Luxembourg; LI = Liechtenstein; LT = Lithuania; LV = Latvia; NI = Northern Ireland; NL = Netherlands; NO = Norway; P = Portugal; PL = Poland; RO = Romania; S = Sweden; SC = Scotland; SI = Slovenia; SK = Slovakia; UK = United Kingdom

Additional notes

Belgium (Bfr): Foreign language specialist teachers trained for lower secondary education are the most commonly encountered in primary education. However, a minority group consists of primary school teachers who hold a certificate testifying to an advanced level of proficiency in the foreign language concerned. This certificate is issued outside traditional teacher training and involves passing an examination organised by a state board of examiners.

Denmark: The semi-specialist teacher is qualified to teach pupils in any year of the single structure (*folkeskole*).

Iceland: Generalist teachers are the most common, but all three types are encountered. Teachers who are qualified to teach at upper secondary level are also entitled to teach in compulsory education from the earliest years onwards. When such teachers are recruited for compulsory education, they are in most cases responsible for teaching pupils in the last three years of the single structure (*grunnskóli*).

Norway: Responsibility for teaching foreign languages throughout the single structure (*grunnskole*) lies with a generalist or semi-specialist teacher. However, a specialist teacher is also eligible to teach foreign languages in the second stage of *grunnskole*.

Slovakia: As foreign languages are not compulsory during the first four years of the single structure, only teachers of classes involved in the provision of intensive foreign language courses are shown in this Figure.

SOURCE: EURYDICE: 2000:115

As shown in Figure 2-14 (above), in 1998/99, when the present research commenced, the number of EU member states and pre-accession countries employing generalist teachers roughly equalled the number of those using specialist language teachers, while the majority of countries made use of both. In countries where primary level schooling is divided into two sections, the choice of one or the other type of teacher depended on the stage where FL was taught, with generalist teachers being preferred in early years of schooling.

As I will argue below (section 2.13), both staffing arrangements have their strengths and limitations, however, as a result of some positive experiences gained from the employment of specialist FL teachers, many educational authorities have been convinced that the use of this type of staff on a larger scale. 'Countries thus started training specialists for this level who, in addition to their language specialization, were experts in the teaching methodology for the corresponding age-group' (EURYDICE, 2001b:17).

Selection and recruitment of FLTYLs

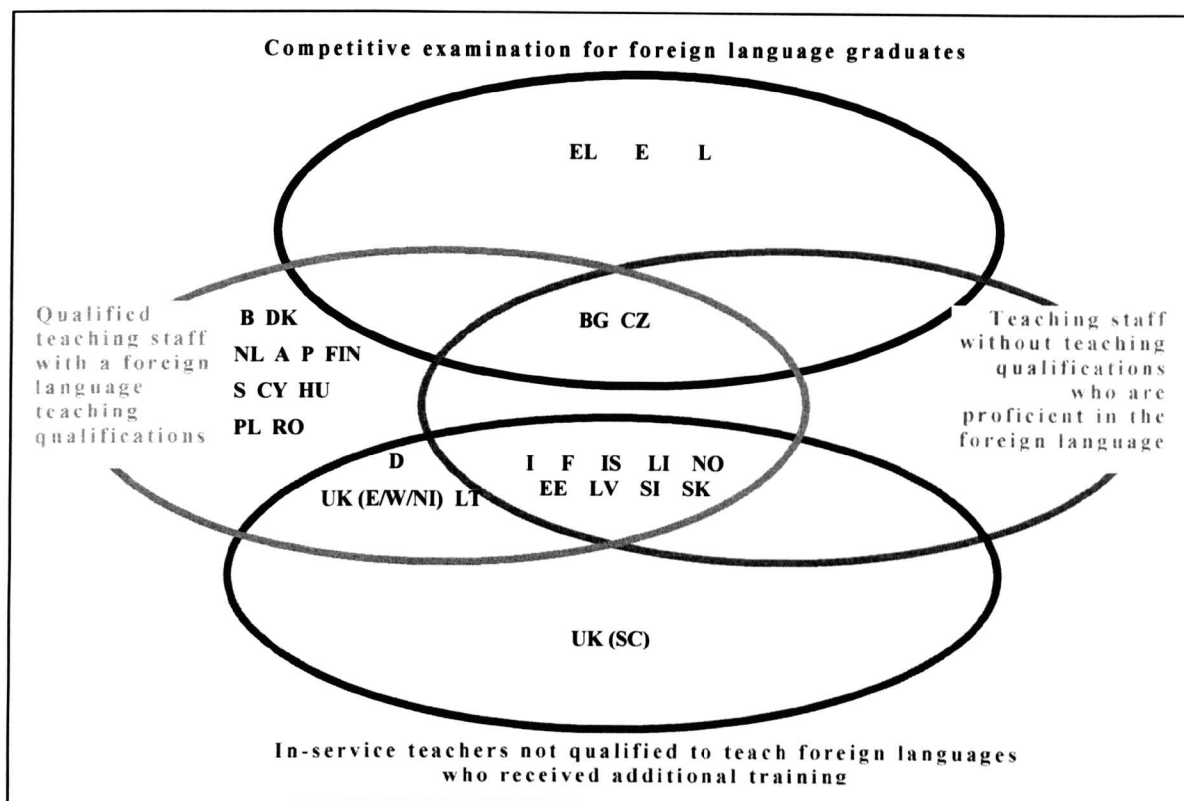
As far as access to the profession of teaching FL at primary level is concerned, several alternatives coexist in Europe (EURYDICE, 2001a):

1. Recruitment based on applicant's qualifications providing evidence of their FL proficiency.
2. Recruitment based on competitive examination.
3. Supplementary in-service training for primary level teachers who did not receive initial training in foreign languages.
4. Recruiting teaching staff without formal teaching qualifications who are proficient in the foreign language.

As shown in Figure 2-15 (overleaf), several countries implement diversified recruitment policies and several solutions coexist.

Generally speaking, the approach frequently adopted is that the younger the students to be taught, the fewer years of preparation and the lower qualifications are required from teachers (Pachociński, 1994). Thus, teachers of pre-school and primary school are often trained in various sorts of post-secondary institutions, while teachers of secondary schools are required to be university graduates. Figure 2-16 (overleaf) offers a general picture of the types of institutions responsible for initial teacher training of FL teachers and types of teachers in charge of FL teaching at primary level.

Figure 2-15 Recruitment or selection methods for FL teachers at primary level in Europe (1998/99 school year)



Country codes

A= Austria; Bfr = Belgium – French Community, Bde = Belgium – German-speaking Community; Bnl = Belgium – Flemish Community; BG = Bulgaria; CY = Cyprus; CZ= Czech Republic; D = Germany; DK = Denmark; E = Spain; E/W = England and Wales; EE = Estonia; EL =Greece; F = France; FIN = Finland; HU = Hungary; I = Italy; IRL = Ireland; IS =Iceland; L = Luxembourg; LI = Liechtenstein; LT = Lithuania; LV = Latvia; NI = Northern Ireland; NL = Netherlands; NO = Norway; P = Portugal; PL = Poland; RO =Romania; S = Sweden; SC = Scotland; SI = Slovenia; SK = Slovakia; UK = United Kingdom

Explanatory note

In the case of supplementary in-service training, recruitment or selection refers to entrusting foreign language teaching to staff who have followed such training.

Additional note

Ireland: does not appear in this Figure, owing to the fact that generalist teachers participating in the pilot project implemented as of school year1998/99 do not hold qualifications for foreign language teaching.

SOURCE: EURYDICE: 2000:121

One has, however, to bear in mind that the figure depicts the general situation in the area of FL primary teacher certification in a given country. It can be argued that few European countries have come up with ‘tailor-made’ courses aimed specifically at prospective FL teachers of young learners. Besides, there is not always clarity about qualifications and competency that a FL teacher of children should possess and there is no agreement which institutions should train FLTYL. In Scotland for example, the model of a visiting secondary school teacher working alongside the primary classteacher seems to work quite well (Johnstone, 1996). Yet, in countries like Italy, due to the differences in training and prestige, smooth cooperation between primary and lower- or upper-secondary school teachers is not always possible (Finocchiaro, 1987; Bonzano, 1988; Rixon, 1987). Primary school teachers in Italy are recruited from courses provided by *insituto magistrale*, a post-

secondary school, while foreign language specialists are trained at the universities. The curriculum and goals of those courses are significantly different (i.e. foreign language courses are not primarily aimed at teacher development—they are linguistic, literature and language proficiency oriented courses) and combining these two is not always an easy task. Still another approach was developed in Finland, where all teachers are trained at the university level and foreign language specialisation can constitute a ‘minor’ subject. An interesting addition to the existing teacher offerings is the establishment of an MEd International Programme (e.g. at the University of Oulu) aiming at teachers working in multicultural and multilingual contexts. Yet, it is only possible in the country where the majority of students possess sufficient language prior to entering a university. Thus, the teacher training courses emphasise the development of the pedagogical and methodological skills of a teacher rather than the development of language skills. I will elaborate further on various constituents of FLTYL preparation in section 2.14.

Figure 2-16 The distribution of different European countries according to the type of institution where FL teachers are trained

TYPES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS AT PRIMARY LEVEL	TRAINING INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR INITIAL TRAINING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS AT PRIMARY LEVEL		
	Teacher training institute (university and non-university level)	Language faculty or other faculties (university level)	Both alternatives coexist
Generalist teacher	B de, B nl, F (ages 5-11), L, IRL, I, NL, A, S, UK (SC), LI, NO (throughout <i>grunnskole</i>)	D, FIN, UK (E/W/NI), CZ, CY	P (1st stage of <i>ensino básico</i>), IS, EE, LV, LT, S
Semi-specialist teacher	DK	FIN	P (1st and 2nd stage of <i>ensino básico</i>) IS, NO (throughout <i>grunnskole</i>)
Specialist subject teacher	B fr, B de, E, IRL, I	D, EL, F (ages 8-11), P (1st stage of <i>ensino básico</i>), FIN, IS, NO (2nd stage of <i>grunnskole</i>) BG, CZ, CY, RO	UK (E/W), EE, LV, LT, HU, PL, SI, SK

Country codes
A= Austria; Bfr = Belgium – French Community; Bde = Belgium – German-speaking Community; Bnl = Belgium – Flemish Community; BG = Bulgaria; CY = Cyprus; CZ= Czech Republic; D = Germany; DK = Denmark; E = Spain; E/W = England and Wales; EE = Estonia; EL =Greece; F = France; FIN = Finland; HU = Hungary; I = Italy; IRL = Ireland; IS =Iceland; L = Luxembourg; LI = Liechtenstein; LT = Lithuania; LV = Latvia; NI = Northern Ireland; NL = Netherlands; NO = Norway; P = Portugal; PL = Poland; RO =Romania; S = Sweden; SC = Scotland; SI = Slovenia; SK = Slovakia; UK = United Kingdom

SOURCE: EURYDICE: 2000:123

Another popular alternative, at least for teachers of English, is to qualify in primary education in their own country and take one of the TEFL or TESOL courses and certifications. Recently, a bunch of the new pilot courses have been offered in specifically in teaching of English to young learners. These options include:

- **Postgraduate courses**, e.g. MEd in TESOL for Young Learners (Leeds); MA in English Language Teaching Young Learners (Warwick, York).
- **The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate examinations**, such as the Certificate in English Language Teaching to Young Learners; Diploma in English Language Teaching to Young Learners; Certificate in Endorsement in English Language Teaching to Young Learners.
- **Certificate in the Teaching of English to Young Learners** (Trinity College, London) – offered only in the Centre for Training Teachers of English in Portugal.
- **Intensive summer courses in Teaching English to Young Learners** – IALA, University of Edinburgh; the University of Strathclyde; the Chichester College, the University of Southampton; International House, Hastings.

Those courses aim at the improvement of the language skills and contain a substantial and appropriate methodological component. Frequently, the entry requirement for candidates is to hold a licence to teach recognised by the authorities of their own countries, or the country where they intend to practise and they are intended for already practising teachers.

As for the teachers of other languages, such as French and German, there does not seem to be much training offer directed at them. Only recently the University of Nottingham has set up a variety of innovative teacher education programmes for so called European BILD (bilingual integration of languages and disciplines) project. Namely, this includes the joint diploma courses for France and the UK (Maitrise-PGCE), Austria and the UK (HSQA-PGCE) and a bilingual teacher education programme to train teachers of Geography, History and Science to teach through the medium of French and German. Unfortunately, these offerings aim at secondary school teachers, and possibly a similar programme for primary PGCE students will be developed in the future. Yet, as indicated by Sharpe (1999) the problem with initial teacher training for example in Scotland is that teachers are allowed to specialise only in these subjects that are part of the National Curriculum. Therefore, it seems to be a vicious circle since early FL programmes are not offered more widely precisely because the staff shortage is the hindering factor.

Still another issue is that in a number of countries inadequate thought and scarce financial resources have been allocated to the training of teachers to undertake the task (Boardman and Holden, 1987d; Sharpe, 1999). It is all too often a case of merely adding this new duty to the existing responsibilities of the primary teachers, not all of whom are sufficiently proficient in a FL or in the methodology of FL teaching to manage to cope.

2.14. Specialist vs. generalist debate

The issue of who is better placed for delivering an FL in the early years classrooms, especially in contexts where FLs are delivered to pupils as a part of the whole curriculum offered within elementary school – an FL specialist or the children’s own generalist classteacher – is another recurrent theme. A typical feature of the specialist teacher is that s/he often has expert knowledge of the subject being taught. The distinctive characteristic of the generalist is that they have a thorough knowledge of the class being taught. As for other advantages and disadvantages of the specialist FL teacher, Sharpe (2001:109) lists the following:

1. SPECIALIST TEACHER

advantages

- excellent expert linguistic role model
- correct pronunciation and intonation are taught
- ability to use the target language spontaneously
- possessing knowledge of the linguistic and cultural context
- ability to plan lessons in the context of full knowledge of the target language

disadvantages

- variability in pedagogic expertise
- outsider status fragmented teacher—pupil relationships
- inability to integrate the fl into the whole curriculum or embed it into pupil experience

2. GENERALIST TEACHER

advantages

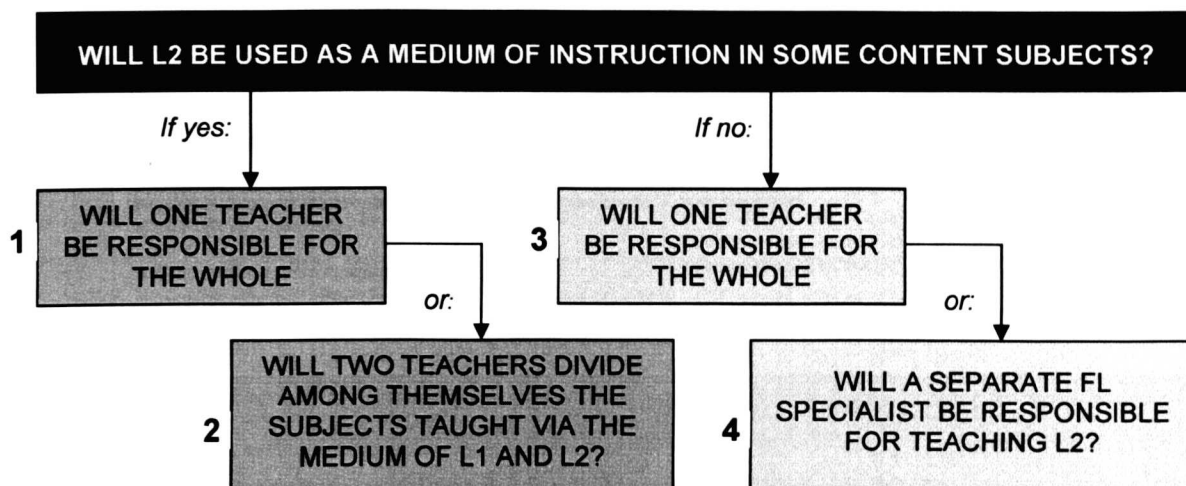
- good expertise in primary pedagogy
- rich relationship with pupils to underpin motivation and learning
- ability to embed and integrate the FL into all aspects of classroom life

disadvantages

- lack of advanced FL knowledge, i.e. limited ability to offer a linguistic role model, less secure pronunciation and intonation;
- little scope to use the target language spontaneously

As I have already argued, various early FL model options require a different sort of the teacher (Met, 1989; Curtain and Pesola, 1994). As illustrated in Figure 2-17, depending on the decision concerning the FL organisational model, four possible situations are possible. In the first three strands, the generalist classteacher is employed, in the fourth a specialist FL teacher.

Figure 2-17 Staffing options in early FL instruction.



The first two options, in which the teacher is responsible for delivering some of the subject-matter subjects in L2 require from him/her near native-like proficiency in L2 and competency in mainstream subjects. Expertise of the teacher involved in teaching an FL as a separate subject will depend on the degree of integration of the FL and the remaining curriculum subjects. Figure 2-18 (overleaf) presents strengths and limitations of different staffing arrangements.

In reality, however, schools make their staffing decisions on the basis of what teachers are available rather than which option suits their needs best. Though possibly it would be advisable to make FL teaching arrangements fit the overall of system elementary education, sometimes it is not possible. Even though some countries, like Poland, promote the integrated day curriculum and one-teacher-one-class model, it is often impossible to ask all classteachers to take up the additional duty of teaching an FL, too. Even if some of them agree, limited linguistic skills may prevent them from total integration of FL teaching with the rest of curriculum.

Lipton (1998) points to the complexity of training the teachers in the USA, where different states differ not only in the types of early FL programmes they offer (immersion, FLES and FLEX) but also in the type of teacher certification they require. Twenty-seven states offer a K-12 certification (i.e. from pre-school to the final grade of elementary school), while 18 states for grades 7-12. At the same time other forms of certification, i.e. K-3, K-5, 6-9 and 9-12, are available (Jeffries, 1996). Hence, the type of teacher training offered to FLTYLs depends to a large extent on these two factors.

Figure 2-18 Strengths and limitations of different staff arrangements in early FL instruction.

STRENGTHS		LIMITATIONS	
CONTENT BASED FL INSTRUCTION	<p>1. The same teacher for both L1 and L2</p> <p>The instructional day is divided into native-language and L2-activities, and the same teacher works with both languages.</p>		
	<p>The teacher has complete flexibility to adjust the amount of time for instruction in each language, according to the needs of the class on a given day.</p> <p>Only one person must be hired for each classroom</p> <p>The classroom teacher can shape the entire classroom environment and climate according to her or his own preference.</p>	<p>The classroom teacher may not be equally good model in both languages.</p> <p>Greater effort is required to establish clear separation between the use of the two languages</p>	
	<p>2. Separate teachers for each language</p> <p>The use of the two languages is kept separate; two teachers divide among themselves the components delivered via the medium of L1 or L2</p>		
	<p>The native language and the target language are kept clearly separate in the minds of the students.</p> <p>The best possible language model is provided for each language.</p> <p>In partial immersion programmes, one foreign language speaker can provide instruction for two different classrooms of children.</p>	<p>The major problem is of staffing i.e. finding elementary certified teachers who are at the same time native speakers of L1 and L2 (or a teacher certified to teach both L2 and EY education).</p> <p>Problems of scheduling, and curriculum coordination may be aggravated by the use of this model, especially when the school day is not divided equally between L1 and L2.</p>	
FL TAUGHT AS A SEPARATE SUBJECT	<p>3. Classroom teacher model</p> <p>In this option one teacher is responsible for delivering the whole elementary school programme, including an L2.</p>		
	<p>The classroom teacher has an extensive training and expertise in working with the particular age group of students in the class and is in the best position to know their needs and interests.</p> <p>The teacher is able to reenter and reinforce the language learning throughout the school day and can also teach some content subjects through the FL, as appropriate.</p> <p>Except for the language specialist-coordinator, there are minimal salary expense for language instruction</p>	<p>This model is dependent on the presence of a language coordinator who knows the language well, understands the school child and the school setting, and can work effectively with teachers and administrators. Individuals with these qualifications may be difficult to locate.</p> <p>It may be difficult to find classroom teachers with fluency in L2 and also extensive inservice language training may be necessary to help a classroom teacher with the language and FL teaching methodology.</p>	
	<p>4. Language specialist model</p> <p>The language specialist teaches only L2, often no formal training to teach elementary school students.</p>		
	<p>The language specialist usually has good language skills and can provide consistency of instruction.</p> <p>The potential for both vertical (from grade to grade) and horizontal (from language level to level) articulation is enhanced when the entire language programme is in the hands of one or more specialists.</p>	<p>If the language specialist has secondary training only, s/he may have little experience with elementary school students and will require assistance in adapting instruction to their needs.</p> <p>The specialist must deal with many students throughout the day, thus limiting the degree of personal involvement and individualisation available to each child. When numbers of students mount, teacher burnout can come at risk.</p> <p>Salary costs for the language specialist(s) increase the expense of the district for foreign language offerings.</p>	

SOURCE: compiled from Curtain and Pesola, 1994:38-41.

Similarly, in European countries, the pertinent problem is to find adequately trained teachers and different staffing arrangements exist (see Dickson and Cumming, 1996, Rixon, 2000). However, if possible, the tendency is to adopt a similar staffing procedure as the one existing at elementary school level in a given country. When the curriculum is integrated, classteachers are often encouraged to take over the responsibility for teaching.

If the division into subjects exists separate FL teachers are often involved in delivering FL classes. In Italy, for example, two-three teachers often share the work load in two classes, one of them usually semi-specialises in teaching an FL in addition to other mainstream subjects. In Austria, Sweden, and some German *Länder*, FL is integrated into other subjects and is often delivered by a classteacher.

Of course, it goes without saying that the teacher's educational background (i.e. generalist or specialist) influenced the ways s/he teaches. As Driscoll's (1999b) study has revealed, both types of teacher have advantages and limitations. Unsurprisingly, FL specialists' strong linguistic background informs their pedagogy. They are better at sequencing of language material, scaffolding and representation of the subject matter. They also react better to students' errors and build on students' performance. The definite drawback of this model of a teacher is that they tend to focus only on linguistic performance and their position of outsiders usually does not let them build as strong relationship with students as a regular classroom teacher does. FL specialists tend to have only a limited knowledge of students' overall cognitive development and attainment in other schools subjects. The generalists' background and professional expertise, on the other hand, are far more focused on the needs of students and they are much more understanding of the difficulties that students may encounter. Unsurprisingly, the main problem of the generalist teacher is his/her insufficient linguistic and cultural FL competence. Despite the fact that s/he can draw upon experience in teaching other subjects, and is often eager to take advantage of curricular freedom and merge FL study with the overall mainstream education, lack of resources supporting integration of the two languages often makes it impossible.

Yet, when an FL is to be used regularly as a medium of instruction in other subjects, neither a generalist with a smattering of an FL nor an FL specialist with a limited knowledge of EY subject matter knowledge will be adequate. Bernhardt and Schrier (1992) provide a research-generated model of immersion teacher preparation. Unsurprisingly, investigations into the nature of the immersion setting imply that **complete** knowledge of the elementary school curriculum is essential for effective content-based FL instruction, and thus, the competent immersion language teacher should posses 1) high level of fluency in the target language and culture, 2) be prepared as an elementary school teacher, and 3) be prepared to teach a target language. This would mean that only native speakers or near-native speakers would be eligible to teach in CBI programmes, which in

turn, would prevent them from becoming more widespread in contexts like Poland where native-speakers of the most popular FL taught are not widely available.

This, however, is not always the case. In some European programmes of bilingual education also non-native teachers have been involved, some with a great deal of success, in providing instruction (Beatens Beardsmore, 1993; Fruhauf *et al.*, 1996; Masih, 1999). Thus, as for this study an interesting question arises whether it is possible to **prepare** a non-native teacher for CBI instruction? In other words, is it feasible in a 5-year-long training to equip student-teachers with all necessary skills and competencies so that s/he will be able to teach other subjects via an FL; assuming that, as it is often the case in the Polish context, his/her proficiency in an FL is far from near-native?

2.15. Content and aims of FLTYL education

In this section I deal with the central issue to this thesis of teacher's professional development. As I have already argued in section 2.1.4, over the years we have come to realise that, to quote Hargreaves and Fullan (1992:ix), 'the teacher is the ultimate key to educational change and school improvement'. In other words, teachers do not simply implement the curriculum. They constantly define and redefine, interpret and transform the curriculum so as to make it more accessible to the learners. If this is so, if it is what teachers think that eventually determines what learners learn in the classroom, then given the key role that the teachers play, it is imperative that professional growth becomes a top priority (Met, 1989). Teachers should constantly upgrade and develop not only their knowledge of the language, but also of the curricular subject matter, and their knowledge of pedagogy. The two subsequent sections look at the different aspects of FLTYL professional development. First, I will deal with mapping the scope of what has been called the 'knowledge base' of FLTYLs, or to put it differently, competencies that these teachers need to develop. Next, I look at the issues related to the complexities of how knowledge of teaching might be learnt or taught, and I define the structure and organisation that FLTYL professional development should take.

Untangling terminology

The terms 'teacher training', 'development', 'education', and 'preparation' are often used apparently interchangeably in the literature to refer to the same thing: the professional preparation of teachers. Recently the authors prefer 'teacher education', since 'training' can imply mechanical habit formation and an over-emphasis on skills and techniques,

while the professional teacher needs to develop theories, awareness of options, and decision-making abilities – a process which seems better defined by the word ‘education’ (Richards and Nunan, 1990; Richards, 1998; see also discussion in section 2.15).

However, as already indicated in the introduction to this thesis (section 1.6), I have decided to use these terms interchangeably since in the present study the distinction was often not clear-cut and the needs of FLTYL often denoted education in the largest sense: ranging from initial training and the on-going professional development. Similarly, the term ‘professional development of FLTYLs’ is also frequently used here to refer to ‘various interventions that are used to develop professional knowledge among professionals’ (Freeman and Johnson, 1998: 398).

2.15.1. Domains of FLTYL professional knowledge

Knowledge

Unlike the commonly held belief that ‘If you know your subject, you can teach it’, the knowledge that teachers draw upon while teaching goes far beyond, what is known as content knowledge. The research of Shulman (1987) and associates (Wilson, Shulman and Richter, 1987; Grossman, Wilson and Shulman, 1989) suggests that teachers use different types of knowledge at different times:

Teachers use their *content knowledge*—their understanding of the facts and concepts within a domain—as well as their grasp of the structures of the subject matter (...). Teachers must have knowledge of the substantive structures—the ways in which the fundamental principles of a discipline are organised. In addition, they must have knowledge of the syntactic structure of a discipline—the canons of evidence and proof that guide in the field. Teachers’ *knowledge of educational aims, goals, and purposes* also contributes to pedagogical decisions. Frequently teachers use their *knowledge of other content* that is not within the scope of the discipline they are teaching. Teachers use *general pedagogical knowledge*—knowledge of pedagogical principles and techniques that is including knowledge of student characteristics and cognitions as well as knowledge of motivational and developmental aspects of how student learn. Finally, teachers frequently draw upon their *curricular knowledge*—their understanding of the programs and materials designed for the teaching of particular topics and subjects at a given level.

Wilson et al., 1987:113-114 (emphasis in original)

Unlike teachers of other subjects, language teachers normally do not have a direct body of knowledge in the sense that Maths or Science teachers have, since for them an FL is both the means and ends of instruction (Medgyes, 1994). Grenfell (1998) and Roberts (1998) have offered the following system of language teacher knowledge bases:

- **CONTENT KNOWLEDGE**
Knowledge of target language (TL) systems
TL competence
Analytical knowledge
- **PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE**
Content restructured for the purpose of pedagogy, i.e. teachers' knowledge of the TL that they need to teach it.
Ability to adapt content and means of communicating linguistic knowledge according to learners' needs
- **GENERAL PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE**
Principles and strategies for classroom management
Repertoire of language learning activities appropriate for different situations
Aids and resources
Planning and formative evaluation
Assessment
- **CURRICULAR KNOWLEDGE**
Of the official language curriculum (exams, textbooks etc.) and of resources
- **CONTEXTUAL KNOWLEDGE**
Learners: knowledge of their characteristics; appropriate expectations
School: norms and behaviour in class and with colleagues
Legal accountability
Community: expectations and accountability
- **PROCESS KNOWLEDGE**
Ability to relate to learners, peers, and parents
Skills and attitudes that enable the development of the teacher (study skills, team skills, observational skills, classroom inquiry skills, and language analysis skills)

In the case of FLTYLs the question of what constitutes teachers' subject-matter knowledge is more blurred since the teaching of the language overlaps with other mainstream subjects (Doyé, 1995). In the case of early FL teaching when language teaching is closely linked with other subjects the question what constitutes teachers' subject-matter knowledge is more blurred than in the case of other teachers. FLTYLs need the ability to **use** the foreign language in the classroom, knowledge about the subject taught (i.e. knowledge **about** the language), have to be at least familiar with the subject matter of other mainstream subjects. In addition, they need pedagogical content knowledge in these various areas. Needless to say that these competencies are interdependent: 1) content knowledge, 2) the language, and 3) pedagogical skills required to teach various curricular areas. These three are no matter if an FL is either related to other curricular areas (in so called cross-curricular,

interdisciplinary or content-related FL teaching) or an FL is used as a medium of instruction in other mainstream subjects (CBI).

FLTYL's subject-matter knowledge also includes the awareness of target language culture or cultures. If the four primary goals of early FL instruction are communication, culture, context and confidence (Sharpe, 1992), the teacher's own appreciation and knowledge about the culture and how to teach it, is crucial. As Pesola (1991:331) says, 'language and culture are in close relationship: the development of language skills give access to another culture and culture shapes the development and use of the language'. As it is often pointed out, a teacher should be able to surround his/her students with 'Frenchness', or whatever other language in question. Often it is difficult to say whether the use of such phrases as 'Oh là là', 'Whoops' and '¡Bravo!' or culturally appropriate grammatical forms, intonation, gestures (of their lack), are the indications of the teacher (or eventually, also the learners) linguistic skills or his/her knowledge of the foreign language culture. The extent to which the teacher (especially a non-native one) will be able to perform these naturally and willingly is a slightly different matter (see Medgyes, 1983, 1994, for the discussion of 'cultural schizophrenia' and 'identity crisis').

From the literature of a child learning an L2 and on teaching FL to children, it also seems that the essential provisions that have to be fulfilled by FL elementary classroom are much beyond the potential of the traditionally trained FL specialist. As Maley (1993) notes:

Teachers of young learners need special skills, many of which have little to do with the language, which becomes a by-product of learning activities rather than a centrepiece. Helping the child to learn and develop becomes more important than simply teaching the language. The approach and techniques and therefore drawn from good general educational theory and practice rather than from narrow TEFL repertoire.

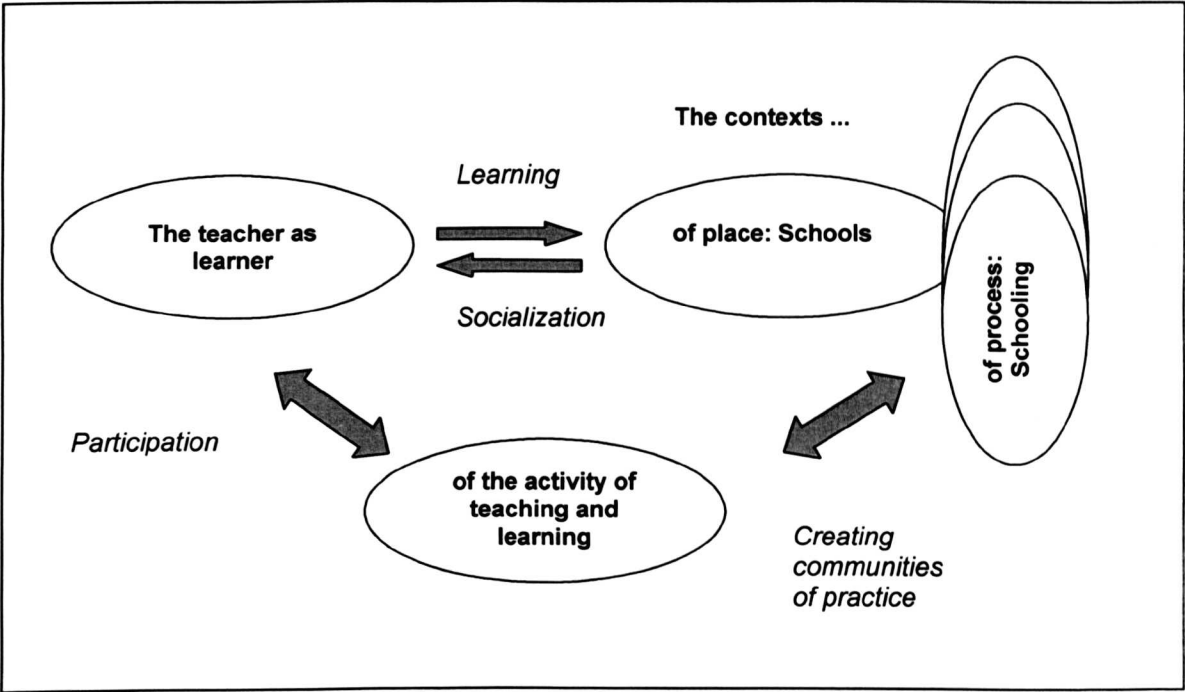
Indeed, as already suggested the FLTYL training should be an amalgam of EY education and FL teacher training, yet the degree of expertise required from these two areas would depend on whether an FL is used as medium instruction to teach other subjects or not. It would also depend on whether the same teacher will deliver all subjects or whether two teachers will be involved.

Teacher education programs generally operated under the assumption that teachers needed discrete amounts of knowledge, usually in the form of general theories and methods that were assumed to be applicable to any teaching context. Learning to teach was viewed as learning about teaching in one context (the teacher education program), observing and practising teaching in another (the practicum), and eventually, developing effective teaching behaviors in yet a third context (usually in the first years of teaching).

Freeman and Johnson, 1998:399

The knowledge-base of language teacher education needs to respond to answer the simple question: Who teaches what to whom, where? Freeman and Johnson (1998) argue that this question poses three broad families of issues that knowledge-base needs to address: 1) the nature of the teacher-learner, 2) the nature of schools and schooling, and 3) the nature of language teaching, in which we include pedagogical thinking and activity, the subject matter and the content, and language learning. Taken together, the framework for the knowledge-base of language teacher education encompasses three terrains in which FL teachers learn and practice their craft. These include: the ‘teacher learner’, the ‘social context’, and the ‘pedagogical process’ domain as illustrated in Figure 2-19.

Figure 2-19 Framework for the knowledge base of language teacher education



SOURCE: Freeman and Johnson, 1998:397. Note: Domains are boldface; processes are in italics.

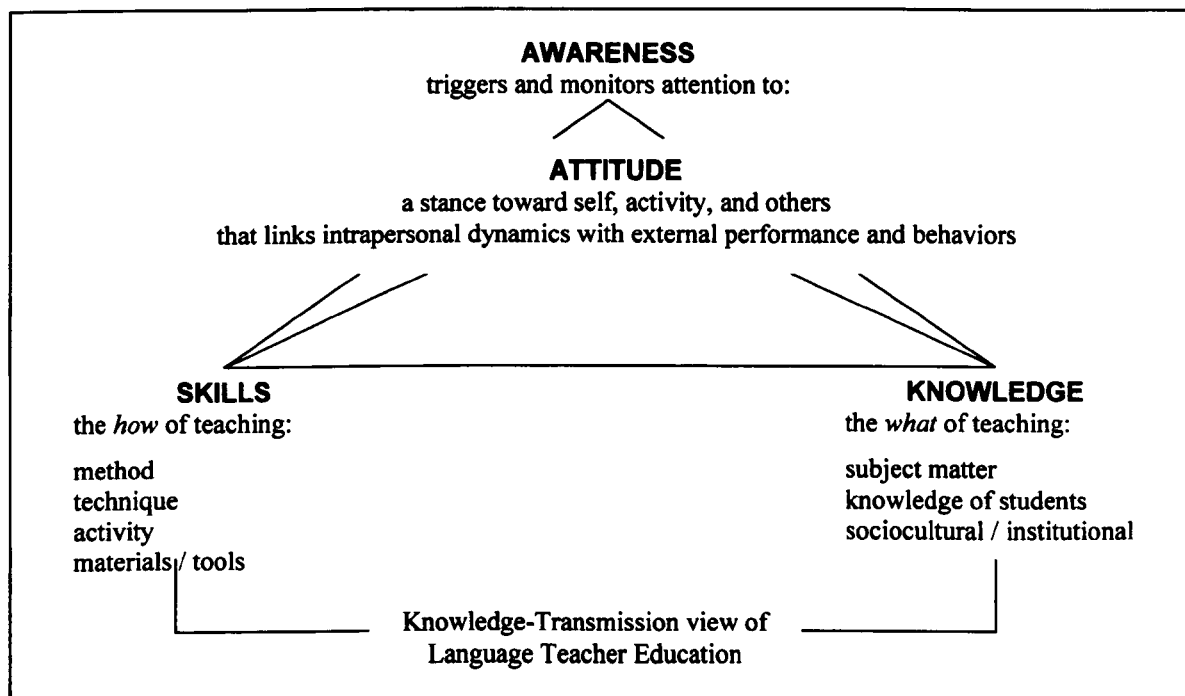
Attitudes

In addition to linguistic and pedagogical skills (including those that relate to how to cope with teaching this particular age-group and how to manage teaching an FL), several authors point to specific character features that FLTYLs need to develop or even to be born with. Pinthon argues that first and foremost a good FLTYL ‘loves young children, is [to be] able to relate well to them, know how to create a relaxed atmosphere while motivating the children to learn (Pinthon, 1979:74, emphasis in original). This ability is particularly important in the light of research suggesting that for successful FL learning young children need to (and frequently do) develop a strong emotional of attachment to their teacher

(Driscoll, 1999b; Djigunovitch and Vilke, 2000). This unique teacher characteristic may be classified under ‘attitude’ label in Freeman’s (1989) a descriptive model of language teaching. He defines there language teaching as a decision making process based on four constituents: knowledge, skills, attitude, and awareness (Figure 2-20).

Knowledge, for the teacher, includes what is being taught (the subject matter); to whom it is being taught (the students-their backgrounds, learning styles, language levels, etc.); and where it is being taught (the sociocultural, institutional, and situational contexts). **Skills** define what the teacher has to be able to do: present material, give clear instructions, correct errors in various ways, manage classroom interaction and discipline, and so on). Taken together, these constituents—knowledge and know-how (i.e. skills)—make up what is often referred to as the knowledge base of teaching. In similar vein to Shulman (1986), Freeman states that the these four elements of the knowledge base are not static but tend to evolve and be redefined throughout the teacher’s professional life.

Figure 2-20 The constituents of the descriptive model of teaching



Source: Freeman, 1989:36

Freeman argues that traditional knowledge transmission language teacher education models (see discussion in the section 2.15) concentrate almost exclusively on these two components or constitutes. What is missing, however, is the development of teacher **attitude**, defined by Freeman (1989:32) as:

The stance one adopts towards oneself, the activity of teaching, and the learners one engages in teaching/learning process. Attitude is an interplay of externally oriented behavior, actions, and perceptions, on the one hand, and internal interpersonal dynamics, feelings, and reactions, on the other.

The fourth component, **awareness**, is the constituent that integrates and unifies the previous three constituents – knowledge, skills and attitude. It is this element that may account for why teachers decide to change their behaviours or way of thinking; why they grow and change (*ibid.*). According to Freeman, in its essence, teaching involves constant shifts, negotiations, actions, and responses to a myriad of variables. Therefore, the final element in this model must be one that captures the dynamism of the process, and that elements is decision making.

Thus, knowledge and skills in FLTYL education is important. However, I would argue that the development of attitudinal competence is even more important. At this point I would concur with Maley, who argue that ‘in the absence of such capability, no amount of skills will be effective’ (1995:1@).

For FLTYL education programmes to be successful they have to go beyond abstract, decontextualized body of Knowledge (what) and Skills (How), no matter how linguistic or related to EY pedagogy they are. The knowledge-base of FLTYL education, for which I have argued here, will need to build strong linguistic and pedagogical skills, and simultaneously ground teachers in classroom practice, their learning and professional lives, and the sociocultural contexts in which they work or will work. Since throughout their teaching careers FL teachers often find themselves teaching to a variety of learners, in a variety of contexts, awareness raising components seem particularly vital. Similarly, EY upgrading of qualifications to be able to provide FL instructions to their classes would need not only a range of new skills and knowledge, but will also need to develop an ability how to choose between options and be aware of how attitudes (beliefs on child FL learning; feelings towards themselves, feelings towards their work, etc.) influence decision making. Doyé (1995:137), for example, lists the following attitudes that need to be fostered through FLTYL professional education:

1. Teachers who intend to educate learners towards international intercultural learning must be international and intercultural learners themselves.
2. Teachers should be prepared to consider how others see them and be curious about themselves and others.

3. Teachers should be prepared to experiment and negotiate in order to achieve understanding on both sides.
4. Teachers should be prepared to share and experience emotions with people from both other countries and cultures and their own students in the classroom.
5. Teachers should be prepared to take an active part in the search for the contribution of modern international understanding and peace-making at home and abroad.
6. Teachers should aim to adopt the role and function of a social and intercultural interpreter ('Deutungshelfer'), not an ambassador.

In other words, FLTYLs need, in Maley's words (1995), both **Body** (Knowledge and Skills) and **Soul** (attitudes and awareness).

I will now turn briefly to skills and competencies required from a FLTYL.

Skills and competencies

The answer to the question, 'What skills and competencies do FLTYLs need?', requires indicating the type of early FL programme in which they will be involved. For example, a teacher delivering a short sessions in a language potpourri (see details in section 2.2.2) would need different skills and knowledge than a teacher involved in, say, an immersion programme. These differences notwithstanding, there are some generic competencies needed by FL teachers of young learners.

Generally speaking, FLTYL expertise can be divided into 1) what a teacher **should be able to do** (ability to speak, write, read, understand an FL; ability to teach the four language skills and culture, etc.) and 2) what a teacher **should be knowledgeable about** (e.g. developmental stages of children, L2 acquisition of children, elementary school policies) (see details in Lipton, 1996; Sharpe, 1999).

Possibly the most comprehensive description of FLTYL skills and competencies, is provided in *Elementary School (K-8) Foreign Language Teacher Education Curriculum* (Rhodes, 1992), which resulted out of the North Carolina Teacher Preparation Project. The exceptional thing about this curriculum is that it grew out of joint experiences of practitioners (FL teachers in elementary schools) and teacher trainers. Other authors such as Lipton (1996) and Sharpe (1999) also provide some specifications in this matter.

Thirty⁴³ of such major skills and competencies have been grouped in Figure 2-21 in the adjacent pages. They have been grouped according to Shulman’s (1987) taxonomy of teacher professional knowledge bases.

Figure 2-21 Professional knowledge bases of FL teachers of young learners

<p>CONTENT KNOWLEDGE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Superior level (or above) of proficiency in all FL skills. 2. High level of knowledge about the culture(s) of the target language, including contemporary happenings. 3. High level of proficiency in student’s L1 (if a native speaker of L2 is involved) in order to communicate with parents and other professionals. 4. High level of knowledge of the content of the elementary school curriculum and ability to deliver in via the medium of an FL.
<p>GENERAL PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Knowledge of class management techniques, and the ability to apply such knowledge to create an affective and physical environment to FL learning. 6. Knowledge of variety of classroom techniques such as group work, pair work and individualisation of instruction. 7. High level of ability to plan and to teach lessons effectively and to reflect upon the success of each lesson. 8. High level of ability to use the variety of materials to appeal to children different learning styles. 9. Ability to assess student progress through variety of ways, including portfolio assessment. 10. Knowledge of different aspects of technology and its application to early FL teaching. 11. Awareness of the need for personal and professional growth.
<p>CURRICULAR KNOWLEDGE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Knowledge of elementary language curriculum and the mainstream elementary curriculum, and the relationship among the content areas and resources available. 13. Ability to teach, integrate and reinforce the elementary school curriculum through or in an FL. 14. Ability to develop curriculum materials, as well as scope and sequence of each of them.
<p>PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT KNOWLEDGE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Awareness of techniques for teaching aspects of the target language culture to children, and the various stages of cultural acquisition and understandings. 16. Knowledge of age-appropriate target language children’s literature, and the ability to use these materials in the classroom. 17. Knowledge of instructional methods appropriate to FL instruction in the elementary school. 18. Ability to develop reading and writing skills in learners who are simultaneously acquiring literacy skills in their L1.

⁴³ The list only presents generic FLTYL skills and does not include skills and competencies needed specifically to teach other than an FL subjects. In order to get a full picture of what a FLTYL in the Polish context needs, one will have to add another set if subject matter, curricular, subject pedagogical knowledge required to teach all curricular areas listed in the Core Curriculum (see MoNE, 1999b).

<p>19. Knowledge of ‘successful over years’ methods and new trends in early FL teaching methodology, such as cooperative learning, TPR, interdisciplinary activities, content-based and content-enriched activities, immersion techniques, etc.</p> <p>20. Ability to identify different programme models of early FL instruction, settings appropriate for each type, and factors influencing program design and teaching in each of them.</p> <p>21. Ability to handle students new to the programme, as well as the ability to reach all students</p>
<p>KNOWLEDGE OF LEARNERS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS</p> <p>22. Knowledge of the social, emotional, cognitive and linguistic development of children.</p> <p>23. Ability to apply child development principles in the planning and delivery of instruction.</p> <p>24. Understanding of L2 acquisition in childhood and its relation to L1 development.</p>
<p>KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS</p> <p>25. Understanding of the local system of elementary school education e.g. policies and practices such as record keeping, grading, and discipline.</p> <p>26. Understanding the role of administrators in the institutional programme and how to relate to them, particularly in reference to teaching loads, scheduling, allocation of space for teaching, participation in school activities.</p> <p>27. Understanding the role of parents and how to relate to them.</p> <p>28. Understanding the role of colleagues in the instructional programme and how to relate to them.</p> <p>29. Knowledge of how to publicise the early FL programme to a wide school community.</p>
<p>KNOWLEDGE OF EDUCATIONAL AIMS</p> <p>30. Knowledge of educational ends, purposes, and values of teaching FL to children, and their philosophical and historical grounds.</p>

SOURCE: compiled from Rhodes, 1992; Lipton, 1996.

A short glimpse at this list of competencies leaves no doubt that a FLTYL needs an extensive professional knowledge base. In the case of language teachers, such knowledge can be acquired through the study of disciplines such as: 1) general education; 2) educational psychology and sociology; 3) applied linguistics, communication theory and cultural studies; and most important 4) FL pedagogy. Some skills, however, are unique to early FL situation and would call for FLTYL ‘tailor-made’ offering.

The time devoted to each competency is, of course, not equal. For example, competency 26 (*‘Understanding the role of parents and how to relate to them’*) will take less time in training than the key competency *‘Proficiency in the foreign language’*. Also, as stated by Rhodes (1992) the list of competencies and skills is only a framework for a complete teacher training programme and not a single methods course. Such a programme should take into account various routes via which FLTYLs enter the profession: some teachers are EY classteachers, FL secondary school teachers, while others are native-speakers of L2

who for example have never worked at school. Each group will need a course with a slightly different focus.

As for teachers involved in immersion-type programmes, Crandall (1998:7-8) indicates that at the **minimum**, teacher development programmes should help foster the following skills, knowledge, and attitudes:

- basic understanding of the developmental nature of L2 acquisition and of errors as a sign of learning;
- understanding of the nature of academic language and skills and helping students to develop this through content study;
- strategies for accommodating different levels of English language proficiency in the classroom without ‘watering down’ the curriculum by providing:
- multiple opportunities to negotiate meaning and construct understanding through the use of multiple media (reading texts, writing assignments, class discussion);
- repetition or rephrasing of difficult concepts or vocabulary;
- multiple grouping strategies which promote cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and other learner-centred approaches and provide opportunities for instructional conversations, scaffolding, and support from more experienced peers or the teacher;
- demonstrations and experiential learning to reduce dependence on academic language for conveying meaning and understanding;
- visuals, realia and other means of using concrete, embedded instruction as a bridge to the more abstract; and
- graphic organisers and other pre- and post-reading and listening strategies to break concepts into manageable chunks and focus students’ attention on major concepts, rather than number of pages to be ‘covered’;
- an understanding of differences in cross-cultural communication; and
- strategies for assessment and evaluation, including portfolios, checklists and inventories, and other accommodations, such as the use of the primary language.

For language teachers, all of the above is needed, and much may already be a part of language teacher education program. What needs to be added, however, to enable English teachers to more effectively address academic language needs of students learning of subject-matter content through an FL is:

- an understanding of different ways to conduct needs analyses, including analyses of textbooks and curriculum and classroom instruction;
- strategies for integrating content into language instruction, including ways to focus on both essential (‘content-obligatory’) and related, useful sub-technical or other academic (‘content-optional’) vocabulary (see description in Snow, Met and Genessee, 1989); and

- strategies for developing learning strategies, especially cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies that will increase student's effectiveness and efficiency in using English as an academic medium.

Since the rationale for most of pedagogical skills has been justified in preceding sections, I have selected only three areas of FLTYL, which I believe are crucial for the present study. These are:

- a. proficiency in an FL taught
- b. understanding of the role of parents in FL teaching
- c. ability to establish good relationship with other teachers

I will now explore each of them in turn.

a. Proficiency in the foreign language

It goes without saying that a FLTYL needs the language in order to be able to teach it (Brumfit, 1991), and of course, FL development will be the kernel of the majority of professional offerings for FLTYLs. Yet, the type or level of proficiency which should be targeted, is less clear.

Many experts in the field (Curtain and Pesola, 1994; Lipton, 1996; Driscoll, 1999b) feel that the optimal learning conditions described in the section 2.3 require the teacher to be prepared for, to use Marton's (1988:47) words, 'any linguistic emergency'. Early FL classroom is not a setting that a teacher can teach 'by the book' relying on the linguistic level that is just one step ahead of the lesson to be taught (Doff, 1987:68). The very idea of scaffolding the learners in their learning, elaborating on the ill-formed phrases, reformulation one's own speech or negotiating the meaning via collaborative talk impose very high linguistic requirements on the side of the teacher. In particular fluency in oral language seems vital so that the teacher provides a good model for the learners, given that some researchers imply that the younger learners possess superior skills in acquiring pronunciation and grammar.

Whilst an ideal FLTYL is usually portrayed as a native speaker or a person with near-native command of the target language, the classroom behaviour of a native and non-native speaker of L2 will differ, and 'both of them are good on their own terms' Medgyes (1994:76). Sometimes sharing the same linguistic, cultural, social and emotional background as the students may be of considerable advantage or in Edge's words

(1988:155), ‘the ideal model’. Ideally the scarcity of FL native-speakers in a monolingual setting like Poland should not be an serious obstacle to early FL offerings. As in the case of generalist vs. classroom teacher distinction, it may be argued that high language proficiency is not *sine qua non* condition for being a successful FLTYL. In addition to high command in an FL, teacher’s pedagogical skills are equally important. As visible from Figure 2-21, both general pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge have to receive considerable attention. Sharpe (1999:170) has suggested that ‘it is better to have a teacher with less than native command but with a more balanced profile across [other] elements required’.

Hence, rather than demanding native-like proficiency at the outset of the FLTYL training course, it is more realistic to assume that considerable attention will have to be given to developing linguistic and cultural competence of future teachers. Two scenarios are possible here: ideally student-teachers will posses native-like competence in an FL prior to entering a teacher training course and additional professional as these listed in Figure 2-21 (below) may be build upon this base. If this is not the case an intensive FL improvement course is required, and possibly some sacrifices will have to be made in terms of breadth and range of the skills and experiences teachers will be initially equipped with. Additionally, inservice provision should be then available to enable the teachers to upgrade their qualifications in addition to preparing the teachers for life-long self-improvement of professional skills.

The area of pronunciation raises another problem. As I have discussed earlier in this chapter (2.3.1), from a linguistic point of view, the major benefit of the early start to FL learning may be found in the area of pronunciation. Namely, the younger the child starts to learn an FL, the higher the chances for him/her to acquire native-like pronunciation in that language. In contexts such as Poland, where FL learning is limited to the language classroom, a premise about ‘acquiring native-like pronunciation’ is heavily influenced by the teacher’s proficiency in this respect, so it would be tempting to make claims that teachers who themselves have native-like pronunciation should teach YLs. Leaving aside the question of whether it is necessary for students to achieve native-like pronunciation standards, there is a perennial problem of what counts as ‘native-like pronunciation’ in the first place. As for English, this question has not been answered categorically and there has recently been an intense debate among researchers about ‘norms’ and ‘models’ in the area of pronunciation (see Jenkins, 1998). According to Barrera Pardo’s (1999-2000:20), the

classical ‘be native’ model of teaching English pronunciation, with its insistence on RP (Received Pronunciation), an accent with marked social connotations and apparently hardly any speakers, has now declined in importance and glamour. A competing and at the same time, a more viable goal to achieve in monolingual EFL contexts, i.e. the ‘be international’ English model, is based on the premise that what EFL learners need above all is to be able to communicate successfully with other non-native speakers of English from different L1 backgrounds. Consequently, ‘making yourself understood’ rather than ‘passing for the native’ pronunciation goals—the goals established on the real and practical needs of learners—are frequently targeted.

This discussion has far reaching implications for the subject of this study. Crucially, it is not clear from the literature promoting early FL teaching in Poland what pronunciation norms are striven for—native, international or others—and consequently what standards in terms of teachers’ expertise would be required to enable a desired type of pronunciation teaching. To make things even more complex, the choice of a preferred approach to teaching pronunciation would need to be considered separately for various FLs to be taught since desired pronunciation standards and access to teachers may be different for them.

It seems that it is insufficient to state that ‘FLTYLs need to be a proficient language users’ or, as it is frequently described in Poland (Wysocka, 2000), using the examination framework adopted by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations Framework. It is vague to state that ‘FLTYLs need to be at least at the “FC” level’, for example. Likewise it is unclear whether some authors use the terms such as ‘native-like proficiency’ or ‘a proficient user’ in a general sense or with reference to a specific level established by the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE, 2002) in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and Learning*. In Poland it is also common to use the term ‘proficient’ to denote a learner holding the Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE). Still another matter, as rightly noted by Bondi, is that the levels established by various official bodies, such as the ALTE for example, ‘do not normally specify anything in terms of knowledge about the language and keep a balance within the four skills which is not suited to the communicative situation in which the primary teacher is involved’ (Bondi, 2001: 41).

Consequently, some more precise language profile which is required from a FLTYL must be specified. In a similar vein, the FLTYL course designers should state what entry and exit levels in terms of FL proficiency are expected from teacher-trainees. Such profiles

have, of course, their limitations and cause debates whether they represent an ‘ideal’, i.e. what external evaluators think teachers should be like, or a ‘realistic’ picture of what teachers are (*ibid.*). In two such profiles, Doyé (1995) and Bondi (2001) have proposed essential core knowledge and understanding of the language and the language skills which are needed to underpin effective FL teaching to young learners, as well as to identify areas for development.

For instance, Doyé (1995:138ff) specifies the following FLTYL language competencies:

1. Teachers should have and develop further appropriate **communication skills** in the FL which are suited to negotiation in the classroom and in the international communication situations at home and abroad.
2. Teachers should have and develop further **text skills**, i.e. the ability to deal with authentic texts in all media (print, audio-visual) and in face-to-face interaction.
3. Teachers should have and develop further the necessary skills to connect the student experience with ideas, things and objects outside the direct reach and to create learning environments which land themselves to experience learning, negotiation and experiment.

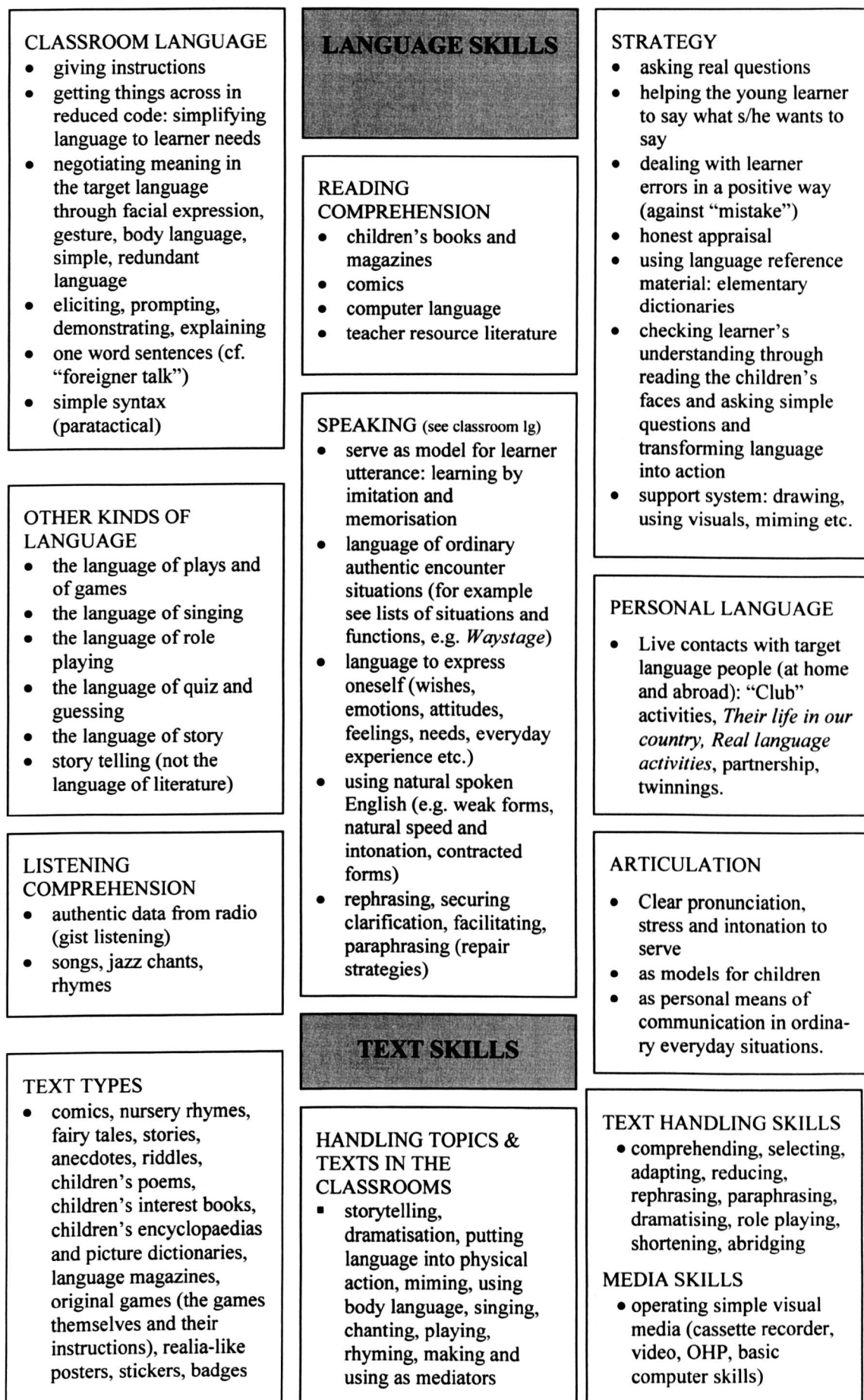
Specifications in these three domains of FLTYL skills are reflected in Figure 2-22 on the adjacent page.

In addition, Bondi (2001) has listed language needed for professional self-development, with reference to both language improvement and teacher development, as well as language needed for interaction with other professionals.

These are of course tentative versions of such and the educational authorities will need to develop their own FLTYL language requirements profile to meet the desired model(s) of early FL provision that they wish to offer.

Surely the ‘ideal’ teacher does not exist, or at least does not exist in sufficient numbers. Therefore if one is high in some skill areas and low in others, surely a training course should try to address weaknesses and build on strengths, so that all teachers have a minimum level of competence in **all** areas. This denotes a potential challenge for FLTYL training course designers and providers: how to meet potential trainees’ needs if they are so differentiated?

Figure 2-22 FLTYL language skills specifications



b. Contacts with parents

In agreement with the overall philosophy of EY education, which emphasises the whole-school approach (see section 2.10), a FLTYL should also know how to build good contacts with parents of children. This aspect of education has recently gained momentum and various publications emphasise the role of home-school relationships (e.g. Bastiani, 1989; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992; Coleman, 1998; Hornby, 2000). Docking (1990:27) says:

Children learning is more likely to be enhanced if all significant adults in the child's life regard each other's views as important.

Similarly, Blondin *et al.*, (1998: 38) for example have put the following recommendation:

In the course of the introduction of a foreign language at primary school, parental involvement is important. This involvement should rest on helping parents to achieve a clear understanding of the objectives pursued by the school. Involving parents will establish an encouraging, supportive environment outside the classroom in which children may talk about, study and use the foreign language they are learning. It will also give the school an opportunity for discussing with parents and sensitising them in respect of any language-choices that may be made.

EY teachers in Poland, who due to the fact that they teach one group of children for three years, usually develop quite close relationship with the parents. Teachers and parents have various opportunities for informal meetings since many parents are actively involved in organising and participating in school trips or class events. EY educators, as described in section 2.10, believe that the school and home have shared responsibility in child education and therefore close cooperation between them is necessary.

However, preparation of FL teachers for working with parents is usually neglected. Home-school relations are seen as very marginal and work with parents is an 'optional extra' rather than an integral part of FL teacher's job. Many FL teachers perceive the role of parents as confined to occasional help in homework or showing a general interest in child progress. The reason for this is probably that FL teachers are traditionally trained to work with older learners, for which parental involvement plays much lesser role. Various research, however, implies that parents' impact on FL learning of primary and secondary school students is quite substantial. As suggested by Strachanowska (1996) parents play a vital role in the choice of the language studied by a child. Their interest in the FL in question and their perception of importance of FL learning (loosely related to the fact if they themselves can speak it or not) is one of the major factors influencing child's success

in FL learning. Strachanowska's study also reveals that those parents who are competent FL users, are often directly engaged in helping their child's FL learning.

Hence, it seems vital that FL teachers know how to use 'parent power' effectively. Dunn (1998) takes a rather radical point of view on this matter. As she explains in her book devoted entirely on how a parent can help a child to learn an FL:

Help your child with a foreign language. You may wonder if you can do it. Remember, you have already taught a language: you helped your child from zero to fluency with first language. Reusing and developing some of these techniques, supported by materials and careful planning, you can help your child again. Part of the secret to successful foreign-language learning for a child is knowing that he is making progress that is recognized and appreciated by his parents. (...)

You can help your child learn a foreign language in much the same way. You can give him the same individual attention and encouragement. Even if you can't speak a foreign language well yourself, you can manage, since many tapes or materials exist to support your spoken language. And speaking the language well is only one ingredient in the recipe for successful learning. You did it before when you taught your child to speak.

Dunn: 1998:11 and 15

It is arguable if parents, who are not able to speak an FL themselves can actually teach it to a child 'in the **same** way as they helped a child to learn his first language.' The majority of parents would rather delegate the responsibility for FL teaching to a person qualified to teach it. Yet, parents' appreciation and recognition for the child's efforts in learning an FL may indeed be very supportive. Therefore it is vital they are given chances to see the child's FL competency growing not only through annual student progress reports, but also during less formal occasions, for instance staging FL theatre plays, family contests in FL language and culture or a festival of FL songs. As suggested in Curtain and Pesola (1994) and Lipton (1998) parents may also successfully help to revise FL material and actually learn **with** a child. Those who are proficient in an FL may act as an additional resource (e.g. be invited as a 'mysterious guest' to be interviewed by children) or assist in projects related to FL culture. Finally, all parents may help in the 'usual' way, such as to organise FL trips, assist in the purchase of books and resources, etc. Yet whether or not parents will be willing to take an active role in their child FL learning, and whether such teacher-parent cooperation will be successful depends very much on the attitude and skill of a FL teacher. The changing emphasis of work in EY education field means that that:

Those who are trained to work with young children are now finding themselves working with parents as well, a change that has implications for the skills required of professionals as they take on new roles, and for how professionals and parents view each other. As 'parent power' has grown, so some workers have feared that their professionalism will be undermined and diminished.

Pugh: 1989:14

Therefore it is imperative that FLTYL training considers the changing roles and new skills required from the teachers. Pugh (*ibid.*) also notes that new skills and strategies will be fruitless unless professionals change their attitudes towards partnership with parents, and thus teacher training should also take into account this factor.

c. *Contacts with other teachers*

Teacher's ability to establish good relations with his/her colleagues cannot be underestimated in early FL teaching. FLTYLs need to establish good professional links with colleagues teaching at higher levels to ascertain FL teaching continuity. As already indicated, lack of cooperation between secondary and primary school teachers, the feeling of being unwelcome on the side of secondary 'visiting' FL specialists, and low morale among primary teachers were some of the causes of the failure of *French from the Eight* initiative in the 1970s in Britain (Khan, 1991).

In CBI divided among two teachers demand enormous efforts in planning and orchestrating teaching of various elements in the curriculum taught in L1 and L2. Teachers involved in teaching an FL as a separate subject have to establish good links with EY classteacher. In this case good cooperation between a FL teacher and a classteacher in planning cross-curricular links and running the courses is the only way of preserving the integrated EY education philosophy.

A form of team teaching can be developed, based on mutual professional respects and drawing upon diverse professional expertise (Lipton, 1998). FL teacher can contribute his/her FL part in various class events, maintaining a bulletin board and joint L1 and L2 projects. And vice versa: a classteacher spending more time with a class and enjoying more curricular freedom may help supplement for a limited time spent on FL study. S/he may revise or reinforce new material or even include elements of FL culture and language in her teaching of other mainstream subjects. Ultimately, provided a classteacher is willing to, peer observation and teaching would be very useful to help EY teacher gradually take over responsibility for FL teaching as well.

Therefore, FLTYL training should promote many ways in which teachers can learn from each other. The emphasis should be on the avoidance of what Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) call 'professional isolationism'. They argue that most of teachers' work lives are often lived in autonomy and isolation, behind the closed doors of individual classrooms. Instead, teachers should be encouraged to collaborate and work together, learn from each

other and share their expertise, i.e. build a school environment where ‘interactive professionalism’ (*ibid.*) is a norm.

Conclusions

At its root, achieving high levels of FL teaching and learning in primary schools requires a sound professional preparation of the teachers involved. From the review of literature it seems clear that ‘teaching children’ is not something to be thrown at [teacher] trainees in the course of one or two lectures: better not to attempt it than do it superficially’ (Holden, 1980:7). The kinds of knowledge and skills that need to be developed in the course of inservice and ongoing professional development of FLTYLs, and which I wish to explore further in the present work, include:

- Teachers’ need to understand the **subject matter** deeply and flexibly.
- Teachers’ need to know about **learning** (teaching strategies, decision-making, strategies about the content to cover and the best way to do so, assessment strategies, language acquisition theory).
- Teachers’ need to know about **curriculum resources** and **technologies**.
- Teachers’ need to know about **cooperation**—their cooperation with other teachers, pupils cooperating together, and cooperation with parents.
- Teachers’ need to be able to **analyse** and **reflect** on their practice, to assess the effects of their teaching, and to refine and improve their instruction.

2.16. Structure and organisation of FLTYL education

The education of teachers is a topic of no small controversy. Historically the evolution of teacher preparation in many countries has involved both schools and HEIs with the changing emphasis on the importance of one or the other (Fidler, 1994; Hult, 1994; Pachociński, 1994; Kwiatkowska, 1997; Denek, 1998). Since teacher preparation has to include both preparation to teach and also preparation to work in schools, new forms of training have been shaped around the idea that a close partnership between higher education and school should be established. Also the content of teacher training courses and the way they are structured have changed considerably within the last two decades. The final section of the literature review focuses on the structure and organisation of FLTYL education.

2.16.1. Conceptions of language teaching and models of language teacher education

New approaches to FLTYL education mirror those that occurred earlier in general teacher education and in language teacher education. In general, there is a growing shift from transmission, product-oriented theories to constructivist, process-oriented theories of learning, teaching, and teacher learning (Richards, 1998). There is also a change in the interest from **‘what’** should be taught in training courses, i.e. which skills, qualities, knowledge, values, information and theories should teachers learn, to **‘who’**, i.e. to the person who enters the course and what s/he brings with them, and to **‘how’** people learn to teach languages, i.e. what are the most effective ways this body of knowledge should be conveyed or shared within a training course (Freeman, 1996). In the same way, views on what are expected outcomes of FL education and how they should be measured have changed.

Crandall (2000) argues that in traditional approaches to teacher professional preparation there was a balance between education and training. The former refers to the development of language knowledge and language teaching and learning, whilst the latter refers to the development of skills to apply knowledge in the practice of language teaching, with a limited opportunity to observe and practice that theory in actual classrooms or simulated contexts such as microteaching (Freeman, 1989, 1996, 2001). In both orientations, the content is generally defined externally and transmitted onto passive recipients, regardless of prospective or experienced ones, through conventional processes such as lectures, readings and the like. The assessment is usually measured through some form of demonstration, such as exams, academic articles or portfolios. Omitted is any understanding of the role language teachers play in their own development, which teacher research has demonstrated as being of considerable importance (Woodward, 1991). Neither are considered as having any pre-existing ideas, beliefs and preconceptions about their work, about their teaching, what FL learning involves, what their pupils are capable of, and so on.

Wallace (1991) identifies three major models of how language teachers acquire their expertise:

1. **The craft or apprenticeship model:** The trainee learns by imitating the expert's techniques and by following the a master teacher's or an expert's instructions and advice.

2. **The applied science or theory-into-practice model:** The trainee studies theoretical courses in applied linguistics and other allied subjects (psychology, pedagogy, etc.), which are then, through the construction of an appropriate methodology, applied to classroom practice.
3. **The reflective model:** The trainee teaches or observes lessons, or recalls past experiences; then reflects alone or in discussion with others, in order to work out theories about teaching; then tries these out in practice (see Figure 2-24).

These three models broadly correspond to the three views of teaching identified by Richards (1996:2):

- **A didactic view of teaching**—based on the belief that the student is primarily concerned with transmitting knowledge through providing clear explanations, demonstrations, or discussions.
- **A discovery view of teaching**—based on the belief that students can develop knowledge themselves through active investigation and discovery, with a minimum of teacher structure and explanation and with provision of opportunities to learn inductively from direct observation.
- **An interactionist view of teaching**—based on the belief that students arrive with well-formed ideas, so that there is a necessary interaction between the students' own ideas, their empirical observations, and the curriculum content.

Even though a reflective practice model and its corresponding conception of teaching have become dominant paradigms in FL teacher education worldwide, Wallace (1991) warns against a simplistic either-or approach to teacher education. He argued that the teacher will need all three types of development, but in different degrees, depending on his/her experience and understanding. In other words, neither traditional education nor training will probably be sufficient for FLTYLs; they will probably need opportunities to reflect upon their beliefs and practices and to construct and reconstruct their personal theories of language teaching and learning. I will now turn to key issues related to what reflection involves and some possible pitfalls of reflective teacher education.

Reflective practice

Reflection is a popular term both in general teacher and in FL teacher education literature. Numerous authors see reflection and inquiry as key components of teacher development (Freeman, 1996; Richards, 1998; Richards and Nunan, 1990). However, not all researchers are in agreement as to the exact definition of what the term reflection means. There is a plethora of stances with sometimes conflicting meanings of what reflective teaching is (see Figure 2.23).

Figure 2-23 Summary of different approaches to reflective practice

REFLECTION TYPE AND AUTHOR	CONTENT OF REFLECTION
Technical Rationality (Shulman, 1987; VanMannen 1977)	Examining one's use of skills and immediate behaviors in teaching with an established research/theory base.
Reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983, 1987)	Dealing with on-the-spot professional problems as they occur. Thinking can be recalled and then shared later.
Reflection-on-action (Schön, 1983, 1987; Hatton and Smith, 1995; Gore and Zeichner, 1991)	Recalling one's teaching after the class. Teaching gives reasons for his/her actions/behaviors in class.
Reflection-for-action (Killon and Todnew, 1991)	Proactive thinking in order to guide future action.
Action Research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986)	Self-reflective enquiry by participants in social settings to improve practice.

SOURCE: Farrell, 1998:11

Reflection is a much broader concept than merely ‘thinking’ about one’s teaching. It encompasses not only the day-to-day classroom decision making of an individual teacher but also the institutional structures in which the teacher and students³ work. The meaning of reflection is best summarised by Kemmis (1986:5)

Reflection is not just an individual, psychological process. It is an action oriented, historically-embedded, social and political frame, to locate oneself in the history of a situation, to participate in a social activity, and to take sides on issues. Moreover that material on which reflection works is given to us socially and historically; through reflection and the action which it informs, we may transform the social relations which characterise our work and our working situation.

Viewed in this way, reflection has a double meaning. On the one side, reflection involves the relationship between an individual’s thought and action and as such denotes the subjective meanings in teacher’s head. The second meaning, on the other hand, involves the relationship between an individual teacher and his/her membership in a larger collective (society).

Related to the notion of reflection is the concept of criticism. Writing on teacher development through reflective teaching, Bartlett explains that :

Becoming critical means that as teachers we have to transcend the technicalities of teaching and think beyond the need to improve our instructional techniques. This effectively means we have to move away from ‘how to’ questions, which have a limited utilitarian value, to the ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions, which regard instructional and managerial techniques not as ends in themselves but as a part of broader educational purposes. Hence we need to locate teaching in its broader cultural and social context. (...) Asking ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions gives us a certain power over our teaching. We could claim that the degree of autonomy and responsibility we have in our work as teachers is

determined by the level of control that we in our work exercise over our actions. In reflecting on 'what' and 'why' questions, we begin to exercise control and open up the possibility of transforming our everyday classroom life. The process of control is called **critical reflective teaching**.

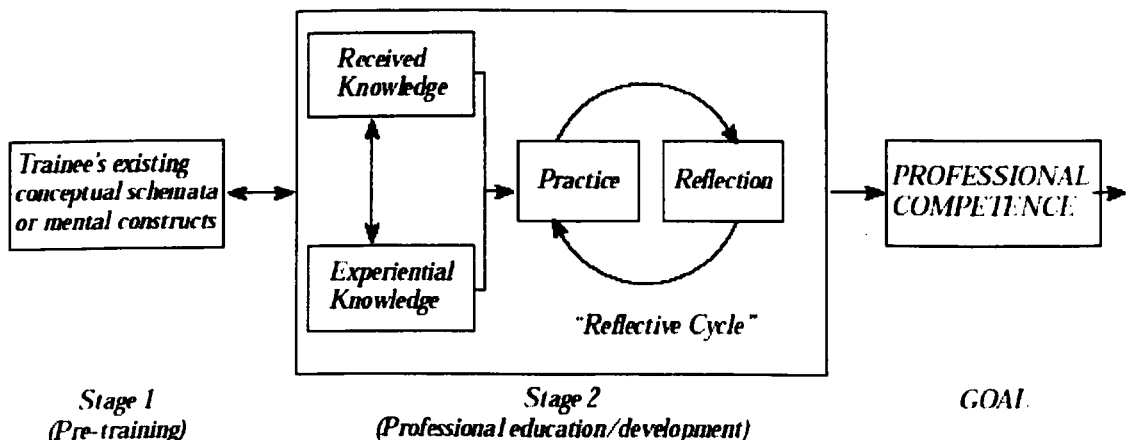
Bartlett, 1990:205 (emphasis in original)

Wallace (1991) provides a useful model of teacher reflection and the relationship between reflection and training. In order to become professionally competent, the trainee teacher needs to practice, teach and reflect on that practice. This is what Wallace's calls the reflective cycle. However, the trainee needs some sort of basis on which to reflect. Wallace describes two different kinds of knowledge that may inform teaching practice:

- 1) Received knowledge is the knowledge the trainee receives from lectures, from reading books or from other external sources.
- 2) Experiential knowledge is the knowledge derived from experience - the trainee teacher might have tried techniques in the past and made judgements about how well they worked.

However, Wallace also refers to the trainees' existing conceptual schemata or mental constructs. By this, he means that trainees do not come to us as blank slates. They already have their own beliefs of what is meant by good teaching. Such beliefs are founded on their own experience of teaching prior to the start of their training. The reflective cycle occurs when teachers analyse their performance in light of their own experiences as students in classrooms, their academic knowledge sources and their own attempts at teaching. Figure 2-24 summarises Wallace's view.

Figure 2-24 Reflective practice model of professional education/development



SOURCE: Wallace, 1991:49

Why has reflective teacher education become a desirable model of FLTYLs education? For one thing, teacher educators often assume that their role is to equip teachers with skills and techniques. We have already seen some examples of the 'key FLTYL skills and techniques' inventories. However, there are also important competencies that are adapted for use in specific contexts by individual teachers. A reflective approach means that teachers are decision-makers. They need to think about what they are doing, the challenges of their role and make their own individual links between theory and practice, personalising the skills and techniques and matching them to their pupils' needs.

Moreover, as indicated above, some of the competencies need years to develop and teacher educators should prepare prospective FLTYLs to continue to learn long after they finish their university studies. In other words, to be a reflective practitioner involves an engagement in 'lifelong' learning.

An important feature of education is that it does not have any final or ultimate form. Courses do not prepare finished teachers; at most, they provide teachers-to-be with 'problems, means, information and opportunities for self-reflection' (Combs, Blume, Newman and Wass, 1978). They only lay the foundations for becoming a teacher.

Denek, 1998:238

The reflective model assumes that professional growth is a lifelong process, and that obtaining initial certification is only a first step in this process. Even though FLTYLs can learn from their colleagues and from being observed by headteachers or FL advisors, the ability to learn from experience is a very powerful learning tool. By training FLTYLs to reflect on what they are doing, to learn from what happens to them in the classroom, we are helping to plant the seeds of teacher development which should last throughout their careers.

A reflective approach to teacher education also seems to reconcile two opposing traditions to teacher training: practice-without-theory ('craft') model and theory-without-practice ('applied science') model. Williamsⁱⁱ (1999:14) quoting Griffiths and Tann, argues that is a false one, and the two of them are 'more helpfully seen as two sides of the same coin, as intricately linked: what could be called *theory with practice*'.

Similarly, Pring (1996:16) explains:

Most people recognise the good teacher—the teacher who works intelligently, imaginatively, sensibly, displaying knowledge of subject and of the many and varied ways in which that subject might be represented in an intelligible and fruitful mode. Such a teacher displays an understanding not only for individual's learning but of how that pattern fits into the mosaic of learning patterns within the larger group. That understanding is implicit within classroom management, but such

knowledge is implicit, tacit, practical. There is a 'knowing how' which cannot be captured within the 'knowing that' of theory.

All three: theory, practice and reflection coexist and are intricately linked in the everyday teachers' professional practice. As Richards (1998:31) has put it 'those who wish to improve practice must understand the workings of practical theorising'. Consequently, Trappes-Lomax and McGrath (1999:5) argue that the balance between theory and practice in teacher education programmes is not a quantitative one (i.e. number of courses developing theory vs. those developing practical skills), but a qualitative one: how to get integration right. A reflective model, as developed by Wallace provides grounds for combining these two kinds of knowledge: 'received knowledge', i.e. subject matter knowledge, and 'experiential knowledge' based on practice and reflection:

Reflection is seen to connect, in different ways, with theory and practice. Reflection in and on action, by illuminating the nature of the relationship between theory and practice, gives meaning to teacher's choices in the course of a lesson and acts as a stimulus to change in the course of a career.

Trappes-Lomax and McGrath, 1999a:5

Shortcomings of the reflective model

Some authors, however, argue that while reflective practice is a useful component in professional teacher education, there are some misconceptions about the nature of reflection and the way reflective element is applied into some programmes. Boud and Walker (1998), for example, warn against what they consider to be a 'checklist' or 'reflection on demand' mentality, reflection processes with no link to conceptual frameworks, and unsuccessful attempts to encourage students to challenge teaching practices. They also note that personal disclosure is beyond the capacity of some young teachers. The authors suggest that these limitations can be overcome only when the trainers or mentors create an environment of trust and build a context for reflection unique to every learning situation.

Ur (1996) argues that this model over-emphasises experience and students acting as sole sources of knowledge, with a relative neglect of external input—lectures, reading, etc—which help to make sense of experiences and can make a very real contribution to understanding. In her 'enriched reflection' model, she calls for inclusion sources of external input, such as other people's observation, other people's experiments, input from professional research and theorising.

Another shortcoming of a reflective model comes from the very fact it is based in schools, which on the other hand, may differ in the degree to which they offer opportunities for

observation of exemplary practice, the best possible place for the trainee to 'reflect on and in practice under the supervision of experienced colleagues who, it may be assumed, see the world aright' (Halliday, 1996:56). This, however, is not always the case. As rightly noted by Halliday, 'reflection is not always comfortable'. Reflection cannot be limited to reflection on pedagogy (i.e. problems resulting from trainees' or mentors' practices), but is likely to involve reflections on management and bring to the surface some problems schools are suffering from. Consequently, it may lead to conflicts both within and between schools and universities involved.

Some of these problems are related to the pertinent problem of how to assess reflection (Selby, 1999) and difficulties in providing good relationships between a mentor and teacher-trainees (Kauffman, 1992; Edwards, 1997; Jarvis, 2001).

Grenfell (1998) cites the survey results of Barrett, Barton, Furlong, Galvin, Miles and Whitty on initial teacher training in England and Wales in which almost three-quarters of HEIs describe their courses as being based on reflective model. Yet, the problem is that in the recent years 'reflection' has become somewhat of a buzzword. Over the years, various writers have provided various classifications of different kinds of reflection related to different purposes and contexts (see Day, 1999; and Farrell, 1998, for overview) and at different stages in teacher preparation (Valli, 1992, cited in Wallace, 1999). Consequently, it is no longer clear what sort of reflective practices student-teachers are involved in during their professional preparation. As rightly noted by Wallace in *Reflective model revisited* (1999), there is still much more to be learnt about techniques for developing reflection, finding valid and reliable methods of assessing and measuring the reflective process in trainees' practice, and evaluating the effectiveness of reflective training. That, of course, assumes that we **want** to measure/assess reflection, for example in order to 'prove' that one type of teacher education programme is better. Surely, providing a scientific proof that becoming a reflective practitioner automatically makes you a better one, would be difficult.

Likewise, Pring (1996) argues that reconciling putting the new models of teacher education into practice requires far reaching changes. The basis principle is establishing partnership between schools and HE. Yet, as he argues, effective partnerships are difficult to achieve, since they require fundamental reconsideration of the dominant role of the university in that partnership. Current trends in teacher preparation should therefore aim at 'the integration of theory and practice, university and schools, thinking and doing, academic

respectability and professional relevance, knowing that' and 'knowing how' (Pring, 1996:21).

In the same way, Konarzewski (1996:5) recommends that 'teacher education [in Poland] should be reconciled with Academe'. The fact that academe equips teachers-to-be with excess knowledge 'is not a misfortune but a blessing' (*ibid.*) As he says, a teacher of the future is a professional—somebody who accounts for the effects of his/her work, and not the process. Thereby s/he must be able to organise his/her work, adapt it in the light of results achieved, cooperate with other professionals, and most importantly, establish good rapport with his/her students. A teacher straight from his/her university course that equipped him/her with a sound theoretical foundation, is not such a professional but has a *potential* to become one. His/her colleague trained in efficient transmission of knowledge that s/he experienced second-hand, does not have such a chance. That is why:

Teacher education should take place in the higher education institutions, where a body of knowledge is both transmitted and produced. If, as some people often complain, the academy and academics disregard teacher education we need to win them over, rather than create their substitutes.

Konarzewski, 1996:5

2.16.2. Process options and organisation of teacher training

The new models of teacher education require rethinking the organisation of training courses, and means by which teachers acquire their professional skills and competencies. This is what Wallace (1991) calls *modes* of teaching-learning and Woodward (1991) refers to as *process options*.

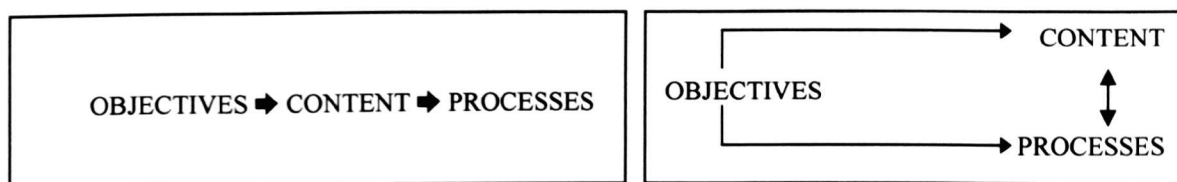
In his social constructivist approach, Roberts (1998) suggests that dialogue, talk and collaboration are central to teacher learning. Teacher learning is best promoted by activities that integrate different dimensions of learning and teaching, already referred to above, and that teachers learn best by a combination of the following elements:

- Access to new information (e.g. by reading, lectures and models)
- Activities to raise the learner-teachers' self-awareness of past experiences, and current beliefs, practice and knowledge
- Direct personal experience, in language learning, micro-teaching and teaching practice
- Indirect experience of teaching, e.g. by structured observation
- Opportunities to reflect privately on these inputs and experiences, e.g. by means of reflective writing

- Opportunities for dialogue with fellow teachers and others, addressing one's practice. Beliefs and the social pressures affecting one's work
- Development of skills and attitudes which enable teachers to get the most from the above activities: study skills, observation skills, and team skills (p.48)

McGrath (1997a) provides further insight on training processes. First he distinguishes between two ways in which some process decisions are made (Figure 2-25). In the first one, course objectives determine content, and processes are selected to carry out this content. In the second model, course objectives, content and processes are interrelated. Course objectives determine both content and processes. Content may be chosen because it is suitable for carrying process and vice versa.

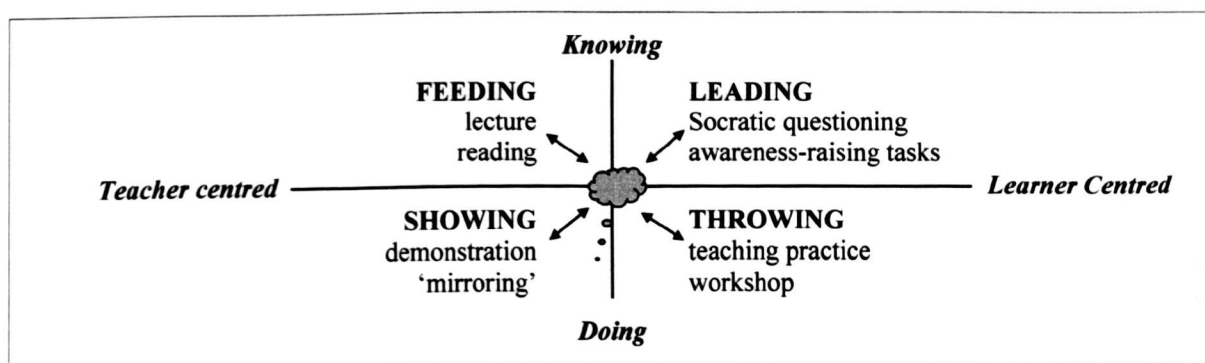
Figure 2-25 Relationship between course objectives, content and process choices



SOURCE: McGrath (1997a: 163)

As far as processes are concerned, McGrath distinguishes between *process categories* (at macro level) and *process options* (at micro level). Figure 2-26 illustrates four possible categories—Feeding, Leading, Showing and Throwing—and gives examples (i.e. process options) for each.

Figure 2-26 Process categories and process options in teacher training



SOURCE: McGrath (1997a: 165 and 171)

As explained by McGrath, the process of 'feeding' denotes transmission of information or opinions about the language, teaching or any other relevant discipline. 'Leading' involves processes by which course participants are guided towards knowledge or awareness or towards a conscious or analytical understanding of what they already 'know'. 'Showing'

refers to the provision of models or examples of language or teaching techniques. 'Throwing' is a matter of exposing participants to the realities of everyday life, in real or simulated situations, giving them an opportunity to perform one or other of the roles associated with teaching. A little reflective 'head' added in the middle of the diagram denotes a reflective element, which, according to McGrath (1997a: 172), is crucial in teacher training:

At the micro level of specific options, reflection may make the difference between participants adopting or adapting; at the macro level of choices between categories, it may make the difference between process-selection as a matter of routine or administrative convenience (...) and what (...) might be principled process-selection.

McGrath's taxonomy of process options is convergent with Kolb's (1983) classification of four distinct learning styles: accommodative, divergent, convergent, and assimilative. His Learning Style Inventory demonstrates how the needs and preferences of each group can be catered for. It must not be forgotten that teachers and student-teachers are also learners themselves and thus they should be exposed to a variety of process options:

In handling the 'received knowledge' areas of the teacher education curriculum (...) there ought to be a varied and flexible approach involving a range of teaching and learning techniques. For teacher education, these techniques ought to feature in various ways the following key aspects of the academic process: acquisition, reflection, application and evaluation.

Wallace, 1991:43

In other words, if teachers are to become 'reflective practitioners', then a good part of their learning at university or college should be experiential in nature.

Yet, a very strong lecture-based tradition in teacher training in Poland seems to contradict these guidelines. An old maxim 'practice what you preach, and preach what you practice', though often repeated, sometimes seems to be forgotten by academics when they decide how they are going to pass knowledge how to teach onto their trainees. Mizerek (1999) provides a detailed account on the negative impact that HEIs courses have on trainees' assumptions and beliefs. They seem to transmit a 'hidden curriculum', defined as 'unintentional, inadvertent and often unconscious effects of an influence' (Mizerek, 1999: 130⁴⁴), which contradict an official message on what teaching and education is (or should be) about.

⁴⁴ Mizerek uses here the work of such authors as Giroux (1993), Meighan (1993), Ginsburg and Cleft (1997).

As I have argued elsewhere (Wiśniewska, 2001), there seems to be discontinuity between modes of training which student-teachers are exposed to during their training and the type of language teaching they are being prepared for. There also seems to be discontinuity between the practical language courses and the rest of the curriculum (i.e. content subjects such as literature or linguistics in English Philology courses). Basic language courses are not linked with what is going on in other content courses, even though they are delivered through the medium of an FL. The study of language is seen solely as the acquisition of language skills divorced from any meaningful connection with other disciplines, such as theory of education, psychology, language and literature education, FL teaching methodology, IT courses, just to mention a few that typically constitute the FL Philology curriculum.

It is not surprising, then, that students report that pre-service training has little influence on the way they teach (Berry, 1990). As claimed by Britten (1985:225) 'for EFL trainees who themselves learnt English as a foreign language, probably the most potent models are those to which they were exposed and which they internalized during their own learning'. Hence, if trainees in Poland are mostly exposed to 'feeding' during their own language learning and also during their teacher preparation, no wonder then they find it difficult to fall far any other forms of teaching.

The situation becomes even more difficult in the case of FLTYL preparation. The unique feature is that process choices made in FLTYL preparation should reflect the fact that FL teaching in EY would require linking content and language. Therefore, if FLTYLs are to be successful, we have to establish a closer link between future vocational needs of the students and the language practice that they are offered⁴⁵. In other words, if teachers are to be prepared for immersion-type teaching for example, they need to experience 'immersion in the target language' themselves, rather than traditional, form-driven FL study. The rationale for combining content and language applied equally to adult learners, such as FL teachers-to-be.

This is not intended to set impossible targets for FLTYL education. A few examples of such 'content + language' combinations are described in the literature. Berry (1990), for

⁴⁵ Gołębiak and Teusz (1999) have recently reported on a very interesting EY teacher training project at Poznań University. Some loop input techniques were used in order to prepare students for integrative EY teaching. The students designed cross-curricular EY methods classes and had an opportunity to experience how this type of methodology actually 'worked' in practice.

example, illustrates how an FL teaching methodology may be used for language improvement, or vice versa, language learning experiences can be used for shaping teacher behaviours. Quite often such models are based on Woodward's (1988, 1991) 'loop input' model, which involves the designing of training materials in which experiential and awareness-raising activities are not combined but one and the same, for example while learning how to use jigsaw reading, trainees may be experiencing a jigsaw reading themselves. Williamsⁱ (1999) provides some examples of how McGrath's process options and Woodward's loop input can be combined in training teachers of young learners.

Tedick and Tischer (1996) provide an account on a summer language immersion program that helps preservice and inservice teachers of French, German, and Spanish develop language proficiency and knowledge about current topics in the target culture and to enrich their pedagogical knowledge. They suggest that language teachers should experience 'immersion' courses (pre- and in-service) themselves in a variety of content areas, for example learn the elements of Science alongside pedagogical training of how to teach it. Similarly, Glisan and Phillips (1988) describe a program that prepares teachers to teach content using the foreign language in immersion or partial immersion schools.

In the already mentioned Carolina Teacher Preparation Project (Rhodes, 1992; Mitchell, 1998), teacher trainers experienced a 'twist' in their roles by becoming student-teachers themselves. They were paired with experienced FLTYLs who served as their mentors. Together they participated in the following activities: 1) an intensive four-day seminar on elementary school FL teaching methodology, 2) observations of their partners' elementary school language classes, followed by 3) being involved in teaching of their partner's FL classes themselves, 4) collaboration with the elementary school language teachers in the development of a teacher education curriculum, and 5) peer coaching with a new group of teacher trainers. The components of the training model were based on the principle that 'in order to be successful, teacher trainers should have experience observing and teaching at the level for which they will be training others' (Rhodes and Heining-Boyton, 1993:155). When the program finished teacher trainers were responsible for implementing the new curriculum, methodology and materials in their home HE institutions and were involved in providing training to prospective FLTYLs. Moreover, in the model duplication in the final year, new teacher trainers joined an original group for collaboration and coaching and underwent the same activities involving lesson observation and teaching in their partner's classrooms. Finally, the project coordinators and evaluators attended classes of teacher

trainers and had an opportunity to see them and their students in action. In some cases, students were involved in peer teaching, where they would present sample lessons to their classmates.

It seems that a similar approach should be recommended for FLTYL preparation in Poland. The model proposed is the content-based instruction (CBI) in which EY and EP curriculum content courses that aim at the development of professional skills and knowledge are supplemented and facilitated by foreign language instruction. Thus, a foreign language will not be taught in isolation, but is a medium of acquiring knowledge. Content courses, on the other hand, will provide an opportunity for the meaningful practice of the language. I will now briefly describe three models that are available.

Combining language and content in teacher training

As the key literature on the topic (Cantoni-Harvey, 1987; Brinton, Snow and Wasche, 1989; Short, 1991; Snow, 1991; Blanton, 1992) suggests that at the post-secondary level there are three models available in which is FL is integrated with content instruction: theme-based, sheltered and adjunct model.

Theme-based model is a course model in which language curriculum is developed around selected topics drawn from one content area (e.g. psychology) or from across the curriculum (e.g. child language development). The main goal of instruction is to foster students' development of general academic language skills through interesting and relevant content. In this model, the language teacher functions as the content teacher. Consequently, FLTYL training may include for instance the following theme-based classes:

- A language course using selected topics from EY content course (e.g. speaking + legal rights of children)
- A language course using selected topics from FL content course (e.g. writing + literature)
- A language course using selected topics from EY and FL courses (e.g. speaking + EFL didactics to children)

Sheltered model involves the teaching of a subject matter course by a content area specialist who gauges their instruction to an audience with limited language proficiency. It also involves adapting foreign language texts or tasks and the use of certain methods familiar to language teachers (demonstrations, visuals or graphic organisers) to make instruction more accessible to students of different English proficiency levels. Sheltered model instruction originally developed for FL immersion programmes. In Polish bilingual

secondary schools, sheltered courses, such as 'FL Maths', 'FL History' or 'FL Science', are common alternatives to content courses taught in Polish. In the FLTYL training courses this model may include for example:

- EY content course adjusted to the language level of the students (e.g. with the use of graphic organisers, specially designed handouts, pre-seminar work on key vocabulary)
- FL content courses adjusted to the language level of the students (e.g. with the use of graphic organisers, specially designed handouts, pre-seminar work on key vocabulary)

In the **adjunct model** students are enrolled concurrently in two linked courses - a language course and a content course. The courses share a content base, but the focus of instruction differs. The language teacher emphasises language skills, such as academic reading or writing, while the content teacher focuses on traditional academic concepts. An adjunct program is usually limited to cases where students have language skills that are sufficiently advanced to enable them to participate in content instruction with English speaking students. This model requires substantial coordination between the language and content teacher; usually the language teacher has to make the extra effort of becoming familiar with the content. The example FLTYL training courses may include the following options:

- Concurrent EY content course and a language course (e.g. child development + grammar)
- Concurrent FL content course and a language course (literature + writing)
- Concurrent generic course (IT, psychology, philosophy, PE, etc.) linked to a language course (IT + writing, psychology + study skills)

In addition to the three prototype models presented above, some other programmes are also available. Language across the curriculum, for example, is a programme that involves integration of language instruction into all other curricular offerings (such as reading or writing across the curriculum). Another quite popular option in the FL elementary school setting is cross-curricular teaching. It encompasses the 'borrowing' of resources, topics, skills, and teaching strategies from other curriculum areas (Brown & Brown, 1996). A third option is language for specific purposes, the foreign language instruction which involves instruction aiming at the development of core language skills, required for basic communication, and a branching instruction whose aims and content reflect particular linguistic needs of learners such as doctors, bankers or lawyers.

The key issue in CBI courses is that they are based on very specific student needs and adjusted to language proficiency. Thus, planning and curriculum should always be tailor-made and based on sound recognition of what trainees' needs are. CBI instruction can be implemented as a whole-course or whole-school policy, or may simply be applied to some classes. The key issues that have to be considered before implementing CBI are: staff, methods used, organisation, administrative support, classroom organisation, scheduling (see Short, 1991, for details).

As for staffing Snow (1991) suggests the two options: 1) an individual teacher trainer (content or language) links two parallel courses that s/he teaches or 2) teams of content and language teacher-trainers work cooperatively. An important element is professional development of trainers who may not in initial stages be familiar with either content or language matters. Teacher trainer collaboration is crucial in cooperative teaching since it requires joint planning, evaluation and revision (Snow, 1991; Cantoni-Harvey, 1987)

As for methodology in addition to the typical process options in teacher training discussed already, there are a variety of strategies and techniques that are used in CBI. The four most important types of strategies that increase attention to academic language learning, contribute to content learning, and encourage the development of thinking and study skills are: cooperative learning and other grouping strategies, task-based or experiential learning, whole language strategies, and graphic organisers (see Crandall, 1992, for details).

As suggested in Short (1991) it is also worth considering running a CBI course with students of different linguistic and educational backgrounds and different skill levels to encourage cooperative learning. In the context of this study, more language proficient FL students can organise peer (buddy) tutorials for possibly less proficient EY students, which will give them some practice for their teaching skills. EY student-teachers may do the same as far as content specific for EY education is concerned (e.g. using songs, drama techniques, puppets, etc., in the EY classroom).

FLTYL training course based on CBI requires rethinking of the purpose that practical foreign language learning serves in the overall student education. It has been suggested teacher training studies, no matter FL or EY, serve primarily vocational needs of future teachers. Thus, the 'content' of practical English courses should not be treated as a set of vocabulary, structures, or sound patterns to be acquired by learners. A foreign language should facilitate and enrich content courses in which students gain professional skills and

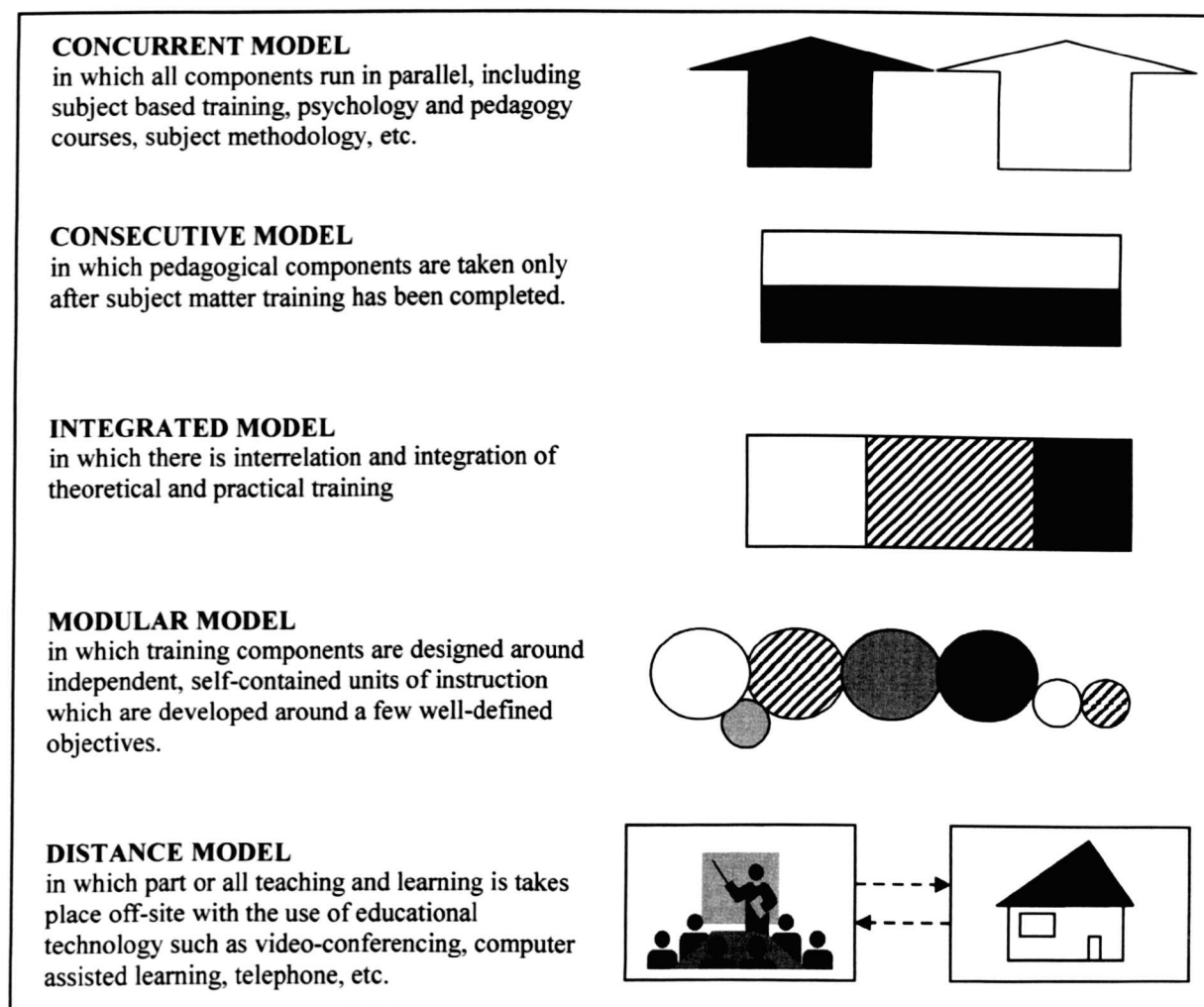
knowledge, and vice versa. In addition, content courses can provide meaningful language use. As we have seen, there is strong theoretical support for integrating language and content. Finally, when choosing from several CBI models available, the key issues to be considered are the staff, scheduling and teaching methodology.

Organisation and structure of teacher education programmes

Several organisational options are available to FLTYL course designers. The most typical one are illustrated in Figure 2-27.

Some of them are already widespread in Poland, including concurrent model prevailing at universities, and integrated model commonly found in teacher training colleges in Poland. Modular and distance options are still in their pilot or early-implementation phases.

Figure 2-27 Organisational models of teacher training



SOURCE: based on Giddings, 1986; Keegan, 1996; Savova, 1996.

As for less common options, the following examples are described in the literature:

- a. Summer TFLYL programmes, e.g. ‘FLES Institutes’ in the USA (Lipton, 1996). They provide a generally intensive experience with the networking of FLTYL teachers as a major benefit. Some of these courses have language improvement and early FL teaching methodology.
- b. Teacher—trainers partnership programmes, e.g. ‘Teacher Partnership Institute’ at Iowa State University, the USA (Lipton, 1996), in which primary school (K-12) teachers study with teacher educators from HEIs.
- c. In Italy, HEI-based FLTYL training is twinned with intensive language summer courses in the target language country (Rixon, 1999, personal communication);
- d. ‘Cascade model training’ in English teaching at primary level in Sri Lanka, in which training is conducted at several levels by trainers drawn from a level above (Hayes, 2000).

Many trends in current professional development of FLTYL teachers derive from broader changes encompassing teacher education and higher education (HE) in general. These trends include at least five major shifts (Betts and Smith, 1999):

- Deconstructing the traditional curriculum model of HE into modular frameworks of four types: 1) contained provision, 2) boundaried provision, 3) combined provision (major/minor; major/minors; multiple combinations), and negotiated provision.
- Introduction of credit accumulation and transfer system.
- Introduction of negotiated programmes of study and negotiated awards.
- Introduction of Accreditation of Prior and Prior Experiential Learning (APL/APEL) schemes.
- Introduction of in-company accreditation schemes⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ At the time of data collection for this study, introduction of some of these changes into Polish educational system was being considered (see section 1.1.3 and 1.1.4), yet the major shift took place after 2000 when Poland started to implement the assumptions of the so called Bologna Declaration (see section 5.4).

Numerous universities and colleges set up modular faculties, which offer modular courses within modular fields, leading to modular degrees. Traditional boundaries between disciplines, programmes or faculties get ‘smudged’.

Indeed, one of the more fascinating aspects of a university embarked on wholesale modularization is the process of intellectual jobbing or ‘territorial smudging’, whereby old, firm boundaries are held and ceded and young, uneasy alliances are formed, where creative energy is released in some staff and defences are maintained by others. In that undermined period between subject autonomy and collective responsibility the reality of student choice is formed.

Walker, 1993: 25-26

Modular teacher programme is not always regarded as a model of training *per se* but as one of the possibilities how such training may be structured. Some authors (Savova, 1996) lists it alongside four other, as she calls them, ‘organizational models’ (Figure 2-27 above).

Kwiatkowska (1997), however, provides an alternative view. She claims that modular training is a separate model of teacher training, based on fundamentally different grounds. In consecutive and concurrent models, theory and practice are to be kept separate: practice either runs in parallel or follows subject-matter courses. In integrated model, practice and theory is intertwined, yet as in the two former models, course components are self-contained and follow division into subject disciplines such as pedagogy, psychology, linguistics, literature, etc. Modular model (and some distance model which often uses modular structure in addition to new forms how teaching-learning process options) has grown out of the following criticism:

- Logic of a **discipline** as the main selection criterion of course content and its organisation is unsatisfactory.
- **Information** and fact-based orientation is inappropriate in a profession like teaching, in which factual information is only a means and not the end of education; the value of teacher education lies in how graduates can apply knowledge into practice and not how much information they can amass.
- **Standardisation** of educational route, i.e. the same set of courses, content, mode of delivery, and assessment ‘experienced’ by all student-teachers, is questionable; the school needs teachers with diverse characteristics and skills.

Notwithstanding, modular training has some pitfalls. It is quite often criticised for producing ‘inhomogeneous’ graduates, whose knowledge and skills are fragmented and incoherent (see Jenkins and Walker, 1993; HEQC, 1996a, 1996b; Betts and Smith, 1998). As Walker (1993) warns:

The curricular case for well-designed modular programmes is also well-rehearsed—student choice, learner autonomy, flexibility for individual student circumstances, adaptability to new modes of learning and assessment, speed in response to external pressures and agencies, openness to new kinds of knowledge and new connections. As with all things, however, its potential strengths are its possible weaknesses. Poorly designed modular programmes are vulnerable to intellectual incoherence, to problems with continuity and progression of learning, to loss of student identity and to excessive bureaucracy. It may be that such charges can equally be levelled at non-modular courses (coherence is not guaranteed by length of course and lack of student choice) but it seems true that modular programmes are prone to fragmentation unless carefully designed and monitored.

Walker, 1993: 25

It must be remembered that apart from modularity, integration and coherence of the programmes is a must (Jenkins and Walker, 1993). Consideration should also be given in the following areas: learner autonomy, development of skills and knowledge, an understanding of the nature of work, and the use of profiling and records of achievement (*ibid.*).

Nevertheless, a modular approach to FLTYL course design seems to offer a great potential as far as FLTYL training in Poland is concerned. First, it may be argued that it offers more flexibility in designing teacher training courses and possibility to offer modules across various programmes, e.g. a given module may be offered as part of pre-service and in-service offering in EY education and FL Philology courses. Secondly, it may provide better grounds for balancing theory-practice-reflection components in teacher education. Students will be given more autonomy to design their courses, study at varied pace, transfer from one course to another, and make constant adjustments to fit their interests, abilities and future professional needs. It also widens access to the profession since it may be expected that potential FLTYLs will derive from at least two streams: FL and EY education teacher training. Their prior expertise may be approved and appropriate further modules negotiated. As evident from section 2.15.1, FLTYL preparation requires extensive repertoire of knowledge and skills that probably cannot be built into any single-set course, either at BA or MA levels. Modularity may therefore enable students to gradually accumulate necessary expertise for various types of early FL courses and from different domains: linguistic, pedagogical or subject matter.

2.17. Summary and reformulation of research questions

By the way of introduction to the present thesis, the first chapter has portrayed a picture of the status quo of FL teaching and learning in Poland, and the context in which professional preparation of teachers in Poland takes place. In 1998 (when the present research was undertaken) with accession to the EU looming near, Poland seemed at crossroads in its socio-political events, and educational changes undertaken at that time echoed this. The titles of writings of that time imply uncertainty and change: ‘Tradition and new challenges’; ‘Teacher education on the threshold of the New Millennium’; ‘Education in the process of transformation’. In the second chapter therefore I wanted to include the detail to facilitate this ‘education for change’. I have included the macro view on the problem: the past and present early FL practices in various countries, a changing rationale for why and how children should be taught FLs, and contradicting stances on what ‘optimal’ FLTYLs qualifications and competencies comprise and how they should be developed. Clearly, the problem has proved to be very complex.

In the first chapter I concluded by underlining the three research areas and some preliminary questions which guided me through my reading of the relevant literature. I should also like to conclude the second chapter by recapitulating the main points that this substantial literature review revealed and which steered me towards a more focused conceptual framework for the study.

Figure 2.28 presents in a diagrammatic form the key points of the discussion so far and how these relate to my research questions. The grouping of the issues follows my division into three research themes (see section 1. 1.5).

As evident from this extensive list of research questions, there are a lot of issues concerning early FL provision and teacher preparation for this that remained unanswered and need further clarification. A seemingly straightforward question, ‘What is the best way to prepare FL teachers of young learners in Poland?’ proved difficult to answer and has generated a very wide study.

The kinds of the research questions asked in the present study make it clear that the present study is to a large extent evaluative in nature and encompasses a political and philosophical dimensions (see section 3.1.2 in the next chapter).

Figure 2-28 Summary of key issues emerging from the literature review and their relations to the study

LITERATURE STRANDS	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
<p><i>1. Early FL teaching and learning—provision vs. needs</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Though FL teaching is a long-standing phenomenon (see section 2.1), the last fifteen years have seen a very rapid general expansion in the provision of FL teaching to children worldwide (sections 2.1.1-2.2.3). ▪ Sober assessment of some past projects has revealed a proper teacher training for early FL instruction seems to be the key to the continued growth and success of the programmes (2.1.3). ▪ By now the majority of European countries have early FL provision (in particular Young Learners' English) established or well on its way (2.2.3). ▪ Wider spread of early FL provision is often hindered by a concern about how to provided enough competent teachers. Numerous programmes already introduced suffer from staff shortages. ▪ Early FL provision can take place in many contexts (2.2.1) and various models of it prevail (2.2.2). In particular, caution must be exercised as to not extend generalisations emerging from contexts in which L2 is learnt from natural exposure to those that are less favourable (i.e. instructional/school settings). ▪ Policy makers, educators, and parents of the children involved must be clear about the objectives that an earlier introduction to FL study is purported to serve (2.3-2.7). This is particularly important since scientific evidence in favour of 'the younger the better' slogan is skimpy, especially as far as linguistic gains are concerned (2.3). ▪ Early FL learning offers numerous other benefits, in particular it is a good way of opening up to the target language community culture and assisting in the fight against xenophobia and prejudice. Also, early FL learning is worthwhile educationally, and can go happily alongside much of the cognitive and L1 development. Still if this is to take place, teachers must be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of learning at different ages, and how to make use of the former. 	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the status quo of FL teaching to children in Bydgoszcz, Poland (programmes available, motives for undertaking early FL projects, number of students and teachers involved, teachers' qualifications)? 2. To what extent does the current FL early learning provision meet the actual needs (of schools and of parents)? 3. What has prevented the wider spread of early FL teaching? What factors will hinder the implementation of the ministerial recommendations to provide FL instruction in classes 1-3 ('conditions permitting') in the school year 1999/2000? 4. Does the existing FL teacher training match schools' and parents' needs for early FL teaching (e.g. number of teachers available, problems encountered vs. teachers and their qualifications)? 5. What problems exist in the current early FL provision and how are they related to teacher training?

- The growth of early FL teaching has many implications for mainstream education (2.10-2.11). For years TEFL has tended to develop separately from the mainstream of educational thought, now it seems that FLs cannot be simply 'added' to the primary curriculum. At least in Poland, separate subject teaching of FLs would violate the whole philosophy of Integrated EY Curriculum that is being introduced by the 1999 reform of education.

II. FL teacher of young learners (FLTYL – needs, qualifications & competencies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Various countries have adopted different alternatives as regards to the type of teachers involved in early FL teaching, their selection and training (2.13). ▪ A major debate worldwide is whether the 'best' FLTYL is to be found in the children's classteacher (generalist), or in an existing specialist FL teacher. Those with a well-established provision frequently opt in favour of a generalist class teacher qualified to teach all subjects, including FLs (2.14). Since in most countries primary school teachers follow a different route of professional training than FL specialists, both groups need some form of complementary training, either to gain the necessary FL competence, or a course of orientation to the appropriate approaches to teaching young children. Various forms of such training exist in various countries (2.14) ▪ There is a configuration of skills and knowledge that all teachers preparing to teach in elementary FL school programmes should acquire (2.15). Whilst certain early FL programmes will require greater emphasis in some skills/knowledge areas than others, the core elements nevertheless, remain constant across all programmes. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. What are the needs of FLTYL? 8. Are the FLTYL needs met by the existing teacher training provision? 9. Can the FLTYLs' needs be addressed in a better way? 10. Who are the current and prospective FLTYL (a FLTYL training course student entry profile)? 11. What are the optimal FLTYL qualifications and competencies? 12. Should the programme be designed with FL or EY student-teachers and teachers in mind or both? 13. How many teachers are needed and for what sort of FL programmes? |
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III. FLTYL training – reconceptualising training to meet needs

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The term 'reflection' has frequently been advocated by teacher educators as a goal, and as the means by which programmes of teacher preparation can be improved. Various claims are made for the value of reflective practice both in the mainstream and in early FL education (2.16.1). ▪ Models and process options in FLTYL training would depend on defining what | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. What sort of programme will serve the needs of FLTYL best—FL with additional specialisation, EY with additional specialisation, FL + EY combined? 14. What sort of model should be applied—pre-service/in-service, BA/MA/further teacher's specialisation, |
|--|---|

<p>constitutes teaching, what is the role of a teacher and how teachers acquire their professional expertise. The stance commonly advocated in this study is that specificity of how children learn FLs, calls for FL instruction that is closely linked or based on content (2.16.2). The same model of instruction was offered to facilitate teacher training. Through content-based instruction, the trainees will have a rare opportunity to improve their FL competence, update their pedagogical skills and at the same time learn content areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It was also argued that a modular framework to curriculum development offers some promising possibilities as far as organisation of FLTYL training programmes is concerned (2.16.2). 	<p>daily/evening/extramural or different options?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. What pattern of organisation should be applied—which HEIs (universities, HPSSs, colleges or all available); what departments (FL, EY or both)? 16. What should be a FLTYL course organisation and structure, e.g. how different components of teacher training should be organised—concurrent, consecutive, modular, integrated, one-phased/two-phased model? 17. What sort of school experience practice should student-teacher posses (FL, EY or both); prior entering the programme or as a part of training? 18. What sort of admission criteria should be set (L1 and FL proficiency, artistic skills, etc.)? 19. Should specialist FLTYL training be launched or are changes within current FL teacher training provision possible? 20. How can the existing FL teacher training be improved to meet FLTYL needs? 21. Can FLTYL training programme count on clients? 22. What will be the main problems of acceptance and implementation of a new programme and/or changes within current provision and how can they be overcome?
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The first set of questions is intended only to provide a background to the issue whether FLTYLs should be trained, reasoning that there is not point in providing training if there is no such a need in schools. I wanted to assess the demand for these teachers, for what type of programmes and what teacher qualifications are most desirable. The other two sets of questions deal directly with the issue of FLTYL training and evaluate the extent to which the needs of FLTYLs are met by current teacher training. Moreover, they diagnose the

necessity of launching a specialist training programme for FLTYLs, its scope, design and population it is intended to serve.

Central to the subject matter of the present study is that there are many stakeholders involved in early FL provision. These typically involve policy or decision makers, programme developers, and managers on the one side, and teachers, students, and their parents involved in early FL instruction *per se* on the other. At the macro level, however, there are also managers of HE courses and teacher educators who prepare teachers to a particular type of practice. Windeen and Grimmer (1997:35) call teacher educators ‘the forgotten players in teacher education reform’ and argue that

Assuming that teacher educators’ beliefs influence their practices and that those practices influence student teachers, then the need clearly exists for a concentrated examination of the beliefs and actions of those who teach beginning teachers during the pre-service year.

Ibid.

Thus if the question on how FLTYLs should be trained is to be answered fully, beliefs and opinions of teacher educators need to be investigated. The two-phase data collection framework applied in this study (see section 3.2.2) has enabled me to compare and contrast an ‘ideal’ FLTYL preparation programme as deigned out of the opinions expressed by headteachers, parents, student-teachers, teachers with the opinions of teacher educators, who would be responsible for carrying these ideas out. This involved evaluating the feasibility of launching a new FLTYL training offering and/or adjustments of present EY or FL training programmes to make them more suitable for FL teachers working with young children.

At the same time, data collection framework with both quantitative and qualitative methods used enabled some questions to emerge from the first part of the investigation. Those that seemed particularly significant and which were followed up in more depth have included:

23. What are the motives of teachers entering the profession of FL teaching to young children?

24. Is the new type of qualification (i.e. FLTYL) difficult to accept for ‘pure’ FL and EY teachers?

25. Is parental involvement in FL education equally problematic for teachers with EY and FL backgrounds?

- 26. Are any legislative changes within HE system and certification necessary in order to enable new FLTYL programmes?**
- 27. Are there any controversies over division of powers between EY and FL university departments and who should be involved as a FLTYL course provider?**

Since it would be difficult to 'navigate' through the process of research design, data collection and analysis bearing in mind the complete list of all twenty seven research questions, I have mostly referred to three key research questions:

- 1. What is the current FL provision available to children from grades 1-3 in Bydgoszcz region and how is it related to potential needs in this aspect?**
- 2. Who are prospective and current FL teachers of young learners and what are their professional training needs?**
- 3. Does current teacher training provision match these needs? If not, what changes should be implemented?**

With these three broad questions in mind, I shall now turn to description of methodology applied in the present study.

3.

METHODOLOGY

Chapter three provides a methodological framework for the study. The first section aims at presenting and justifying the core methodologies used on the basis of the overall purpose of the study and intended users of the research findings. I provide a rationale for the mixed-methodology research design and identify possible drawbacks of combining methods derived from two methodological paradigms in a single study. Then, I discuss the issues related to the research design itself. Within the logical framework of the study I opted for an interactive qualitative-quantitative research continuum and a multi-stage and multi-perspective data collection. Subsequently, the issues concerning sampling, negotiating access and procedures used in administration of each of the eight data collection tools are described. Next, I move onto discussing the way in which qualitative and quantitative data were analysed, first as separate sets and then as a whole. The chapter concludes with a section on the quality standards applied in the study: how the problems of validity, generalisability, researcher bias, and ethics were addressed.

3.1. Philosophical considerations

3.1.1. Evaluation research

As stated in Chapter I, the present study is evaluative in nature. Its main purpose is to evaluate to what extent the needs of foreign language teachers of young learners (FLTYL) are met by current teacher training, and to offer diagnostic evaluation of the need for specialist training for FLTYL, its scope, and design, and the population it is intended to serve. The choices of evaluation research strategy—qualitative, quantitative or mixed⁴⁷—were considered in relation to this distinctive research purpose.

⁴⁷ In this study I have decided to use the term 'mixed-method research design' (Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989) to mean the research which combines qualitative and quantitative methods within the same project to address the same research questions. This term is synonymous with what other authors call (qualitative-quantitative) methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1970) or multiple triangulation (Mitchell, 1986), yet in the present study the term triangulation (meaning: looking for convergence and confirmation) is only one of the purposes of applying the mixed-method design.

As there is no widely agreed-upon definition, the term ‘evaluation’ or ‘evaluation research’ (used as synonyms, see Guba and Lincoln, 1981, for opposite views) will be defined after Rossi and Freeman (1993:5) to mean

the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualization, design, implementation, and utility of social intervention programs.

Evaluation is a genre of applied social research. Unlike basic academic research which aims to generate new knowledge and which may not have specific reference to any practical decisions, the purpose of applied research and evaluation is to ‘inform action, enhance decision making, and apply knowledge to solve human and societal problems’ (Patton, 1990:12). This central purpose—serving practical decision making—distinguishes evaluation from any other types of research. Evaluation researchers (evaluators) use the research methodology derived from social sciences to improve the ways in which policies, programmes or social services are run. Evaluation can be conducted from the earliest stages of defining and designing programmes through their developments and implementation (Rossi and Freeman, 1993).

Out of the six categories of evaluation types listed by the Evaluation Research Society Standards Committee (1980:3-4, in Robson, 1993:178), I chose front-end analysis (pre-installation, context, feasibility analysis) or what Rossi and Freeman call, ‘diagnostic evaluation’. The main aim of the diagnostic evaluation is to find out whether a perceived need is, or is not, being met by a current provision, and to evaluate whether an innovatory programme or a new service should be set up. In other words, the diagnostic evaluation serves the purpose of assessing the future clients’ needs and stating the ways of meeting them. The diagnostic evaluation takes place before the programme starts to provide guidance in its planning and implementation as well as deciding if the programme should be implemented.

Yet, the present study also serves to some extent formative (‘What improvements and modifications within current FL teacher training should be made?') and summative purposes (‘What is the impact of EY and FL teacher training offerings? How well do the programmes perform? Do they meet the needs of all involved?'), since as pointed out:

Proposals for policy changes and new modified interventions generally arise out of the **dissatisfaction** of one or more groups of stakeholders with the effectiveness and efficiency of existing policies and programs, or out of the realization that a new social problem is about to emerge.

Rossi and Freeman, 1993:60 (emphasis mine)

Similarly, the role of the diagnostic evaluation in education is to diagnose and define educational problems and the targets of proposed interventions through systematic and replicable procedures. The role of evaluators, therefore, is to perceive and conceptualise problems that occur in educational environments and to design remedial action accordingly. Yet, social problems are not always easily conceptualised because they are not always objective phenomena, but rather they are socially constructed by different parties involved (Rossi and Freeman, 1993). It may be true in the case of this study that some stakeholders will see the problem of lack of FLTYL believing that FL instruction should start early in the first place. Other groups of stakeholders, on the other hand, may have a different opinion on this fundamental matter and dismiss the need for teachers up-front.

I would also agree with Rossi and Freeman (*ibid.*) that a social condition is defined as problematic only when it is identified as such in the arena of politics. Indeed, the Polish educational authorities have not so far seen any problems related to teacher training for early foreign language instruction because in the state sector officially there is hardly any such instruction. Thus, before a remedy action is designed and started, it is vital to have the thorough understanding of the nature and scope of the problem it is meant to address as well as precise information about the corresponding program targets and the context in which the intervention will operate. As Rossi and Freeman (1993:63) rightly note:

In the case of major social problems ... better program development and planning, and better evaluation designs, can be devised on the basis of grounded knowledge rather than surmise and conjecture. Furthermore, when action is taken in the absence of knowledge, it is important to acquire such knowledge as soon as efficiently as possible so that the program activities and evaluation plans can be adjusted and fine tuned to produce maximum.

Consequently, the main purpose of the present study is to provide guidance in planning and implementing a teacher training programme as well as to decide if a new programme should be launched at all since some substantive changes within the current teacher training scheme are feasible (see section 2.17).

3.1.2. The political dimension, utilisation and stakeholders

Another key feature of evaluation research is that it is bound to face political issues, related to power, ideology and purpose. Since most evaluations are concerned with innovation and change, they always have their advocates and sponsors on one side, and critics and sceptics, on the other, and therefore, it is almost inevitable that they have a political dimension. 'Program evaluation is integrally intertwined with political decision making

about societal priorities, resource allocation, and power' (Green, 1994:531). Evaluation of social programmes, also those in education, manifest responses to individual and community needs and are themselves 'the creatures of political decisions. They [are] proposed, defined, debated, enacted, and funded through political processes, and in implementation they remain subject to [political] pressure—both supportive and hostile' (Weiss, 1987:47, cited in Green, 1994:531). Thus, values that are promoted in evaluation, and questions asked in relation to program goals or the quality and effectiveness of a program, quite often do not reflect the inquirers autonomous or theoretical predictions, but rather 'a politicized process of priority setting' (*ibid.*).

Indeed, the issues discussed in the present work—teacher training and FL instruction—have always attracted the attention of the main political powers. Since evaluation is mostly about assessing worth it is thus no wonder that it is so closely linked to the underlying issues of the country's political and educational priorities. In the same way as the political situation in Poland was changing in the past 50 years, so did the attitude towards FL teaching. The evaluations of the past 'accidentally' corresponded with Polish political preferences—they highly valued Russian as the FL and indicated that almost the entire Polish population wanted to learn it. Now, with the accession of Poland to the EU, evaluation studies may unintentionally force a European Union-oriented educational policy.

The political dimension is related to the purported utilisation of evaluation findings. In the evaluation research process it is vital to look at utilisation as a crucial part of the evaluation plan. In the first place, we have to ask ourselves why answers to evaluation questions are needed in the first place. As Patton (1990) noted utilisation plans have to be laid down **before** data are ever collected. Answering an ordinary research-significance question, 'What difference will this study make?' is vital for any evaluative research. Thus, the process of decision making about the content, focus, and methods of the evaluation has to take into account how the information collected will be further applied to practice by specific intended evaluation users (Patton, 1990). The evaluator then has to identify out of all audiences those stakeholders who will possibly use the information that the evaluation produces.

Since 'the focus [of evaluation] is on intended use by intended users' (Patton, 1990:122), an evaluator frequently has to represent several constituencies which often have competing needs. 'In all evaluation settings there are multiple, often competing audiences—groups

and individuals who have vested interests in the programme being evaluated (stakeholders) ... [thus] evaluators must negotiate whose questions will be addressed and whose interests will be served' (Green, 1994:531).

As far as the evaluation users are concerned, I recognised the following:

- **Legislators**—high level policy and decision makers in the Ministry of National Education
- **Programme developers and managers**—mid-level managers in HEIs, course directors and teaching staff
- **Programme clients**—teacher training programme participants
- **Beneficiaries**—elementary school headteachers, students and parents

Since the interests and needs of those stakeholders differ, so do the relevant research questions. Likewise, the answers to research questions came from multiple perspectives and involved multiple research methods and data collection techniques. As Patton (1990:122) advises, utilisation-focused evaluation has to be open and flexible and 'creative, practical evaluators need a full repertoire of methods to use in studying a variety of issues'.

Thus, bearing in mind the specific purpose the research is going to serve and its potential users, I decided to collect and analyse data using both qualitative and quantitative methods. I believed that different groups involved may be more receptive to one type of component, e.g. ministerial officials may be more receptive to numerical findings, while verbal description may be more informative for course designers. And thus, I reckoned that it might be a good tactical decision to include a quantitative component to address specific stakeholders while, at the same time, preserve the qualitative element for the research questions that could not be answered otherwise (Bryman, 1992; Bird, 1992).

3.1.3. Paradigms and pragmatism

However, while deciding to use a multimethod approach I was aware of the possible methodological dilemmas and challenges I was going to face. I was conscious that evaluators, like other researchers, have split into the opposing camps of the advocates of a scientific (positivistic, hypothetico-deductive, quantitative) paradigm in evaluation and those who favour a naturalistic (humanistic, holistic-inductive, qualitative) framework of inquiry. While the scientific approach to evaluation is associated with experimental, macro scale studies serving central decision makers, the humanistic approach of evaluation

involves naturalistic investigations in which a programme is seen through the eyes of its developers and clients and which aim their findings at the local scene.

In recent years there has been a heated debate among researchers and evaluators over the relevance of a qualitative and quantitative 'paradigm war'. Individual researchers, academic departments, and even entire disciplines have apparently felt obliged to declare allegiance to one or to the other (see Murphy, Dingwall, Greatbatch, Parker and Watson, 1998, for review).

For researchers like Guba and Lincoln (1981, and also Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Smith and Heshusius, 1986) paradigm distinction is real and critical. According to Guba and Lincoln, quantitative and qualitative paradigms represent rival ontological, epistemological, and axiological postures and thus are incompatible. The choice of a positivistic or naturalistic paradigm (methodology) necessarily refers to the choice of methods (tool and techniques) attributed to them. The authors claim that the researcher always operates within either one paradigm or the other and methodologies disconnected from the paradigm are meaningless.

Other researchers (see examples in Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989) take a 'situationist' stance and argue that the methods do not follow logically paradigm distinction and the choice of paradigm does not necessarily imply the choice of methods. The two research traditions are simply an indication of different ways of conducting social investigations, which are appropriate to different kinds of research question. Thus, it is possible to combine qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study but in different phases and for different purposes, with little, if any, integration between the procedures and findings.

The third camp of researchers, however, argues that the narrow dichotomised 'either-or' approach is exaggerated (Bryman, 1988, 1992) and artificial (Newman and Benz, 1998). In the realm of scientific research the dichotomy does not exist; rather, 'both qualitative and quantitative paradigms coexist in a unified real world of inquiry' (Newman and Benz, 1998: xvii). It seems that that in the postmodernist reality at the end of the 1990s, disciplinary and methodological boundaries are often blurred.

Postmodernism has affected all the disciplines and has gained ascendancy in the humanities, arts, philosophy, and the natural sciences. Disciplinary boundaries are regularly broken. (...) The core of postmodernism is the *doubt* that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the "right" or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge. Postmodernism *suspects* all truth claims of masking and serving particular interests in local, cultural, and political struggles. But postmodernism does not automatically reject conventional

methods of knowing and telling as false or archaic. Rather, it opens those standard methods to inquiry and introduces new methods, which are also, then, subject to critique.

Richardson, 1994:517

Crossing the traditional disciplinary boundaries in research usually denotes employing the methods that are typical of one discipline or another. Eisner (1991:41) holds that

Not only can studies be qualitative by degree – that is, some qualitative studies may be extremely figurative and literary while others more literal in the use of language – they can employ both literary and quantitative forms of representation. There is no reason why several forms of representation, including the quantitative, cannot be combined in the conduct of a study that is dominantly qualitative in character, or vice versa.

Patton (1988) makes a clear distinction between the paradigms being competing and incompatible by saying that in the real world quantitative and qualitative researches compete for resources and credibility and this is why they rely so much on contrasting features rather than similarities. This, however, does not imply that paradigms are incompatible and cannot be logically employed together.

As practice shows, there are in fact several overlaps between the two methodologies. Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) have listed various way in which the two paradigms are similar and compatible:

1. SIMILARITIES:

- Both approaches generate knowledge
- Both approaches are rigorous
- Both approaches share findings with the field
- Both approaches utilise measurement

2. COMPLEMENTARITIES:

- The knowledge utilised by each approach is complementary
- The measurement methods of each approach are complementary
- Each approach can inform and assist the other approach

In the similar vein, Goodwin and Goodwin (1984) note that vociferous debate between proponents of qualitative and quantitative research is caused by three misunderstandings or ‘myths’:

Myth 1: Quantitative and qualitative research strategies represent clearly different, mutually exclusive paradigmatic perspectives.

Myth 2: Qualitative methods are always ‘naturalistic’, unobtrusive, and subjective, whereas quantitative methods are always controlled, obtrusive and objective.

Myth 3: Measurement-related validity and reliability are interrelated in qualitative research.

Since these myths are not always true (see Murphy *et al.*, 1998: 64ff, for discussion), there are several proponents (Brannen, 1992a, 1992b; Bryman, 1988; Reichardt and Cook, 1979; Creswell, 1994; Goodwin and Goodwin, 1984, 1996; Howe, 1985, 1988; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Newman and Benz, 1998; Patton, 1980, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1997; Shulman, 1988; and in Poland: Palka, 1989, 1997; and Zaręba, 1998) of a pragmatic stance which holds that the choice between quantitative and qualitative methods is a technical decision which should be made in terms of their appropriateness in answering particular research questions. In other words, the two methods are essentially a ‘horses for courses’ or a ‘tool-kit’ from which ‘a researcher can choose, on the basis of which method is likely to produce the most comprehensive and valid answers’ (Murphy *et al.*, 1998:59). As Shulman proposes (1988:15):

We must avoid becoming educational researchers slavishly committed to some particular method. The image of the little boy who has just received a hammer for a birthday present and suddenly finds that the entire world looks to him like a variety of nails, is too painfully familiar to be tolerated. We must first understand our problem, and decide what questions we are asking, then select the mode of disciplined inquiry most appropriate to those questions. If the most proper methods are highly quantitative and objective, fine. If they are more subjective or qualitative, we can use them responsibly as well.

Similarly, Patton notes that too much research, evaluation, and policy analysis is ‘based on habit rather than situational responsiveness and attention to methodological appropriateness’ (1990:38). Researchers should avoid routine ways of thinking and ‘paradigmatic blinders’, which constrain methodological flexibility and creativity. Instead, investigators should base their methods decisions on practical need and situational responsiveness, rather than on the consonance of a set of methods within any particular philosophical paradigms.

Rather than believing that one must choose to align with one paradigm or the other, I advocate a paradigm of choices. A paradigm of choices rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of **methodological appropriateness** as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality. The issue then becomes not whether one has uniformly adhered to prescribed canons of either logical-positivism or phenomenology but whether one has made sensible methods decisions given the purpose of the inquiry, the questions being investigated, and the resources available.

Patton, 1990:39 (emphasis in original)

Patton argues that it is the very paradigms exist because they make the life of researcher easier—they reduce the painstaking methodological decisions *how* to be flexible and situationally responsive by making the methods choices routine and obvious.

Paradigms tell practitioners what is important, legitimate, and reasonable. As such, paradigms are normative and largely implicit, telling evaluators what to do without the necessity of long existential or epistemological considerations.

Patton, 1988:128

The real decisions that researchers have to make are far beyond 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' paradigms. The real options are much more complex than simple choices between 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' paradigms and involve measurement options, design options, personal options, analysis options. Hence, polarising and highlighting differences in values between the paradigms are useful pedagogical devices but in reality researchers make their methods choices along the continuum. It is quite rare that actual studies are comprehensive in methodology so as to be genuinely 'pure' to either paradigmatic ideal. And several compromises in methods result from practical considerations, political limitations, limited resources and time. On the whole, researchers make their choices from a highly pragmatic, empirical perspective that has little to do with strictly logical and theoretical perspective. As Murphy *et al.* (1998:59) have rightly observed 'The researcher should not argue whether qualitative methods are better than quantitative methods, without adding the rider, 'better for what?'

Altogether, it was not the philosophical underpinnings of the two approaches or the superiority of one approach over another that were the decisive factors for undertaking a mixed-method approach but the appropriateness of methods to address a specific research problem. I believed that the use of methods derived from both qualitative and quantitative approaches would do it in a better way than either of the two methods alone could offer. In particular, I recognised the following potential advantages that such an approach may bring (based on Jick, 1979; Bryman, 1988, 1992; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989; Newman and Benz, 1998):

1. PHILOSOPHY

- **Flexible and more creative design** — Using multiple methods and making practical decisions; pragmatism and openness to adapt inquiry as understanding deepens and/or situations change; avoiding getting lock into rigid designs that eliminate responsiveness; attempt to pursue new paths of discovery as they emerge. As Jick says (1979), mixed-method design allows one to go beyond the traditional research 'package' and stimulate new ways of 'capturing' the problem.
- **Inductive and deductive approach combined** — Some evaluation questions determined deductively while others were left sufficiently open to permit inductive analyses based on direct experience. Openness to whatever emerges—lack of predetermined constraints on outcomes, with minimal researcher manipulation.

- **Personal contact and insight** — Direct and personal contact with people under study in their own environments (whenever possible); my own experience and insights are an important part of the inquiry, critical to understanding the phenomena under study.
- **Inside and outside perspectives** — Comparison of both insider and outsider perspectives; seeing the problem from different angles. The researcher is detached from the setting in some stages and immersed at others.
- **Preserving emphatic neutrality** — Complete objectivity is impossible; pure subjectivity undermines credibility; the researchers passion should be understanding the world in all complexity—not providing something, not advocating, not advancing personal agendas, but understanding. The researcher includes personal experiences and emphatic insight as part of the relevant data, moving towards a natural non-judgemental stance or toward whatever content may emerge.
- **Context sensitivity** — Findings placed in a social, historical, and temporal context.
- **Capturing macro/micro levels** — a qualitative approach is much more suitable for exploring problems on a micro level (individual teachers) whilst quantitative research may provide a better macro picture (teacher training in Poland in general). Combining the two approaches will help to bridge the micro/macro gap.
- **Holistic and particular perspective** — Mixed methods will help to get both an overview of the situation and individual close-ups of the units under study. The accounts of educational reality can be much more complete and rich. Quantitative study will be employed to plug the gaps in a qualitative research and vice versa.

2. MEASUREMENT

- **Facilitation** — A quantitative component will enhance the sampling and the selection of themes for qualitative study. It will be more suitable to answer questions of ‘How many? What kinds?’ types, the answers to which will provide background information on context and subjects for a subsequent qualitative study which will, on the other hand, generate a theory how teachers should be trained, help to identify variables and aid scale construction. The feasibility of applying such a theory into practice will be tested via qualitative case study.
- **Nature of data** — Combining the advantages of quantitative portrayals (statistical precision, linearity, normality, cause-effect relationships) with the strengths of qualitative close-up portrayals of holistic settings (emphasis on nuance, setting, complexity, interdependencies, and context).
- **Multiple perspectives** – Combining multiple methods will help to research the problem from different angles: that one of the different participants involved (teachers, headteachers, parents, and teacher-trainers) and the researcher’s. I will be able to get an ‘insider’s (i.e. I as a teacher trainer) vs. outsider’s perspective (I as a researcher). I will have an opportunity to give a voice to the groups that are rarely heard (i.e. ask teachers what type of teacher training will suit their needs best).
- **Complexity** — Multimethod approach has a special relevance because of the complexity and multitrait characteristics of the phenomena studied.

3. ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

- **Triangulation** — seeks for convergence, corroboration, and correspondence of findings that are derived from the other method used. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods used may help to diminish bias of theory, researcher or method.
- **Initiation** — seeks the discovery of paradoxes, new perspectives and helps to ‘uncover the deviant or off-quadrant dimensions of a phenomenon. Different viewpoints are likely to produce some elements which do not fit a theory or model’ (Jick, 1979: 609).
- **Complementarity** — Qualitative and quantitative findings will elaborate, enhance, clarify and illustrate each other. In that way the interpretation and meaningfulness, and validity of results may be enhanced by ‘capitalising on inherent method strengths and counteracting inherent biases in methods and other sources’ (Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989:259). A qualitative component may help to broaden and explore explanations of the underlying factors and strengthen the validity of the causal relationships between variables established through a quantitative study.
- **Development** — the results from one method will be used to inform and develop another one (e.g. sampling, development of data collection instrument and its implementation).
- **Generalisability** — The addition of a quantitative component may help to overcome the problem that it is usually impossible to generalise from qualitative research (in statistical terms).
- **Numbers and words** — the use of numerical description of the general scene buttressed with detailed, thick description (Geertz, 1973) ‘in depth’, using verbatim quotation capturing people’s personal perspectives and experiences. Miles and Huberman (1994) hold that we need both words and numbers and ‘both types of data can be productive for descriptive, reconnoitring, exploratory, inductive, opening-up purposes. And both can be productive for explanatory, confirmatory, hypothesis-testing purposes’ (p.42).
- **Utilisation** — The choice of research methods has to take into account how the information collected will be further applied into practice by specific intended evaluation users (Patton, 1990). It may be therefore a good tactical decision to address research questions using both qualitative and quantitative methods since groups of stakeholders may be more sensitive to findings generated by one methods and not the other.

Strong as this rationale is, this is not to say that I was not aware of some potential dangers of combining qualitative and quantitative methods in one study. In particular, I thought that the study may be criticised for the difficulty, if not impossibility of replication (Jick, 1979). On the technical side, I also knew that merging qualitative and quantitative approaches might generate numerous problems such as these listed in Mitchell (1986:24):

- The difficulty how to combine numerical (quantitative) and linguistic or textual (qualitative) data;
- The problem how to interpret divergent results obtained from qualitative and quantitative data;
- The issue of what to do with overlapping concepts that emerge from the data and are not clearly differentiated from each other;
- The problem of whether and how to weight different data sources, and
- The issue whether each different method used should be equally sensitive and weighted equally.

These issues are addressed in sections 3.4 and 3.5.

Besides, being a single and inexperienced researcher I considered very carefully possible constraints in terms of time and money. I was particularly aware of the fact that such design would require a lot of imagination and skill (Jick, 1979), and an excellent working knowledge of both approaches (Creswell, 1994). Yet rather than being threatened and intimidated by these demands, I treated them as a challenge, even though throughout the research the following warning kept going in my head:

While it is possible, and in some cases desirable to use the two approaches together (...), the same person attempting to carry out a sophisticated quantitative study while doing an indepth qualitative study **is likely to produce a big headache**. Researchers, especially novices, trying to combine good quantitative design and good qualitative design have a difficult time pulling it off, and rather than producing a superior hybrid, usually produce a piece of research that does not meet criteria for good work in either approach.

Bogdan and Biklen, 1992:43 (emphasis mine)

Nevertheless, despite some definite shortcomings (see 3.2.2), I decided that the respective strengths of using the multimethod approach outweighed the potential dangers and if used with caution such an approach might produce better research results.

In conclusion, the use of methods that derive from two different philosophical paradigms was not only a technical decision that would serve the purpose of this study better. Neither was it a mere compromise that some audiences are more receptive to the findings derived from one method or another, or are more likely to participate in a certain type of research. I believed that the use of mixed methods would address the problems posed at the beginning of this thesis in a better way than either of the two methods alone could offer. I assumed, too, that the interaction between the datasets, drawing from both inductive and deductive logic of inquiry and cross-checking the findings would prove to be fruitful to the outcomes of the study. I wanted to get advantage of the strengths that the two approaches offer and try to minimise the drawbacks of both. Therefore, it was a conscious decision that a

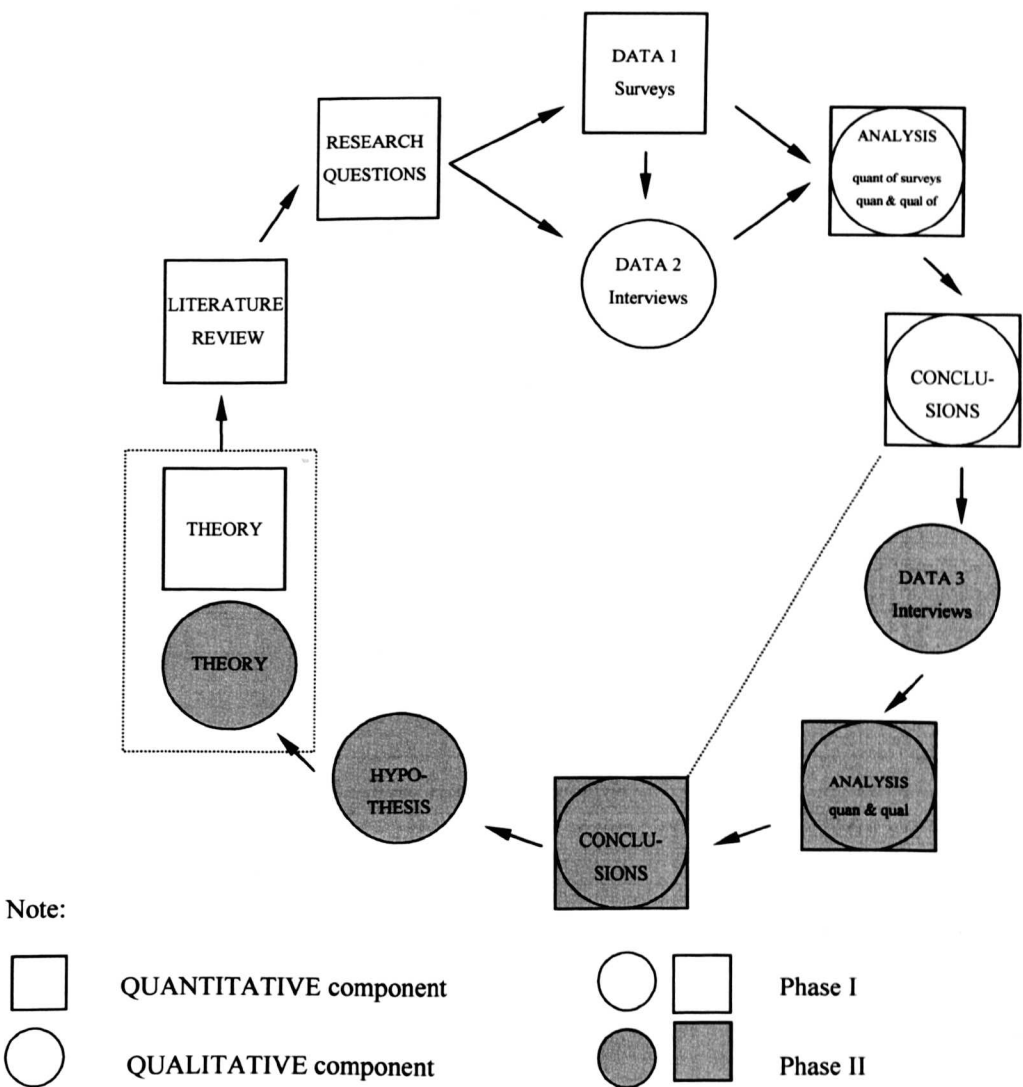
multimethod and multistage data collection would result in getting a more holistic, accurate and truthful answer to the research problem.

3.2. Research design

3.2.1. Logical framework

Bearing in mind the specific purpose of this research, I designed it accordingly. Out of the models proposed by Morse (1991), Creswell (1994), Miles and Huberman (1994), Patton (1987, 1990), I decided to build my own analytical frame (Figure 3-1) on the basis of Newman and Benz's (1998) notion of science as 'an interactive continuum'.

Figure 3-1 The qualitative-quantitative interactive research continuum



SOURCE: the design based on Newman and Benz, 1998:21

According to Newman and Benz, science is both positivistic and naturalistic in its assumptions, i.e. instead of a polarising dichotomy between the qualitative and quantitative paradigms, there is a continuum of methods. They hold that:

If we accept the premise that scientific knowledge is based upon verification methods, the contribution of information derived from a qualitative (inductive) or quantitative (deductive) perspective can be assessed. It then becomes clear how each approach adds to our body of knowledge by building on the information derived from the other approach.

Newman and Benz, 1998:20

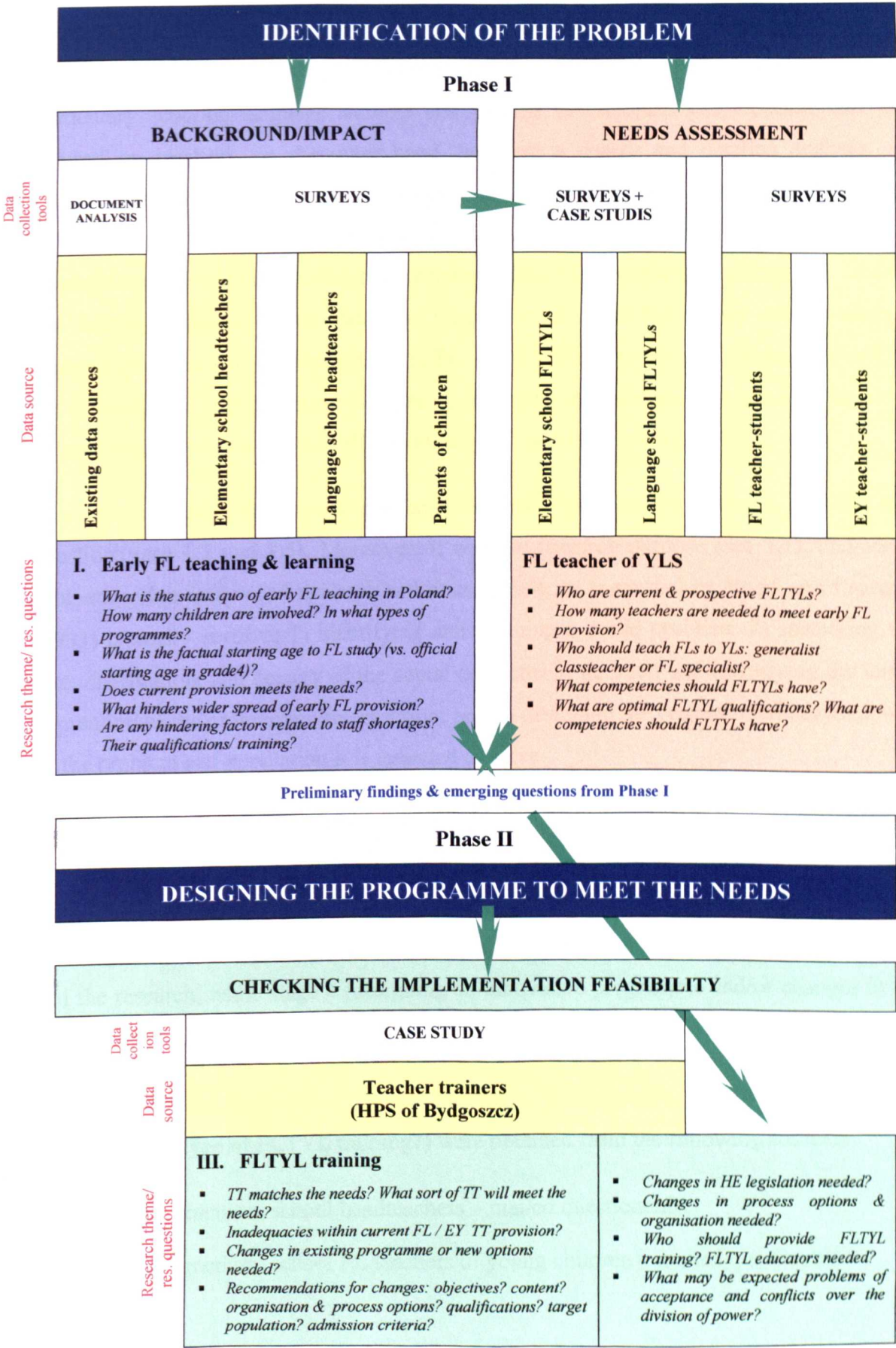
Newman and Benz point out that the researcher can test a theory and then feed back the results to the original hypothesis. In this procedure both inductive and deductive processes are operational at different points of time, i.e. when qualitative and quantitative methods are invoked respectively, and feedback loops maximise the strengths of both methodologies. In qualitative-quantitative philosophy of educational research, theory is neither the beginning nor the end of the process. The research continuum encompasses the research holistically. It involves both *theory building* (the qualitative part) and *theory testing* (the quantitative part) and thus, it closes the gap and completes the circle in what Glaser and Strauss (1967) call 'grounded theory discovery'.

These premises are also true for the logical framework used in this study. Conceptually, in this model, theory is neither at the beginning nor at the end, but the qualitative and quantitative components overlap and continue the cycle closing the theory-building/theory-testing gap. The study is both inductive and deductive in nature and data is collected through qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data is analysed through both statistical and content analysis. The subsequent elements add up to the body of knowledge. They not only complement each other, but also are used to check for accuracy and verification of findings (see also 3.4).

3.2.2. Data collection framework

The research design is always an outcome of the compromise between what was desirable and what was feasible. The trade-offs in this study were necessitated by limited resources, limited time spent in the site in Poland, and obviously, as Patton (1987:45) puts it, 'limits in the human ability to grasp the complex nature of social reality'. These inevitably determined the range and scope of the issues and questions to be studied, the choice of evaluation model, the research site, sampling, data collection instruments, and data analysis.

Figure 3-2 Data collection framework



The most important tradeoffs involved the data collection framework (Figure 3-2 above), i.e. considering the relative merits of breadth versus depth of the data collected. Consequently, as far as information on FL teaching to children is concerned, I decided to design this stage quite broadly and collect a large variety of data from different sources—elementary schools, language schools and parents of children. The research unit that focused on teachers, on the other hand, involved a deeper and detailed analysis. As teachers and their training were the research priority, my intention was to get as thorough information on teachers' background and needs as possible. Thus, the data collection involved both surveys and in-depth interviews among FL teachers from elementary schools and language schools. These data was supplemented with the survey among teacher-students from the two departments—the FL and EY. Finally, the part aiming at checking the feasibility of implementing changes or launching an innovative programme involved indepth interviews in a selected HEI providing EY and FL teacher training.

The data collection framework has been designed to meet the research problem and questions (see 1.2 and 1.5). Moreover, it was the research purpose (see 3.1), diagnostic evaluation that influenced research activities. These, as suggested by Rossi and Freeman (1993) typically involve: 1) identifying and defining a social problem; 2) specifying the size, distribution, and density of the social problem; 3) defining and identifying the target population of the programme/intervention; and 4) designing the programme/intervention to fit the problem and population it is intended to serve.

However, this neat division into research stages was not possible. In the present research the 'problem' and its specification are current and prospective FLTYL themselves for whom the 'intervention' programme (a specialist FLTYL training programme) is going to be designed. Thus, stages 1-3 were merged and conducted simultaneously during the Phase I of the research, while stage 4 (designing an innovative programme and/or changes in the current system and checking their implementation feasibility) constituted Phase II.

The answers to the three sets of research questions (What early FL provision? What type of teacher? What type of FLTYL training?) were obtained from the following sources:

1. Elementary school headteachers – mailed questionnaire
2. Elementary school FL teachers of young children – mailed questionnaire

3. Language school headteachers – telephone survey)⁴⁸
4. Student teachers from EY and FL departments – group-administered questionnaires
5. Parents of children from classes 1-3 – group-administered questionnaires
6. Elementary school FL teachers of young children – semi-structured interviews
7. HEIs staff: the HPS of Bydgoszcz – semi-structured interviews
8. Official statistics, HE documents and parliamentary bills.

(See also Figure 3-2 how these relate to research questions, and section 3.3.1 for the overview of the time lines)

Phase I of the study was aimed at the conceptualisation of the problem, whether there is a need for FLTYLs. It was specified using the existing data sources, mainly official statistics on FL teaching in Poland and purpose-made surveys distributed among different parties involved: elementary school, language school headteachers, and parents of children from classes 1-3. This part was designed to provide some information about the forms of courses, numbers of students taking part, teachers involved and the future needs of school in this respect and assess if what is available to children meets the demand. In addition, the headteacher survey was also a tool in designing teacher and parent surveys' samples.

Having researched the background, I moved on to investigating the FLTYLs. The teachers were first approached through the mailed questionnaire that aimed at diagnosing the key issues connected with teachers of foreign languages to children. The focus was on stating who teaches and what qualifications s/he has and the main groups compared comprised FL vs. EY specialist. Due to the survey abandonment, no comparison between elementary school FLTYLs and those from language schools was possible. The proper assessment of FLTYLs' training needs was conducted through the qualitative, in-depth interviews with a selected sample. This part was designed to give me further insight into the problems of an adequate training of teachers for the early teaching of foreign languages. The findings from the teacher surveys and interviews were complemented with the survey among teacher-

⁴⁸ A very low response rate during the elementary school survey resulted in introducing some changes in administration of the language school survey. The language school headteacher mailed survey was replaced by a telephone survey. Yet, approaching the heads of language schools did not bring intended results in terms of response rate among the teachers and since no replies were obtained, the survey was abandoned altogether (see sections 3.3.4 and 3.3.5).

students from both FL and EY departments. It provided additional information about the type, organisation and content of teacher training.

This general background was intended to clarify if there was a need for a special, tailor-made course to address the needs of teachers already practising, but without necessary qualifications and preparation (as perceived by experts – see Part 4 of the Literature Review). Additionally, I wanted to describe the sizes and types of populations for the proposed teacher training courses (i.e. pre-service vs. in-service; concurrent vs. consecutive vs. modular; double or single diploma; daily, evening or extra-mural) and gauge the appropriateness of proposed intervention programme.

Phase II of the research was concerned with the perspectives of those who are usually responsible for implementing and running the teacher training courses (principals and course co-ordinators of HEIs, the directors and the academic staff). The site chosen comprised the Higher Pedagogical School of Bydgoszcz, one of the biggest teacher training providers in the region. The original idea to design a FLTYL training course out of the responses from Phase I of the study and check its implementation feasibility was abandoned. This is because the data collection coincided with the setting up a new offering at the HPS of Bydgoszcz—a double specialisation course in EY education and FL teaching. Even though this course was not intended to train FLTYLs (see discussion in Appendix A), due to its name and departments involved, there was much confusion about the purpose it was supposed to serve. Since I did not want to add to even greater confusion asking informants to consider still another training course, I decided to treat EY+FL education teacher training offered at the HPS of Bydgoszcz as a starting point to discussion. Both the design of this offering and the opinions of the teacher trainers were then contrasted with the results emerging from Phase I on what actual FLTYLs' training needs are.

Consequently, the main objective of the second phase was to obtain the opinions from key people on the feasibility of setting up a new programme or implementing some changes within the current provision to solve the problem of an adequate teacher preparation for early FL instruction. I anticipated some disparity between the opinions expressed the academics representing EY and FL departments. Besides, I expected a big discrepancy between the optimal course as 'designed' out of the inservice teachers' needs and ideas about the optimal programme as seen from the perspective of academic staff. And most

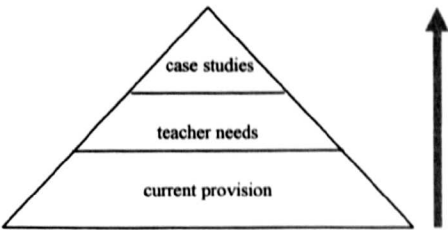
importantly, I was interested what factors (if any) may be hindering implementation of new FLTYL training offerings.

At this point of research design process, however, I made a very significant decision not to collect data from possibly *the* most important group of stakeholders—pupils involved in early FL instruction. Excluding pupil data from the study contributes to imbalance between the detailed presentation of pupils in the literature and lack of their voice in the research itself, which admittedly is a serious limitation of the research design (see section 5.2). My decision was motivated by abundance of other data on the one hand; and lack of an suitable data collection instrument on the other. My feeling was that due to young age of informants, using, as in other cases, a survey questionnaire to collect pupil data might prove inappropriate. On the other hand, time constraints prevented me from using other, more suitable, data collection tools.

3.2.3. Choice of data collection instruments

Some of the factors underpinning the choice of research instruments were related to the choice of appropriate research methodology. I considered the two main research approaches and methods associated with them in the light of their potential capacity to answer particular research questions. Furthermore, the process of selecting research instruments was a compromise between the tools’ appropriateness, relationship between different datasets (the logic of inquiry) and pragmatic considerations, such as participants involved, the future audience and convenience (costs and speed).

The research design (see 3.2.2) involved multistage data collection, with the research focus shifting from the mere description and evaluation of the current system, through an in-depth analysis of teacher needs and perceptions, to a single-case study of a teacher training institution. This type of framework is very much a macro-to-micro design, and can be represented diagrammatically as follows:



(See also discussion on data collection in section 3.3.)

In the survey research in Phase I, data was collected using mailed, telephone and group classes 1-3, FL teachers, and teacher-students. The survey approach seemed to be the most suitable because it allows the collection of data from a large number of people in a relatively short span of time (Robson, 1993; Mertens, 1998) and it also kept time spent in the research site to minimum. Moreover, a rapid data collection and analysis process was required since the data collection in Phase II was dependent on the availability of results from Phase I. Finally, the survey appeared appropriate for the research purpose— it enabled me to obtain a fairly detailed description of characteristics of different samples at one point of time. The questionnaire format also permitted statistical comparison between groups involved and the investigation of the relationships between various attributes.

Having decided on the survey, I was considering advantages and disadvantages of different questionnaire methods (see Palys, 1997:148). The decisive factors here were sample accessibility, its size and the time needed for data collection. As elementary schools were to be very busy throughout the final, pre-reform school year (as they will be in the first post-reform school year), the practical decision was made that it would be easier to obtain information from a larger sample of headteachers and teachers through a mail questionnaire and not, for example, via telephone or face-to-face structured interviews. Parents, on the other hand, were much more accessible through group-administered questionnaires, which were handed out, filled in and collected on the spot. Since the parent group is also far less homogenous than teacher or headteacher groups, my presence during the survey administration and help in clarifying ambiguities was a real advantage.

However, after the elementary school surveys it became clear that the mail questionnaire was not very effective because establishing a high response rate involved three or even in some cases four follow-ups, which considerably increased costs of the survey. Consequently, I decided to change my strategy and collect data from language school headteachers via telephone and to reassess a higher response rate.

These decisions influenced the time lines for the research process (see 3.3.1). I decided to access elementary school headteachers and teachers in April, just after the Easter break, and contact parents at the beginning of the school year, when most of the decisions about extra- and curricular activities of their children were made. However, due to a more time consuming telephone survey among the FL headteachers, I managed to access only some language schools and I sent the teacher questionnaires by the end of the school year. That part of the research had to be continued also in the new school year. Teacher interviews, on

the other hand, were arranged over a longer period of time, as individual arrangements had to be made with the participants.

Questionnaires, though, have some limitations. One of the biggest is that you have to be clear about the questions (and also the answers) you want to obtain. Despite piloting and refining questions (see discussion in section 3.3.1), it is sometimes the case that the results of surveys leave you with even more questions than answers (Robson, 1993) Thus, to enable answering at least some of the emerging questions, the surveys were supplemented with the face-to-face, individual interviews with the two most vital groups of informants: teachers and teacher trainers. The interviews did more than merely confirm the information obtained from the questionnaires. Rather, I aimed at exploiting the full potential that a qualitative approach could give. For instance, I felt that some issues cannot be adequately explored in a survey and some other need clarification, e.g. themes such as 'optimal teacher training' 'professionalism in language teaching', or 'training received vs. innate abilities' required further attention. Yet, the biggest advantage of the interviews is that they draw upon an inductive rather than deductive line of reasoning. It allows a researcher to remain open to new phenomena, rather than relying entirely on *a priori* questions and hypotheses. As Robson (1993:229) has pointed out:

The interview is a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out. The human use of language is fascinating both as behaviour in its own right, and for the virtually unique window that it opens on what lies behind our actions. Observing behaviour is clearly a useful enquiry technique, but asking people directly about what is going on is an obvious short cut in seeking answers to our research questions.

Face to face interviews offer the possibility of modifying one's line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self-administered questionnaires cannot. Non-verbal clues may give messages which help in understanding the verbal response, possibly changing or even, in extreme cases, reversing its meaning.

The flexibility of the interviews was one of the biggest advantages. Yet, at the same time I thought that making the use of verbatim quotes would be a very powerful tool for highlighting the problematic areas. The clash between what clients want and what the providers wish to offer called for description that would go far beyond percentages and correlation.

In my choice of a specific interviewing technique I opted for semi-structured interviews. An interview guide (see Appendix C.7 and C.8) was intended to provide some direction and scope of the themes explored and yet remained flexible enough to allow for new themes to emerge. Both the interviewer and the interviewees were free to explore some

themes in more detail or introduce new ones. Equally important was the fact that the interview guide was very useful while negotiating participants' consent. Having a sense of what topics needed to be covered, some interviewees felt much safer.

On the pragmatic side, I had to consider the target audience for the research findings (see 3.1.2). In a way, I saw potential for qualitative and quantitative components to generate 'hard' findings via a combination of statistical precision of quantitative method and thick description, verbatim quotations and sensitivity to nuance characteristics of qualitative methods. Research outcomes presented with what both methods have best to offer was perceived as potentially more powerful and thus, more appropriate, for an audience consisting of policy-makers and educational authorities, but possibly also teachers and teacher-trainers themselves.

In addition to the use of surveys and teacher indepth interviews, a set of target interviews was conducted in the Higher Pedagogical School (HPS) of Bydgoszcz. The single-case rather than multiple-case study design was chosen bearing in mind the time and resources available. Yin (1994) suggests that such a design is appropriate if it does not complete the research on its own but is treated only as part of the wider data collection framework. Thus, its role was exploratory and complementary to other sources of data.

Another rationale for selecting a single-case rather than a multiple-case design was that

the investigator has access to a situation previously inaccessible to scientific observation. The case is therefore worth conducting because the descriptive information alone will be revelatory.

Yin (1994:41)

Because, independently of my research, an initiative had been undertaken to design and launch a combined EY and FL teacher training course at the HPS of Bydgoszcz (see Appendix A), the original focus of diagnostic evaluation had to be shifted into an early-stages implementation evaluation. Highlighting this initiative and studying it in more detail seemed appropriate.

Besides, the HPS of Bydgoszcz was chosen because of its familiarity to the researcher and the relative accessibility of informants⁴⁹. Of course, the selection of this particular institution, from the whole range of institutions providing teacher training in Poland, has

⁴⁹ For the description of researcher's bias see section 3.5.3.

one very important limitation—it might not fully reflect problems in other TT institutions. Though I might claim that the HPS of Bydgoszcz bears some resemblance with other HPS in Poland, I was nevertheless aware that single-case study did not allow me to generalise the findings to other teacher training institutions, mainly universities and teacher training colleges, which operate within a slightly different structure (see Appendix A). Yet since all HEIs are autonomous and they are free to shape their programmes independently I would argue that no single study would encompass the issues common for all of them.

3.2.4. Characteristics of collection instruments

Two types of research instruments were used: the questionnaires (administered to the four groups involved – elementary school headteachers, teachers and parents of children enrolled in classes 1-3; language school headteachers and teachers, and teacher-students from FL and EY departments), and the follow-up, semi-structured interviews with two groups: teachers and teacher-trainers.

(For illustration on how data collection tools relate to research questions, see p.223ff)

Elementary and language school headteacher survey

The elementary headteacher questionnaire (Appendix C.1. and C.2) concentrated mainly on facts – past, present and future plans for provision of foreign languages in classes 1-3, the general profile of FL courses offered and teachers involved.

Some questionnaire questions were based on existing reports on foreign language teaching in elementary schools (Carroll, 1969; Burstall et al., 1974; INTO, 1991; Low et al., 1993); others were constructed specially to research the specific context. All questions, except 1-3, 6 (partly), 7 and 12, used a closed-choice format (multiple-choice questions or checklists), with alternative answers provided for the respondents to select one or more.

The first section (ABOUT SCHOOL) elicited demographic information about schools. This information was used to determine the relationship (if any) between the size of the school, organisational type (state vs. private) and languages taught, and school provision of foreign languages in classes 1-3.

The second section (FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN 1990-98) was aimed to offer information about foreign language provision (language taught, period of provision, teachers' qualifications and a course continuation) prior to research period. The underlying

question was, 'Who is best suited to teach teaching foreign languages to children: a FL specialist or an EY classroom teacher?'

The third section (FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THE SCHOOL YEAR 1998/99) dealt with the current provision of foreign languages in classes 1-3 and issues such as course organisation, student selection, number of students involved, choice of language taught, teacher's qualifications, cooperation with other teachers, amount of teaching time available, tuition, continuation of FL provision in classes 4-6 and the motive for FL provision in classes 1-3.

The last section (FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN 1999 ~) concentrated on the plans for the future (i.e. after the implementation of the education reform). The general aim was to test the hypothesis that the ministerial guidelines recommending the three additional hours in the 1-3 curriculum to be used for the foreign language instruction would remain largely on paper because of the shortage of teachers. Questions 25-26 inquired about opinions on the issue of optimal teacher qualifications for early FL instruction. Finally, a blank space was provided at the end of the questionnaire for further comments.

Elementary and language school teacher survey

The elementary teacher questionnaire (Appendix C.3 and C.4) consisted of 205 items in the form of open-ended questions, checklists, Likert scales, and rankings. Some questions were based on past reports (Carroll, 1969; Burstall, Jamieson, Cohen and Hargreaves, 1974; INTO, 1991; Low, Duffield, Brown and Johnstone, 1993). But since none of the existing evaluation instruments aimed primarily at evaluating FLES teacher training, most of the questions had to be either adapted or specially written to fulfil the research purposes and be relevant to the Polish situation.

Questions 1-6 and 8-9 in Section 1 (ABOUT YOU) ask about respondents' background: age, involvement in FL 1-3 teaching, foreign language taught, qualifications to teach FL and EY), and teaching experience. Question 7 asked about the likelihood of respondents' undertaking complementary studies to supplement their qualifications. In questions 10-12 respondents were asked to use the rating scales to self-evaluate their foreign language proficiency and artistic skills. The open-ended question 13 inquired about reasons for taking up teaching FL to young children.

In general, Section 1 was intended to provide a general portrayal of a foreign language teacher in classes 1-3. Demographic information from Section 1 was used later to identify the difference in professional preparation of the two main groups - FL vs. EY specialists - and the opinions presented in Section 2 and 3.

Section 2 (TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO CHILDREN) dealt with teachers' beliefs and classroom behaviour. Question 14 used a Likert scale to ask about opinions on common beliefs about young children as foreign language learners. I wanted to find out if there is any correlation between the teacher's beliefs on child second language acquisition and their professional background.

Questions 15-19 applied a ranking scale and multiple-choice questions to explore the theme of classroom practice, i.e. order of skills taught, use of the native language, priorities in teaching written and spoken forms, ways of teaching grammar and pronunciation. Question 20 used a scale to rate the usage of common teaching aids. In this part, the preconception was that differences in professional background would determine classroom practice.

Section 3 (FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS OF CHILDREN) asked about teachers' opinions on teacher training. In question 21 respondents were asked to rank the most important teacher factors. This was followed by a multiple-choice question (22) inquiring about the best-qualified person to teach FL children. Questions 23-24 asked specifically if a double specialisation course in FL and EY was a good idea and what components such a course should include. The last, open-ended question (25) asked for self-reflection and evaluation of the teacher training received.

Finally, a blank space at the end of questionnaire was provided for comments and a consent slip was attached for those who were willing to take part in the follow-up interview.

Parent survey

The questionnaire intended at eliciting information from parents of children from classes 1-3 comprised three major parts (see Appendix C.5). In the first one (FOREIGN LANGUAGES & YOUR CHILD) asked about FL learning prior elementary school and currently. It established factual information about the languages learnt, frequency and length of instruction, its organisation, and fees. Question 12-13 concerned the teacher

involved and evaluation his/her qualifications and teaching skills. The section 1 ended with question 18, aimed at these parents whose child was not involved in FL learning and asked for reasons of such situation.

In the second section (FOREIGN LANGUAGES & CHILDREN) used a Likert scale to evaluate the *status quo* of FL teaching to children and dealt with issues such as: course availability, variety, organisation, quality, fees, and teachers involved. Questions 20-26 concerned the optimal (future) organisation of early FL instruction, especially who should teach FL to children and what qualifications and personal qualities s/he should possess (questions 27-28). This part was intended at getting an overview of the parents' opinion and also at spotting the differences in opinions of parents whose children were and were not learning an FL.

Finally, the last section asked for background information: the question of who filled in the questionnaire, parents' ages, qualifications, occupation, and FL competence, and the number of children and their ages. This factual information was subsequently used at cross-comparison of various factors influencing the opinions provided.

Teacher-student survey

The main aim of the teacher-students questionnaire was to establish whether the students wish to become FLTYL in the future and if so, what their needs in terms of future training were. I also wished to know the basic characteristics of this group of prospective FLTYLs and thus the first section dealt mostly with factual information such as age, student status, degrees read for and already possessed. In questions 8-10 I asked the participants to self-evaluate their FL competence and artistic skills on a four-point semantic scale. Then, they were asked to assess their overall academic achievement. All these features were subsequently used to compare various student groupings against other variables, such as: past and current involvement in teaching FL to children (questions 12-13), and wish to become FLTYL and reasons against (question 14).

Question 15 asked students for their opinion as to who is the best teacher of young children (question 15) and what is optimal FLTYL training (question 16). These two questions were intended at comparison of opinions obtained from other study participants: parents, headteachers and teachers. As in the case of teacher survey, question 17 dealt with components that FLTYL training should include. The last questions asked the students to

point at the teacher training course that would be most suitable for their situation in order to supplement their qualifications to teach young children.

Teacher interviews

The set of three surveys was accompanied by individual, semistructured interviews with a sample of teachers currently involved in teaching foreign languages in classes 1-3. The interview guide (Appendix C.7) listed the most important themes to be discussed in each interview. However, I approached these flexibly, varying the order, the wording of questions, and introducing additional issues based upon my perception of what seemed relevant to the participants' situation.

The main themes covered in the interviews were:

- Teaching practices vs. training received.
- Teaching problems vs. training received.
- 'Peculiarities' of teaching to children vs. teenagers/adults, teacher of children vs. adults.
- A 'good' teacher of children – personality & abilities vs. training received.
- Improvement of early foreign language teacher training (forms of the training, course organisation, content).

Teacher-trainer interviews

The primary idea was to use, as in the case of teachers, both survey and interviews. However, the variety of respondents' backgrounds (e.g., different FL taught; EY vs. FL staff) made it almost impossible to construct a questionnaire that would be meaningful for all groups concerned. It seemed that the semi-structured interview would be a more flexible technique to elicit answers to the research questions.

Interviews were partially structured as a series of similar questions/themes which were asked and explored with the interviewees. The questions outlined in the interview guide (Appendix C.8) were developed on the basis of the results of Phase I of the research. As already mentioned (3.2.2), originally after the Phase I of data collection and analysis an innovative FLTYL training to meet the identified needs was to have been constructed and its implementation feasibility evaluated in the subsequent case study of the HPS of Bydgoszcz. In the meantime an innovative course—a combined EY and FL teacher training course at the HPS of Bydgoszcz—had been launched so the original research plans were re-adjusted. In addition to exploring a theme of an *optimal* FLTYL training, a new

perspective, the evaluation of a new programme in the early stages of implementation, was added.

Documents and secondary sources

In addition to the primary data, I gathered and analysed existing data sources such as:

- The official statistics on education in Poland and for the Bydgoszcz-region collected by the Central Statistical Office in Poland, the Bydgoszcz Province LEA and the Bydgoszcz Commune Education Board
- Teacher training curricula for the courses provided by the Higher Pedagogical School of Bydgoszcz in the areas of EY teacher training, FL teacher training and an innovative double specialisation teacher training course in Early Years Pedagogy and Foreign Languages
- The Ministry of National Education acts and official documents concerning primary and higher education in Poland with the special regard to the teacher training programmes' requirements and organisation.

3.3. Data collection

3.3.1. Overview

Research site

The researcher's home city—Bydgoszcz, Poland—was chosen for the research site. There were various important reasons for this. One of them was its accessibility for the researcher. Being a FL teacher trainer in the HPS in Bydgoszcz, I was familiar with the Bydgoszcz educational milieu and I had much easier access to the local school population. Such an approach was also consistent with my overall methodological framework, i.e. that educational research in general, and evaluation in particular, has to take into account the context in which phenomena studied occurred. As I have already indicated (see 3.1.1), before any curriculum change is going to be designed and started, it is vital to have the thorough understanding of the context in which the intervention will operate (Rossi and Freeman, 1993). Therefore, setting clear boundaries on my research site and limiting it to a single city helped me to capture the full complexity of the setting under investigation.

Besides, there was a danger that more representative samples derived from various settings would have to be analysed on a very abstract level. Different settings, different schools with different pupils and teachers, though certainly enhances generalisability, become an aggregate and average of individual variables that may not apply to any single case (Huberman and Miles, 1994). Hence, a familiar milieu helped to concentrate on 'here and

now': schools, parents, teachers and teacher-trainers who were no longer faceless, but had a unique history which I wanted to preserve at the expense of possibly drawing conclusions that were context-bound (see also section 3.5.2).

However, from my literature review I had gained the impression that initiatives for an early start in FL frequently begin from piloting an initiative at the regional level (e.g. in Italy, France, Austria) and it was not until the outcomes of these local initiatives are known that any decisions are made at the national level. I hypothesised that the same principle might be true for Poland and decided that such research outcomes would be more relevant to the local education institutions. My assumption was also that if local educational authorities had recently gained full autonomy to design and implement their own educational initiatives, for example in the area of FL instruction, teacher training had to be evaluated, at least to some extent, from the point of view of meeting the teachers' needs at the local level. Consequently, I designed the research samples to be representative for the local population. Yet the statistical evidence provided by CSO in Poland also suggests the Bydgoszcz commune educational profile is quite typical for a middle-size city commune in Poland.

Piloting

The English and Polish versions of the headteacher questionnaire were first revised by research colleagues who commented on wording and structure. After the necessary revisions, the Polish version of the questionnaires was piloted on a small scale with four former deputy headteachers. Small modifications had to be made in the questionnaire wording and in the cover letter accompanying headteacher questionnaire so as to make the distribution procedure more comprehensible.

The teacher questionnaires were piloted similarly. Research colleagues commented on the initial English and Polish drafts of the questionnaire. After the necessary revisions, the Polish version was piloted with a small sample of foreign language teachers and early years teachers. Again, some changes in question wording were made and, as suggested, the questionnaires were made anonymous and an interview consent slip was attached.

The parent questionnaire was piloted among the researcher's friends—20 couples who had children in classes 1-3 in different schools. During piloting, both mother and father were asked to fill in the questionnaire, primarily to boost the pilot sample but also to see if the questionnaire was comprehensible regardless of the parent's gender. Since the pilot stage

revealed quite big differences between the information provided by father and mother even though they were writing about the same child, an additional category of sex of parents who participated in the survey was added. Sensitive questions, such as job, occupation and financial situation were also tested to see if they were likely to be completed by the respondents. Since some of the questions were notoriously overlooked (e.g. child's gender) the layout was slightly changed. Other comments provided by respondents in the pilot denoted wording and response categories.

The teacher-student questionnaire was piloted among 50 English BA students (year 1st and 2nd). After the pilot stage it seemed that the questionnaire needed only a few minor corrections. In reality, however, the survey seemed to work better with the FL Philology students. Since the pilot sample did include EY students it was not clear if this was due to the differences in background and experience or, indeed, if the survey wording was more accessible to the FL students.

Documentation

Throughout the study I kept what I called a 'research filofax' which documented the ongoing research process⁵⁰. I kept track of all important research steps undertaken in it, the names of key informants, dates of the meetings and documents or information obtained, data collection and follow-up events, as well as some notes on the research process. I also came up with the idea of recording my own thoughts and problems about any interview that I just conducted. Later, I summarised these reflections in the filofax. This method proved to be quite effective and facilitated the data analysis phase.

All survey data were stored as SPSS files. They provided evidence for data files (both raw and 'tidied') and the output that recorded statistical analysis. Even though the Polish version of surveys was used, they were coded in English and analysed using English software. The answers to open-ended questions and comments were first translated and analysed qualitatively and later a coding system was developed for their further analysis.

As for case studies data, interviews were originally transcribed in Polish. Here I followed Flick's (1998) recommendation to 'transcribe only as much and only as exactly as it is required by the research question' (p.175). The reason for this was that exchanges were treated as a medium of transmitting certain message and meaning, and no linguistic

⁵⁰ cf. Dörnyei's idea of a 'research logbook' (Dörnyei, 2003:97).

analysis was attempted. Thus, the time that would have been invested in a conventional, exact transcription was invested in the analysis, and for subsequent findings' display, in translation. The recordings were transcribed according to the headings that roughly corresponded to research questions (see section 3.4.2 for further details). If the context was not clear, the interviewer's question asked was also noted. Because the utterances could not sometimes be easily classified under one heading only, a colour highlighting system for cross-referencing was used. Throughout transcription and afterwards, I noted down remarks on the margins that helped to identify emerging patterns. The other sides of transcription sheets were used for more reflective remarks, which later formed foundation of the written text of the research conclusions (analytic text).

Major steps

Data was collected through a number of media: questionnaires, structured interviews and semi-structured interviews. Figure 3-3 gives a summary of the data collection instruments, participants involved and time lines. The details of negotiation the access, sampling and administration procedures are included in section 3.3.2.

Figure 3-3 Overview of the research tools administration

	RESEARCH TOOLS	PARTICIPANTS	TIME LINES											
			1999									2000		
			Jan	Apr	May	June	July	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	
PHASE I														
DOCUMENTS & SECONDARY SOURCES	official stats, bills and acts on HE, TT curricula													
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HEADTEACHER SURVEY	postal questionnaire	49												
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY	postal questionnaire	22												
LANGUAGE SCHOOL HEADTEACHER SURVEY	telephone survey (struct. interview)	20												
LANGUAGE SCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY	postal questionnaire	0												
PARENT SURVEY	group-administered questionnaire	240												
TEACHER-STUDENT SURVEY	group-administered questionnaire	385												
PHASE II														
TEACHER CASE STUDY	semi-structured interview	12												
TEACHER-TRAINER CASE STUDY	semi-structured interview	14												
DOCUMENTS & SECONDARY SOURCES	official stats, bills and acts on HE, TT curricula													

3.3.2. Elementary school headteacher survey

Access

Though researchers in Poland are not formally obliged to seek the official permission of the authority under which schools operate, I wanted to ensure that I had consent to distribute and collect the questionnaires and continue the research with the teachers who volunteered to take part in interviews. In December 1998, I approached the Bydgoszcz province LEA director and the Bydgoszcz Commune Education Board Director and requested permission to carry out the research in the Bydgoszcz schools. I obtained formal consent in April 1999. Additionally, the commune authorities decided to assist with questionnaire distribution and I was invited to a meeting of the Bydgoszcz Commune Education Board with elementary school headteachers.

Sample and response rate

The sample for the survey (the mailed questionnaire) comprised all elementary schools in the city (represented by their headteachers): 60 state elementary schools and 4 privately owned (two by a church board and two by private owners). The four special elementary schools (three for special needs children and one for adults⁵¹) were exempted from in the survey as they did not provide FL instruction either in classes 1-3 or as a part of the compulsory education.

The response rate, as a result of three telephone follow-ups, was quite high: 76.5% (N=49). Since the FL instruction is treated differently in non-state elementary schools (starting age of compulsory instruction is 7), I regretted that two questionnaires from those were not returned despite telephone requests.

In brief, forty-nine schools participating in the survey can be characterised as following:

- As far as the organisational type is concerned, three schools were still run by the state, forty-four by the commune, and two were privately owned (one was run by a social organisation and one by a religious organisation)

⁵¹ Even though education in Poland is compulsory up till the age of 15, there are cases in which people drop out and do not get what is known as Basic Qualifications (*wykształcenie podstawowe*), i.e. the leaving certificate of elementary school, and as a result, are not eligible to enter vocational and secondary education. To enable those people obtaining basic qualifications, an elementary school programme is provided in Elementary Schools for Adults (evening and extramural) and some vocational schools.

- According to the number of pupils enrolled in 1998/99, the schools represented three categories⁵²: small schools (below 500 pupils)—37.2%, medium schools (501-1000 pupils)—58.10%, and big schools (over 1000 pupils)—4.7% of schools. The number of pupils enrolled in classes 1-3 was usually proportional and constituted c30% of the overall number of pupils enrolled into a school.
- As for the FLs taught as part of compulsory education (classes 5-8), the two predominant FLs were English (79.6%) and German (40.4%). In addition, French or Spanish was taught in two schools, while Russian was not taught at all. In 73.6% of schools only one FL was available, two FLs in 21.3% and three FLs were available only in one school (2.1%).

Administration

The headteacher and teacher questionnaires were distributed on April 14, 1999 during an official meeting of the Bydgoszcz Commune Education Board Director with Bydgoszcz elementary school headteachers. I was given an opportunity to introduce the research objectives, explain the method of response and encourage their participation.

Questionnaires were distributed as a set consisting of four questionnaires: one for the headteacher and three for teachers. Each set was enclosed in a large envelope with each questionnaire being accompanied by a cover letter (see Appendices C.2 and C.4), which presented a short description of the research, a confidentiality statement, the dissemination procedure, and the reply deadline. Moreover, the cover letter to headteachers explained the difficulty of selecting the teacher sample and asked headteachers to hand out teacher questionnaires to three, freely chosen teachers involved in FL instruction in classes 1-3. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was attached to each questionnaire.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. However, the official approval of the Bydgoszcz province LEA (*kuratorium*) and the Bydgoszcz Commune Education Board, and the way the surveys were distributed, might have made respondents feel obliged to respond. The headteacher questionnaires were named so the cover letter assured respondents of confidentiality of all data collected and disseminated.

Even though during the survey distribution meeting many headteachers seemed supportive in the research, the initial survey response turnout was very low and, unsurprisingly,

⁵² Excluding six missing cases (schools that have not provided the information on the number of pupils enrolled).

comprised schools that provided FL in classes 1-3. As suggested by de Vaus (1996), starting from two weeks after the deadline indicated in the cover letter, two follow-up telephone calls to the headteacher were made. If the questionnaire form was lost, a replacement was sent. Since, it turned out that the non-respondents constituted only those schools that did not provide FL instruction in classes 1-3, it was not necessary to send additional teacher questionnaires.

Surprisingly, some headteachers decided to use the information provided in the cover letter and contact me directly. Some of them wanted to know more about the teacher training programme for FLTYL that I was developing while some others wanted to share with me the problems that they had in their schools with either early FL instruction or lack of FL teachers for that. I treated those rather unexpected interviews as a form of follow-up data collection. At the end of each telephone conversation I asked what information I could use in the research and having obtained the consent I added those observations to the comments provided on the surveys. Yet, since this data was not collected in a rigorous way I treated them very tentatively. It helped me to analyse survey data more sceptically and add further insight to the problems studied.

3.3.3. Elementary school teacher survey

Access and administration

Questionnaires were distributed together with the elementary school headteacher survey (see section 3.3.2).

Sample and response rate

As the elementary school teacher sample was very difficult to find due to the headteacher's reluctance to provide any personal information about teachers involved in teaching FL in classes 1-3 (FL 1-3), I decided to apply a convenience sampling procedure and approach the teachers according to the following procedure:

- All headteachers were given three questionnaires to distribute randomly among those teachers who were/are involved in FL 1-3.
- The total number of schools involved in FL 1-3 was established through the headteacher survey and an approximate number of teachers involved was estimated.
- The sample of teachers that responded (the availability sample) was checked against its representativeness for an approximated teacher population (calculated in step 2).

- As requested by teachers in the pilot survey, teacher questionnaires were made anonymous and only those who agreed to take part in follow-up interviews were contacted (see 3.3.1)

Altogether, 35 teachers from 25 elementary schools responded to the survey. Nine questionnaires had to be excluded since they were filled in by teachers who had never taught FL to young children and their answers did not meet the research requirements. Eventually the sample of teachers comprised 26 teachers who represented 19 elementary schools. Since 29 elementary schools reported early FL instruction on their premises in one form or another (including FL courses organised by a language school), it could be estimated that teachers represent 65.5% of schools.

For the purpose of further comparison, the teacher sample has been subdivided into three groups (see the Analysis and Discussion Results chapter, Figure 4.27)⁵³:

- **Group A** (11 cases)—EY teachers (graduates of a BA/MA course in Pedagogy or EY Pedagogy)
- **Group B** (9 cases)—FL teachers (students of or graduates of a BA/MA course in FL Philology)
- **Group C** (6 cases)—OS (other subject teachers and teachers without formal teaching qualifications)

As for other characteristics, the sample comprised only females, 22-50 years old, with teaching experience varying from one year to twenty-one years. Twenty-two teachers taught English, two German, and two, French.

3.3.4. Language school headteacher survey

Access, sample and response rate

The main problem with designing a sample for this survey was related to a proper definition of ‘a language school’. In June 1999, the Bydgoszcz Municipal Court had 133 businesses which had FL instruction stated as their business activity. The size of those businesses, however, varied from big international schools to one-person enterprises. Being unable to see the differences between schools from the register, I decided to phone all 133 enterprises. First I excluded from the survey those who were unavailable (i.e.

⁵³ The teachers’ have been classified into the three groups on the basis of their highest teaching qualifications and in doubtful situations their teaching experience was consulted. The underlying assumption of the classification was the question which of the teachers’ formal qualifications and the job she had been involved in might have the biggest impact on her of perception on the phenomena investigated in the study.

invalid contact details), non-active or those that provide only home tutoring (either at a teacher's or pupil's house, for individual students or groups). Moreover, I excluded all institutions such as for example council leisure centres and youth clubs, whose primary activity is *not* providing foreign language instruction, even though for commercial reasons many of them did so. Next I tried to select those enterprises that fit into the category of a language school. For the sake of this research I decided to define a language school as 'an institution for the instruction of foreign languages comprising at least three teachers and 10 student groups at different language levels'.

Yet, I must admit that even armed with such a definition, the boundary between a 'school' and a 'private language teaching business' was not clear-cut. It was very difficult to judge if a single-teacher enterprise operating in a teacher's home or in a hired classroom and serving 15 groups of students is different from a small language schools with three teachers and 50 students.

Eventually, ten language schools were approached and headteachers interviewed at the beginning of June 1999. Since some schools were already closed for summer holidays and some new ones were established since September 1999, they were also included into the survey and interviews were made in February 2000. Altogether, the language school headteacher sample consisted of 20 language schools in the city of Bydgoszcz (defined as above).

Six schools in the sample were the branches of the international language school networks and, thus, they were bound to follow some standardised rules governing, for example, the choice of curricula, methodology or the employment of teachers. The rest were either regional branches of Polish businesses or individual schools founded only locally. The school sizes (i.e. number of students) varied from 1250-5000 to only 30-50 students enrolled⁵⁴. All language schools offered primarily English courses. Eight institutions were 'by name' English-only language schools while the others were driven by the market forces and offered a wider range of languages. In 1999/2000, German was taught in eight of them, French in two and Russian in one institution. Three other schools had French, Spanish, Italian or Russian on offer, but no groups were created due to the minimal interest.

⁵⁴ The precise numbers are not available since six schools treated this information as confidential.

Administration

The language school headteacher survey was originally intended to be a mail questionnaire, but being slightly disappointed with the response rate of elementary school headteachers and teachers mail questionnaire, I decided to approach foreign language principals via the telephone. Because this decision was taken at a late stage and I was not in Poland in June 1999 when the survey took place, each questionnaire was filled in by another trained interviewer during a telephone conversation with the language school headteacher. The surveys with additional 10 schools in February 2000 were conducted by myself using the same procedure as before.

The telephone survey was administered according to the following procedure:

1. Introducing myself and my purpose, making sure I was talking to the right person
2. Introducing the purpose of the survey and general research aims
3. Confidentiality statement and asking for consent
4. Posing survey questions (see Appendix C.3) and recording the answers on the questionnaire sheet
5. Closing remarks, expressing thanks for participating

Though the surveys were calculated to last approximately 10 minutes, they were usually much longer due to the fact that the headteachers wanted to share their general opinions on the early FL instruction or teacher training. It seemed to me that any call I made triggered the whole discussion about the *status quo* of early FL instruction in Poland and teacher training for that. Again, as in the case of elementary school headteacher survey, if those comments were relevant to the research, I included them in the 'comments' section of the questionnaire.

3.3.5. Language school teacher survey

As far as the language school teacher survey is concerned, the sample was selected using the information obtained via the headteacher survey and, as in the case of elementary schools, in July 1999 each language school was sent three questionnaires to be distributed by headteachers among the staff involved in teaching FL to children. For the sake of clarity of the investigation, FL native speakers involved in teaching to children were excluded from the survey.

Because the headteachers were to assist in the questionnaire distribution, two cover letters were attached to the questionnaires, one to the headteacher—reminding of the telephone survey conducted and asking for the assistance in distribution—and the second one, to the teacher. Even though the headteachers seemed supportive, probably due to the bad timing (I did not expect it that most language schools close for summer holidays at the beginning of June, almost one month before the normal school holiday period started) the language school teacher survey did not produce any response. A follow-up procedure during the summer holidays was useless and it was not clear if an after-holidays survey would yield higher response rate. As the result I had to forego further contact with language school teachers and this survey was given up.

In retrospect, I must acknowledge that I should have designed this part of research differently. I should have approached the teachers directly, not through a complicated system of headteacher-redistributed mailed questionnaires. Yet, since the heads were not willing to disclose any information about the teachers concerned, I am not sure whether teacher sampling and survey distribution could have been improved.

3.3.6. Parent survey

Access and administration

Access to conduct the parent survey was negotiated separately with the six schools selected (see section 3.3.2). First, the headteacher was approached and asked if the school was willing to take part in this part of research. Since none of the headteachers refused, then the headteachers selected three classteachers whose classes would participate in the survey. Next, the normal procedure was, as requested by headteachers, to approach the classteachers and agree on the date and time of nearest teacher-parent meeting during which the questionnaires were to be distributed. With the exception of one school, in which the headteacher decided that teachers themselves would handle the questionnaire administration, the procedure was to administer the questionnaires to the whole group of parents present at the meeting. Since teacher-parents meetings in a given school were often held at the same time, the arrangement was in the case of one school to distribute the questionnaires one by one to each of the three classes chosen, i.e. approximately every 20 minutes due to the time needed for the questionnaire completion. Such a procedure was distracting and all other teachers preferred the survey to be carried out as the very first procedure of the meeting. Thus, I was helped by another trained researcher with whom I rehearsed the distribution procedure and introductory remarks prior to the survey

administration: introduction of research objectives, anonymity statement, and utilisation of survey outcomes. This information was also stated in a cover letter attached to each questionnaire (Appendix C.5).

None of the parents withdrew from the survey participation and all of them were very supportive. I believe that face-to-face contact with the respondents, an opportunity to inform them about the research aims and to clarify ambiguities helped a lot in a getting high response rate. Yet, the definite drawback of the group-administered questionnaires, also identified in Palys (1997:148), was that the privacy was not guaranteed since informants were sitting shoulder-to-shoulder. In addition, some of them made comments aloud or even attempted a longer discussion with me about the issues raised in the survey so other respondents might have been influenced.

Sample and response rate

The parent sample for the questionnaire survey (Figure 3-4) was selected out of the target population of parents of children enrolled in classes 1-3 in Bydgoszcz in the school year 1999/2000.

Figure 3-4 Comparison of the parent population vs. questionnaire sample.

POPULATION								
		CHILD'S CLASS						Total
		first		second		third		
	N	4137		4491		4578		13206
	%	31.3		34.0		34.7		100.0
of which girls	N	2002		2204		2228		6434
	%	48.3		49.1		48.7		48.7
SAMPLE								
		CHILD'S CLASS						Total
		first		second		third		
		Non-FL	FL	Non-FL	FL	Non-FL	FL	
	n	42	38	41	39	41	39	240
	%	17.5	15.8	17.1	16.3	17.1	16.3	100.0
Total	n	80		80		80		240
	%	33.3		33.3		33.3		100.0
of which girls	n	39		39		39		117
	%	48.8		48.8		48.8		48.8

The selection was conducted in two stages (multistage cluster sampling). On the basis of the information provided by headteachers I divided schools into two clusters: FL-provision

and non-FL provision schools, depending on whether the child was instructed in an FL or not. For the sake of the clarity of data, I excluded all non-state schools since their status and FL provision differs from the one in all state schools. Next, out of the two clusters, I randomly chose two FL-provision and two non-FL provision schools. I approached the headteachers in selected schools who, then, chose classes representing three age levels: one first, one second and one third class. Since the parents attendance at the meeting varied in different classes and the sample clusters were not of equal size, nine random cases from classes 2 and 3 were dropped to form roughly equal numbers of FL-provision and non-FL provision classes.

Consequently, the parent survey sample consisted of 240 parents who represent 1.8% of the target population (assuming that each parent represents one child and the parents of twins were asked to provide information for both children). The sample reflects proportions in terms of pupils' gender mix—48.8% of girls in the sample vs. 48.7% in the target population. The survey was filled in by 195 mothers and 45 fathers (or other female or male person *in loco parentis*). Other characteristics such as parents' age, educational background, occupation and financial situation, since not relevant to the discussion of the results are included in Appendix D, Figure D-1.

3.3.7. Teacher-student survey

Access and administration

Access to conduct the survey among the HPS's students was negotiated with the heads of the departments chosen: the English Department, the German Department, the Institute of Russian and Applied Linguistics, and the Institute of School Education. Having had the general consent, I approach individual teachers from different departments and requested permission to administer the questionnaires during their classes.

The student consent to take part in the survey was obtained with each group separately. At the beginning of each session, students were informed about the general research goals and other participants, the survey objectives and the dissemination of outcomes. I also explained why their participation was important and reassured them that involvement was voluntary and all data collected and disseminated would be treated as confidential. Next, I invited any questions and asked permission to proceed to the survey administration. No student withdrew from the survey and it took approximately 20 minutes to fill out. The questionnaires were distributed and collected on the same occasion.

Sample

The teacher-student sample (Figure 3-5) was selected from the four departments of the Higher Pedagogical School of Bydgoszcz, namely:

- The English Department running English Philology courses
- The German Department running the German Philology courses
- The Institute of Russian and Applied Linguistics running the Russian Philology courses and the Applied linguistics courses: Russian-English and Russian-German Philology courses
- The Institute of School Education running Early Years courses

Figure 3-5 The teacher-student survey sample

		COURSE												Total
		English		German				Applied Linguistics		Early Years				
		BA 3 rd year		BA 3 rd year		MA 5 th year		R-E 3-4 y	R-G 3 y	BA 3 rd year		MA 5 th year		
D	E	D	E	D	E	D	D	D	E	D	E			
POPULATION														
	N	32	34	28	94	30	159	28	19	29	54	83	143	733
	%	4.4	4.6	3.8	12.8	4.0	21.7	3.8	2.6	3.9	7.4	11.3	19.5	100.0%
Total	N	424								309				733
	%	57.8								42.2				100.0%
of which daily	N	137								112				249
	%	18.7								15.2				33.9
SAMPLE														
	n	20	23	30	40	19	59	19	12	28	45	44	46	385
	%	5.2	6.0	7.8	10.4	4.9	15.3	4.9	3.1	7.3	11.7	11.4	11.9	100.0
Total	n	222								163				385
	%	57.7								42.3				100.0
of which daily	n	100								72				172
	%	26.0								31.7				44.7

Note: D = daily course, E = extramural course, R-E = Russian-English course, R-G = Russian-German course

Since there is little interest in early teaching of Russian, students from this courses were not included in the sample. To provide some uniformity the survey was administered to the final year students from both BA and MA courses (if existing). The difference in the course provision and the number of students in different departments made any attempt to design proportional clustered sampling impossible. Firstly, some of the groups were so small and a consistent sampling would leave sample sizes in some groups too small for

adequate analysis. For example, there were only eight 4th year students studying Applied Linguistics (Russian-English), and the 3rd year was added to this cluster.

However, as is evident from Figure 3-5, the English department did not provide MA courses and Applied Linguistics Departments did not offer extramural courses. Also daily courses were mainly one-unit, 5-year-long MA courses while extramural courses comprised 3-year-long BA courses supplemented by 2-year-long MA courses (5 years in total). In the case of EY students, the MA course was mainly provided for the graduates of the former post-secondary, two-year course who then supplemented it by a one-year long course leading to a BA degree. Therefore considering these difficulties, and given that I was primarily interested in comparing results between FL-department and EY-department students at the HPS of Bydgoszcz, rather than in making overall statements about each of them separately, I decided to use a disproportional random sampling illustrated in Figure 3-5. My only attempt was to preserve the FL–EY student ratio and not to overload the sample with extramural students. The reason for the latter was those students were already reading for their second or even third degree and in my opinion these students are unlikely to become clients of a new FLTYL course. Especially extramural FL Philology students are quite often already employed in non-education businesses and they may not wish to become teachers, let alone FLTYLs. On the pragmatic side, the extramural students do not have obligatory attendance regulations⁵⁵ and obtaining a proportional sample of extramural students would have required a repetitive survey administration, which was impossible for various reasons.

Since student groups were roughly the same size, i.e. c15 students per daily groups and c25 students per extramural group, originally two daily groups per course and one extramural group per course were contacted. However, students' attendance on a given day varied and the sample was not balanced in terms of the daily-extramural and FL-EY properties. Hence, two further extramural groups were added to the sample—German BA and German MA groups and, altogether I ended up with a student-teacher survey sample as described in Figure 3.5. Other characteristics of the student-teacher sample such as age and gender are provided in Appendix D, Figure D-2.

⁵⁵ for daily students, usually not more than two unexcused absences per module.

3.3.8. Teacher interviews

Access

Teachers who gave their consent to take part in the follow-up interviews (the slip attached to the questionnaires) were phoned or approached at school (depending on the information provided on the reply slip). During these pre-interview contacts I explained the purpose of the research and how the data was going to be used in the thesis and in the future reports. Next, I outlined the themes that I wanted to explore during the sessions and asked for permission to audio-tape the interviews. I also reassured them about confidentiality of the information provided during the interviews session, and since none of the teachers withdrew their participation in the interviews, I made individual appointments.

Access to the views of the teachers was definitely facilitated not only by being a foreign language teacher myself, but also by being a staff member of an institution that provided teacher training. Several respondents commented on how positive they felt about having the opportunity to discuss their professional concerns with somebody from the ‘ivory tower’ institution whose ‘usual preoccupation is with more important things than practical everyday problems of teachers’, especially if those problems were related to the activities of the institution itself.

As it was also emphasised many times during the interviews, teachers hoped that ‘*I would do something for them*’ and ‘*some training for FLTYL teachers will finally be made*’. This, on one hand, undoubtedly led to a greater openness between the interviewees and myself and willingness to share their opinions what the teacher’s problems were and what they needed. On the other hand, the teachers’ belief that my work could really make an impact and introduce some changes in the area of teacher training provision put a great responsibility on me.

Sample

All elementary school teachers who had given written consent to being contacted for a subsequent interview (a slip attached to the questionnaire) made the interview sample (convenience sampling). Altogether, twelve teachers from nine elementary schools took part in the interviews and were involved in early FL teaching in the last 10 years. All teachers were women, aged 24-41, with teaching experience between 1 to 16 years. As for the educational background, six teachers were EY course graduates, three FL course graduates, two teachers graduated from other courses (speech therapy and Polish language

arts) and one teacher had double qualifications (MA in EY and BA in a FL). For the sake of comparison the teacher interview sample was also divided into three groups according to the same principle as in the case of the teacher survey sample (see 3.3.3). Consequently, four teachers were classified as FL⁵⁶, six as EY, and two as OS teachers. As for the languages taught, ten teachers taught English and two French. Unfortunately, within the group of teachers who gave their content to the interview there were no teachers of German.

Procedure

Interviews lasting approximately 60-90 minutes were conducted at the place and time chosen by the teachers. Usually they wanted to meet me before or after their lessons in the staff room. Due to this arrangement, confidentiality was sometimes difficult to maintain on some occasions because there were some other teachers present. Yet, since the teachers themselves suggested the place and time I did not object to that.

As already stated above, during the pre-interview contacts the teachers had already been informed about the purpose of the research and the utilisation of the data, and the consent to audio-tape the interviews was requested. At the time of the interview, I confirmed the permission to record the interview and once explained confidentiality issues, namely that transcripts and quotations used in the thesis would be devoid of any reference to the real identity of the interviewees.

All teachers but one agreed on the conversation to be recorded. The remaining teacher after 10 minutes of the interview, experiencing the direction in which the conversation was geared and seeing there were no traps set for her, changed her mind and eventually gave her consent.

Since the aim of the interview was to enable respondents to talk freely and openly about their experience and opinions, open questions were the main technique used. The interview guide (Appendix C.7) was used as a 'shopping list of topics' (Robson, 1993:237) that I wanted to get responses to. It was my overall tactic to employ a great deal of freedom in the sequencing and wording of questions, and in the amount of time and attention given to different topics. I was also open to pursue some new emerging themes in the course of the conversation.

⁵⁶ Including the teacher who had the double qualifications but was currently teaching only an FL.

The proper interview involved a couple of stages. First to establish a common ground and rapport, I said a few sentences about myself, my work at the HPS of Bydgoszcz and described in more detail my research and its goals. At the same time, I attempted not to be too self-disclosive so as to avoid the possible danger of biasing responses by triggering 'expected' responses (Mertens, 1998). I tackle the issue of controlling the researcher's bias in section 3.5.3 in more detail.

During this phase I also made it very clear that my research was not oriented towards the *evaluation* of their work as the teachers of English to young children. Issues such as the teacher's lack of qualifications or proper training or the problems encountered at work would be the signs for me for the future improvements in the area of teacher training rather than signs of teachers' individual defects. This introduction to the research and its non-judgemental nature was in my opinion crucial to develop the respondents' sense of security.

Next, since I also tried to be 'sensitive to how the interviewee may be affected by different questions and various question formats' (Patton, 1987:129). I usually started with questions 1-3 that deal with factual information. Such questions were usually easier to answer and encouraged the respondent to talk descriptively. Then I moved to questions dealing with opinions and attitudes. Here, a very common questioning format was the use of illustrative examples—making the interviewees familiar with what I had known from the survey results or from other (anonymous) informants, e.g. *'Some teachers say that they have experienced problems in finding professional help concerning teaching FL to young learners. Yet, others have told me that they haven't actually needed such help. What about you?'* Such illustrative examples were taken from what may be perceived as positive and negative dimensions of the issues to avoid leading questions (*ibid.*).

Another most frequently used technique was open-ended questioning. The advantage of this technique as described by Cohen and Manion (1994) is that it is flexible, allows probing, develops understanding, tests knowledge, encourages co-operation and rapport, produces unexpected or anticipated answers, and 'can result in unexpected or unanticipated answers which may suggest hitherto unthoughtful-of-relationships or hypotheses' (*op.cit.*: 277). This last point was particularly crucial since the main rationale for applying qualitative and qualitative methods was to look for triangulation, complementarily, development and initiation (see Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989, in section 3.1.3).

The interview session ended with a few minutes of non-recorded conversation with the informants. It was then when I answered any questions and thanked for participation. I also reassured each of the participants that she did well and the information she provided was significant.

As described in section 3.3.1, after each session I also recorded my initial thoughts and reflections, which were then, used as additional notes.

3.3.9. Teacher-trainers interviews

Access and sample

The access to each department participating in the case study was requested during my visits to the English Department, the German Department, the Institute of Russian and Applied Linguistics, and the Institute of School Education when I negotiated access to the students. Once, key informants were selected the consent to take part in the research was requested from each teacher-trainer individually.

Figure 3-6 Teacher-trainer case study sample

INSTITUTE OF SCHOOL EDUCATION	INSTITUTE OF RUSSIAN & APPLIED LINGUISTICS	ENGLISH DEPARTMENT	GERMAN DEPARTMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Institute & Director of General Didactics Division ▪ Deputy Head of Institute & the Director of Teacher Training Division ▪ Deputy Head of Institute & the Director of Block-Scheduling Division ▪ Director of Integrated-Curriculum Education Division ▪ Member of Teacher Training Division; pedagogy lecturer; contact person for Combined EY & FL course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Head of Institute ▪ Director of Foreign Language Teaching Didactics Division ▪ FL didactics lecturer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chair of Department ▪ Director of English Language & History Division ; Former Chair of Department ▪ Director of Foreign Language Teaching Didactics Division ; FL didactics lecturer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chair of Department ▪ Director of Foreign Language Teaching Didactics Division ▪ FL didactics lecturer

My sampling technique was to use key informants from all four departments in question (purposive sampling), i.e. ‘people who are particularly knowledgeable and articulate,

people whose insights can prove particularly useful in helping an observer understand what is happening' (Patton:1987:95) (see Figure 3-6).

In the process of sample selection I abandoned the idea of including the chancellor, vice-chancellor or deans of faculties at the HPS of Bydgoszcz (see Appendix A). The reason for that is that it is staff from the department that initiates any new course programme. The new programme is then put forward by the head of the department to the dean of a given faculty and the faculty Council approve it and eventually it is submitted for approval to the Vice-Chancellor for Didactics, Senate and the Chancellor. Thus, I assumed that it was too early for the dean and chancellors to give me any opinion or information on research-relevant issues. Consequently, the teacher-trainer interview sample (Figure 3-6) comprised 14 informants who, I believed, were particularly knowledgeable.

During the access negotiating contacts, I informed the teacher-trainers about the purpose of the research and the utilisation of the data, and the interview guides were distributed (Appendix C.8). If interested, I also offered a summary of results from the data collection in Phase I (Polish version only, three in total were handed out).

No teacher-trainer approached refused to take part in the research, though the majority was concerned if their expertise would be relevant for the study. When approached and invited to participate in the case study, the first reaction was usually *'I am afraid I know nothing about these issues'*. Since this problem is relevant to the research findings in general it will be discussed in next chapter.

Procedure

On the whole, the same interview tactics was applied in the teacher-trainer interviews as during the teacher interviews. Individual appointments with all informants were made and a specific place was set aside for the interview depending on the respondents' wish. Typically, a 45 to 90-minute-long interview was held in the trainers' office. Two other locations were *The Eliza's* tearoom and researcher's own house.

The consent to audio-tape the interviews was requested during the pre-interview contacts and also stated on the interview guide. Nobody objected to it provided full confidentiality was guaranteed. There were a couple of occasions when informants asked me to switch the tape-recorder off for a moment or said that a particular information was off the record.

None of such data was used in the report, even though, as it often happens in such cases, off-record data revealed the essence of problems that were researched.

The questioning techniques were approximately the same as during teacher interviews. One important difference, however, was that this time I was interviewing colleagues from the same school or even department, and in a few cases, my close friends. Platt (1981) described the main social, technical and ethical issues related to interviewing one's peers. As she points out

One's peers have a variety of relevant characteristics: they are in a diffuse sense one's social equals, they are one's equals in role-specific senses, they share the same background knowledge and subcultural understandings, and they are members of the same groups or communities.

Platt, 1981:76

The social and ethical issues are discussed separately in section 3.5. As for technical issues, I experienced the problem that familiarity of research milieu might also hinder data collection. My general knowledge of some issues meant that some of my informants could assume that it was unnecessary to discuss or go deeper into certain things. Since my other strategy was to use only this information that was actually obtained during an interview, and not on any other social occasion, I had to employ a strategy of 'playing naïve'—further probing of the issues that I presumably was familiar with. Probes were also used to deepen understanding, ask for clarification, elaboration, to uncover hidden or superficial meanings. Even so, still some material was unavailable and the question arose to what extent I could draw on my own background knowledge without an inevitable risk of being biased.

Another issue was what Platt (1981) named 'shared group membership'. Belonging to the same restricted community is enormously helpful in many ways, yet it still may make personal relations during interview very difficult. I found that almost the entire interviews tackled sensitive issues. Discussing the problems of optimal teacher training inevitably led towards talking about particular people, imperfections of certain courses or procedures and responsibility for that. Such a situation was very uncomfortable for me as an interviewer and for my interviewees and required a lot of verbal acrobatics to convey the meaning and not offend anybody. The situation was particularly awkward while interviewing my superiors and the circumstances demanded a critique of other professors or high-ranked members of the School. Yet, in some cases it was, as suggested by Platt (*ibid.*), that disclosures were probably made more freely to an insider, since shared group membership

made similar experience more likely. At the same time, I attempted to moderate this and be as objective as possible (see section 3.5.3)

Finally, there was a problem of how detailed an account should be given the research rationale and purpose of my study, so as not to 1) trigger discussion about my study rather than about issues designed for the interview, 2) lead towards what some perceives as ‘desired’ answers, and 3) elicit raw data and not their interpretations and conclusions they had reached (Platt, 1981). These dilemmas were pertinent since my interviewing strategy relied heavily on illustrative examples and revealing information both from related research and from my own. What I did was to expose both positive and negative cases, i.e. examples that worked for and against what was considered ‘expected, desirable answers to my research questions’ and use probes to ask for opinions and facts and not for interpretations.

3.3.10. Documents and secondary sources

The documents and secondary sources listed in section 3.2.4 were collected for two periods: for the school year 1998/99 in January 1999 and for the school year 1999/2000 in February 2000. The following organisation and offices were approached whilst collecting secondary sources:

- The Central Statistical Office in Poland (a letter request) and its regional office in Bydgoszcz (personal contact with the data dissemination unit officers)
- The Bydgoszcz Province LEA (personal contact with educational statistics LEA officer)
- The Bydgoszcz Commune Education Board (personal contact with the deputy-director)
- The heads of the English Department, the German Department, the Institute of Russian and Applied linguistics, and the Institute of School Education at the Higher Pedagogical School of Bydgoszcz (personal contacts)
- The Republic of Poland Ministry of National Education (letter request for official statistics)

Additionally, all acts and official documents of the MONE were collected from the legal acts and documents database *LEX Omega for Windows 2/2000* (System ..., 2000) and subsequent versions.

3.4. Data analysis

The overall interactive research continuum model dictated the way the data was analysed. The study was both inductive and deductive in nature and data was collected through quantitative and qualitative methods that were originally managed as separated sets, which were after a raw analysis linked and analysed as a whole.

Being by no means a statistician, during quantitative data analysis I relied heavily on ideas provided in Marsh (1988), Hatch and Lazaraton (1991), Oppenheim (1992), de Vaus (1996), Diamantopoulos and Schlegemilch (1997), Bryman and Cramer (1997), Kinnear and Grey (1997). Qualitative data analysis, on the other hand, was primarily designed after Miles and Huberman (1994), but also Patton (1980, 1987, 1990, 1997), Flick (1998), and Yin (1994).

3.4.1. The analysis of the quantitative data

As for quantitative elements, namely data from five surveys, they were handled with the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (*SPSS v. 8.0 for Windows*) software.

Data from all surveys were entered and examined separately. Basic descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, descriptive, means, crosstabs, etc., were computed. Since the quantitative part was not designed to test any hypotheses but rather to search for such, emerging patterns and causal relationships were identified and tested through correlational and inferential statistics in the due course of analysis. Similarly, when the same question was asked in different surveys, triangulation of results was used. Triangulation of data did not seek for absolute convergence and support of findings by showing that independent data sources incline. Rather, triangulated cross-method comparison deliberately sought contrast, resulting from various perspectives and opinions of respondents from different datasets. Finally, the findings were linked with the qualitative survey outcomes (see section 3.4.3).

3.4.2. The analysis of qualitative data

Pre-structured case analysis procedure was used to analyse qualitative interviews. In accordance with Miles and Huberman (1994:83-85) an explicit conceptual framework, a precise set of research questions and a sampling plan was designed. Research questions

were the ultimate guideline how to construct ‘conceptual drawers’—a pre-structured outline—for the data coming from different sources.

The data collection framework (section 3.4.2.) assumed that tentative results of surveys or even the whole Phase I in the case of teacher-trainer interviews, would be known before any qualitative data were collected. Thus, two sets of interview data were collected and analysed with the outline in mind. The raw interview material recorded on the audio-tapes was transcribed straight away in the clustered form. The clusters’ (headings) were developed on the basis of research questions (Figure 3-7).

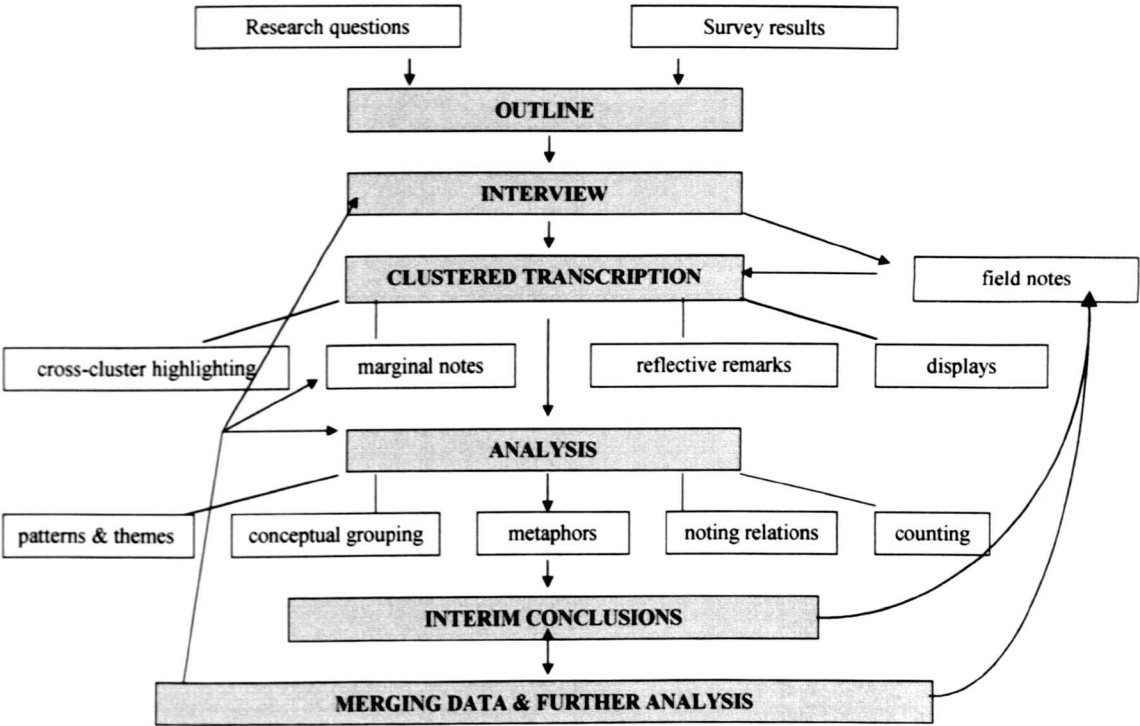
Since some entries could not be easily classified under one heading only, a colour highlighting system for cross-referencing was used. I also developed a system of marginal notes that signalled emerging themes and patterns. The other sides of transcription sheets were used for more reflective remarks, namely linking a particular case with an instance in other cases. The procedure was iterated until case-study data collection was completed. First conclusions were checked back against initial ‘fieldnotes’, i.e. observations, questions and reflection recorded immediately after the interviews and noted down in the research filofax. In the same way, looking back at raw data, sometimes re-listening to original tapes, cross-checking patterns, themes, making contrasts, comparison, re-clustering helped to verify, revise, or disconfirm initial conclusions (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Figure 3-7 Initial interview transcription clusters

TEACHER INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION CLUSTERS	TEACHER-TRAINERS INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION CLUSTERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Motivation to undertake early FL teaching ▪ Conditions at school ▪ FL courses vs. FL at school ▪ FL vs. EY T co-operation/contacts ▪ Prestige ▪ Qualification/lack of such ▪ Methods, approach used ▪ Problems ▪ FLTYL- a specialisation? ▪ Optimal vs. current TT ▪ TT course expectations/needs ▪ Clients/admission criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Early start (rationale for TT) ▪ Current TT ▪ Optimal FLTYL training ▪ Development of FLTYL competencies ▪ Clients/admission criteria ▪ Organisation/models/content ▪ Legal changes/diploma ▪ Problems of acceptance/implementation ▪ Staffing/FL-EY staff co-operation ▪ For integration? FL&EY combined? ▪ Present EY+FL course initiative

In addition, documents that provided additional contextual description were summed up and added to the case study in the background sections. Interviewees often provided very vivid illustrative examples or alluded to some past projects that were not the research focus, but the understanding of which contributed to the overall research conclusions. In order not to lose this contextual information, a short description of such events was provided in the form of vignettes (Miles and Huberman, *op.cit.*) included in Appendix A. Figure 3-8 shows this initial process of analysis that was applied in teacher and teacher-trainer interviews.

Figure 3-8 Case study analytic sequence (phases I and II)



In accordance with my overall research plan, the next step in the analysis was to move into the first data merging process. The synopsis of results from surveys and case-study analysis was summed up in the interim report that was distributed among interested teacher-trainers that formed an interview sample. Since I did not want to distort information provided by the participants, the report was arranged according to the source of data collection and was stripped of any interpretation. In this way I let the figures and major themes from the teacher case study speak for themselves, and allow the reader to make individual judgements. Still, I believe that the report did not make much impact on the teacher-trainer case study's outcomes since only three participants requested a copy

and even in those cases the interest was minimal. Rather, they presented their own views independent of the results of my research.

3.4.3. Merging quantitative and qualitative data

The first step in the overall analysis was to sort out data from each dataset into categories suggested by the research questions (see sections 1.5 and 2.17). All data was analysed for patterns that addressed particular research questions. Data and method triangulation was not used only as the method of validation (see Morse, 1991; Bloor, 1997). Rather, it was a method of ‘obtaining complementary findings that strengthen research results and contribute to theory and knowledge development (Morse, 1991:122). I expected that data obtained from divergent sources—teachers, teacher-students, teacher-trainers, parents and headteachers—were very unlikely to give answers to research questions in a perfect unison. My idea was that if data produced different results it would be a signal that ‘different kinds of data have captured different things’ (Patton, 1987:162) and it was my task to understand and justify those conflicts. Yet at the same time,

Consistency in overall patterns of data from different sources and reasonable explanations for differences in data from various sources contribute significantly to the overall credibility of the findings presented in the evaluation report.

(ibid.)

The overall research strategy was to combine qualitative and quantitative methods to gain convergence, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion (Green, Caracelli and Graham, 1989). In the phase of data analysis this strategy was used to investigate:

- Convergence, corroboration and correspondence of results from different sources
- Elaboration, clarification and illustration of results from different methods
- Discover paradoxes, gain new perspectives, look for negative cases and rival explanations
- Counteract inherent bias in methods

And thereby, the cross-dataset analysis and reaching final conclusions were conducted in the following sequence:

- Pulling data together in relation to particular research question
- Identification of coherent categories, themes and patterns in relation to the research questions
- Labelling and indexing of themes
- Re-reading of data, cross-case comparison, cut-up and re-ordering

- Verification and clarification of interim conclusions – triangulating methods and data; contrast and comparison of cross-case results with within-case conclusions; looking for negative cases; making if-then tests and checking out rival explanations
- Organisation and simplification of data into meaningful and manageable units
- Construction of the analytical text punctuated with illustrative exerts (statistical data and quotations).
- Creating hypotheses to develop theory
- Linking the theory with literature
- Final refinement of report

In this way, the actual theory building/theory testing processes made a complete cycle, which resulted from the research design (i.e. the quantitative-qualitative interactive research continuum) used in the present study (for description, see section 3.2.1). The study was both inductive and deductive in nature with theory neither at the beginning nor at the end. Theory building components (qualitative explorations) overlapped theory testing elements (quantitative measures) and continued the cycle closing the theory-building/theory-testing gap. The subsequent elements added up to the body of knowledge, complemented and expanded each other, and were also used to double-check for accuracy and verification of findings (Newman and Benz, 1998).

Simple as this model might seem, the ‘real-life analysis’ was far from being simple. ‘Stitching’ together all data obtained from six diverse perspectives and by the use of different methods, involved going through the analytical cycle many times. Patterns and themes, though definitely some more evident than the others, did not miraculously ‘pop out’ from the database. They were certainly filtered by my own conceptual and theoretical schema and required a continuous safety check and verification in the raw data. The constant shifting between datasets and analytical text continued to the very final stages of writing up the analysis.

Finally, special care had to be taken while sampling exerts to be included in the final report. I attempted to select significant moments in the transcripts in such a way as to provide a good illustration of emerging patterns, but at the same time minimise potential distortion since it was only possible to include short fragments out of long interviews (see also section 3.5.1).

3.5. Quality standards

3.5.1. Validity

The biggest question for the multimethod research is how to establish trustworthiness of the overall study. It seemed that preserving quality standards for separately for quantitative and qualitative elements would not be sufficient. As Patton (1997:250) points out:

An evaluation is perceived as valid in a global sense that includes the overall approach used, the stance of the evaluator, the nature of the processes, the design, data gathering, and the way in which results are reported. (...) The believability of an evaluation depends on much more than the perceived scientific validity of the data and findings.

Study validity, i.e. 'the best available approximation to the truth of a given preposition, interference, or conclusion' (Trochim, 1999), though cumulative, does not entirely depend on data validity—internal, construct and external (Yin, 1994). Rather, different components, such as data collection procedures, design, and technical analysis add up to potential users' (stakeholders') trust, believability and credibility in evaluation *per se*, evaluation procedures and the evaluator him/herself (Patton, 1997). Those components are situation and context bound and there are no universal and absolute standards that make evaluations excellent.

Judgements about evaluation validity and reliability are usually made on the basis of its intended use. In this respect, I followed Patton that information-gathering procedures should be chosen or developed and then implemented in such a way that they assure that conclusions drawn *are valid and reliable for the intended use* (Patton, 1997:87ff). Thus, the rules applied in the mixed-methodology research design, data collection and analysis took into consideration the potential utilisation of research findings (see 3.3.2). In particular the following rules were applied to the present study (based on Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1987, 1997; Newman and Benz, 1998):

- **The design has to be understandable and trustworthy** → and thus, the rationale for the qualitative-quantitative interactive research continuum was provided; data collection instruments and procedures justified and described in detail;
- **Data has to be believable and understandable** → and thus both 'hard' and 'soft' data were used to compensate for stakeholders' different preference; a detailed description of the context was provided;
- **Data has to be reliable** → and thus, different instruments of data collection were used to counterweight potential sources of errors; data were collected across different settings and from multiple perspectives;

- **Data has to be authentic and credible** → and thus, contextual, thick description was provided alongside the findings and their interpretation; data and conclusions checked and validated; all steps of data collection and analysis documented; verbatim quotations to be included in the final report carefully selected, significant moments chosen, distortion in translation avoided;
- **Data has to be objective** → and thus, researcher's bias was made explicit (see 3.5.3);
- **Data has to be generalisable** → and thus, extrapolation was used (see 3.5.2).

3.5.2. Generalisability

As already indicated, focusing on the particular local scene, though limited and to some extent atypical, allowed me to magnify the problems existing in a given context rather than watering them down and making them average. Following Patton (1997), I did not believe that any evaluation could generate universal laws and generalisations across 'time and space'. Many evaluations are context-bound and provide useful information that is specific to a programme in which it was conducted. Even if it is based on quantitative methods, the degree to which one can generalise from an evaluation sample to the whole population is fairly limited. As Guba and Lincoln (1981) observe, the very nature of generalisations is that they claim to be context-free, yet outcomes stripped of their context are meaningless.

On the one hand, concentrating on a local scene, however limited, helped me to capture cases which were examples of a general class of phenomena, and which, on the other hand, were particular and unique in their own (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). By providing a 'thick description' of the phenomena studied and the explicit context in which they occur, I passed it to a reader to make 'a reasoned judgement' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) about whether the findings hold up in other settings.

Similarly, following Patton (1997) I would argue that quantitative study with rigorous control over a limited set of carefully defined variables, created artificiality, diminishes generalisability. He points out that laboratory-type, highly controlled situation is less likely to be relevant to a greater variety of more natural, less controlled situations. Hammersley (1992:93) has reached similar conclusions:

Empirical generalisation does provide a sound basis for claims to the general relevance of ethnographic studies in the case of both descriptions and explanations. Its use does not necessarily require the study of a large proportion of instances in an aggregate, or a sample selected on the basis of statistical sampling theory. It does, however, require ethnographers to make rational decisions about to which generalisation is to be made, and to collect and present evidence about the likely typicality of the case(s) they study. It also suggest that there should be more collaboration with

survey researchers and increased coordination among ethnographic studies so as to cover the main lines of assumed variation within a domain.

In a way, by using mixed-methodology, multimethod design in this study I addressed Hammersley's suggestion for 'collaboration and coordination' to help overcome problems with generalisability.

Consequently I applied Cronbach's (1982) middle-stance position in this research. I used 'extrapolation' in place of generalisation. Extrapolation involves modest speculations about how specific findings apply to other similar, but not identical, situations, rather than the statistical process of making generalisation from a sample to a target population.

Extrapolations are logical, thoughtful, and problem-oriented rather than statistical and probabilistic. [They] can be particularly useful when based on information-rich samples and designs (i.e., on evaluations which produce relevant information carefully targeted to stakeholder concerns about both the present and the future).

Patton, 1987:168

Such an approach was in concord with my overall philosophy of research, which was purpose- and utilisation-driven (Patton, 1990, see also 3.1.2). Thus, my attempt was to extrapolate from the findings in one city and one programme and point out to the stakeholders what were the possible 'lessons learned and potential applications to future efforts' (*ibid.*).

3.5.3. Researcher's role

Another issue important for this study is how my person as an inquirer might have influenced the research. The paradigm debate presented at the beginning of this chapter made reference to how the two paradigms differ in their assumptions about the researcher's role. The quantitative researcher is said to remain unbiased in pursuit of one objective truth. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, make a claim for multiple realities since they are subject to diverse individual perception. As a result, the argument is about whether the researcher is only a 'transmitter' of the 'truth' out there—a person who is distant, unbiased and detached from the research setting. Or maybe s/he is an instrument in the research—a person who is an insider, immersed in the setting, close to the phenomena or people s/he is researching and while perceiving the real world somehow filters and simplifies it all the time. These two researcher roles seem to be presented as alternatives, yet, in real life an inquirer is usually caught in between the two positions.

Figure 3-9 Positive and negative aspects of the researcher bias

SOURCES OF BIAS	EFFECTS		CONTROL-CHECKS
	POSITIVE?	NEGATIVE?	
Me as an English teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Credibility in the eyes of other English teachers/students/teacher-trainers▪ Common grounds/shared experience with other English teachers/students/teacher-trainers▪ Good rapport with English teachers/students/teacher-trainers▪ Possibly good credentials/shared experience with foreign language teachers▪ Possibly ‘extra points’ for being a teacher of ‘the most influential’, ‘politically-correct’ language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Unfair representation of non-English teachers/students/teacher-trainers?▪ Unfair representation of EY teachers?▪ Unfair representation of English teachers? (e.g., over-criticism of English teacher practices vs. being permissive to non-English teachers due to my inner belief that I do not have necessary qualifications to judge them or possibly less critical representation of English teachers)▪ Unfair representation of other FL languages?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Stressing multiple-faces of my researcher persona to the participants▪ Constructing unbiased samples, if not possible making under-representation explicit▪ Getting multiple perspectives▪ Triangulation of data and methods▪ Describing the results explicitly and in detail, including the cases which do not fit
Me as a teacher of young children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Common grounds /shared experience with FLTYL teachers▪ Common grounds/shared experience with EY teachers▪ Possibly common grounds with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Unfair representation of the importance of an early start?▪ Unfair representation of teachers of older learners?▪ Lack of credentials in the eyes of teachers whose primary interest is not in young children	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Being self-aware of personal assumptions, values and bias, both positive and negative influence—being explicit about them during the study▪ Considering competing hypotheses and rival conclusions
Me as a HPS staff member	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Possibly credentials in the areas of teaching, teacher-training and curriculum design▪ Credibility for parents, headteachers, students, teachers, and teacher-trainers▪ Shared membership with other HPS members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Ivory-tower image▪ Unfair representation of the HPS?▪ Unfair representation of universities and colleges?▪ Having a ‘bad image’ for non-teaching oriented experts?▪ Having a ‘bad image’ because of me representing the HPS rather than university or college?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Segregating data, analysis and interpretation to allow the reader to judge for her/himself

Of course, I tried **not to** skew the samples, **not to** impose my own assumptions and prejudice upon the analysis and **not to** produce generalisations that went beyond my data, but can I be completely objective? Can I really claim detachment from the setting if I am

conducting an inquiry in my home city or among my colleagues? Can I stay truly unbiased if I am researching foreign language teachers when I am myself only an English teacher? Since the answer to those is 'no', instead of being torn between objectivity and subjectivity I would employ the notions of neutrality, fairness, and impartiality into this study. Instead of claiming objectivity I would 'talk with intended users about balance, fairness, and being explicit about what perspectives, values, and priorities have shaped the evaluation, both the design and findings' (Patton, 1997:282).

Figure 3-9 (above) illustrates how different aspects of me as the researcher might have influenced the research. Other factors not included in the table, such as my age and gender might have also influenced my perception. Yet, my feeling was that they were both facilitating and hindering the study. Here again, as in the case of other factors, the study revealed it many times that what counted as the source of positive bias in one case might have been treated as the opposite in other cases. As the result, I think that some positive and negative sources of bias might have counterbalanced each other. Yet, by making them explicit throughout the study I wanted to make the reader aware that they nevertheless existed.

3.5.4. Ethical issues

Several ethical principles were related specifically to my research. The first was the issue of informed consent. This refers to 'the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decision' (Diener and Crandall, 1978, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994:350). In order to inform the participants I attempted to apply the four notions of the above definition: competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension. In order to inform the participants about my research and enable them to make correct decision, each of the questionnaires was distributed with a cover letter. I provided there the relevant information about the research project and the purpose of a specific survey, and its importance. The respondents were also assured that their participation was voluntary. If the surveys were administered through the direct contact with respondents (e.g. parent, headteacher and teacher-student surveys), this information was repeated by the researcher during the pre-distribution contact. Informed consent was also applied to the interviews in the case studies, in which participants were informed in detail of the nature of the research and their right to withdraw at all times.

The notion of 'full information', however, was more complex. It was not possible to inform participants of everything and, thus, I had to make conscious decision what information was revealed to the participants. Following the Merten's (1998) advice I established motivation for taking part in the study through stressing authority, self-interest, professional interest and altruism. As a consequence, rather than exposing the fact that the research is part of my PhD study, I emphasised the fact of my being the member of staff at the HPS of Bydgoszcz, currently working on the development of an FLTYL course. In this way I wanted to appeal to the study participants convincing them that it was worthwhile to invest their time and energy in the study. This is what Miles and Huberman (1994) call 'exposing costs, benefits and reciprocity'—showing the participants that the research would be of some real-life significance since they might hope that the research outcomes would be used to solve some problems relevant to them, and not only serving my needs as a researcher.

Moreover, there was an issue of gaining access and acceptance. Throughout the study it was vital for me to gain official permission to undertake the research in the target community. The official permission was gained from the Bydgoszcz Province LEA Director and the Bydgoszcz Commune Education Board Director, headteachers and classteachers of schools where the parent survey was carried out. Since my research proposal, which included a detailed data collection plan, had been reviewed by the HPS of Bydgoszcz authorities many times and on many occasions, I assumed that I had a general consent to carry out the investigation in my home institution. Additionally the consent was requested from the heads of the departments involved in the student survey and teacher-trainer case studies.

The third ethical issue was that of anonymity and confidentiality. None of the surveys in my research was truly anonymous because all contained some information that revealed identity—names of the schools, addresses, occupational details, etc. Complete anonymity was also lost when the survey was administered to groups with the researcher present, and of course, face-to-face interviews were by no means anonymous. Thus, the only thing I could to was to ensure confidentiality with regard to the information provided. In the surveys, once the data had been prepared for analysis all identifiers were separated from the research data and subsequently deleted. Data were also categorised in such a way as to avoid the possibility of identifying individuals. Yet, with the case studies the problem of confidentiality was quite tricky. On one hand, the very essence of the qualitative research

is to provide rich contextual information and thick description of the phenomena studied. On the other hand, however, how these can be publicised without breaching the confidentiality promise?

As a result, while constructing the research report I adapted several techniques (after Cohen and Manion, 1994:368) to help overcome confidentiality problems:

- **Deletion of identifiers** → all quotations either direct or indirect were stripped off any personal identifiers, e.g. name, school, department
- **Crude report categories** → providing general rather than specific information; comparisons are made between broad categories, e.g. EY vs. FL teachers/ students/ trainers
- **Microaggregation** → whenever possible, constructing ‘an average person’ from data on individuals and including this information in the report

The problem of confidentiality was even more pertinent during the interview stage conducted in my home institution. Revealing, as agreed in the interview guide, the name of the institution in which the case study was carried out, made the participants more exposed. In this context confidentiality had a different meaning. Even though no quotation could explicitly be linked with a particular person, a field for various speculations was open. And even though no individual might have been critically presented, there was also an issue what an overall image of the institution was created? How can I write an honest and possibly in some instances, critical report, and then continue to work with those involved (see Platt, 1981)? My position resembled the one experienced by Kelly (1989)—it lay ‘uncomfortably between that of the internal evaluator whose main loyalty is to colleagues and the school, and the external researcher’. The only remedy was to rely strictly on the information provided during the interviews—presenting what the key informants said and minimising my interpretation to the minimum. Yet, if what the participant said was getting too close to discussing particular people’s practices, the concepts of protecting people and doing no harm was the priority. The notions of balance, neutrality and fairness (section 3.5.3) were obeyed even more closely since the ground was a real minefield.

Under the confidentiality promise I also agreed that no third parties would have access to raw data, fieldnotes and raw analyses, and that anonymity and confidentiality issues would be addressed throughout the dissemination process.

And finally, there was an issue of data dissemination. All study participants have been promised a concise report of the research outcomes upon completion of the research and I

will undertake this task as soon as it is feasible. The report will also be distributed among other interested parties: the MONE, the Bydgoszcz province LEA, the Bydgoszcz Commune Education Board, and institutions providing teacher training in Poland. Moreover, since the research was primarily utilisation-driven, the outcomes will be dispersed among a broader academic community through papers, articles and conference presentation.

3.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of two methods that derive from two different philosophical paradigms was not only a technical decision that they would serve the purpose of this study better. Neither was it a mere compromise that some audiences are more receptive to the findings derived from one method or another, or are more likely to participate in a certain type of research. I believed that the use of mixed methods would address the problems posed at the beginning of this thesis in a better way than either of the two methods alone could offer. I assumed, too, that the interaction between the datasets, drawing from both inductive and deductive logics of inquiry and cross-checking the findings would prove to be fruitful to the outcomes of the study. I wanted to get advantage of the strengths that the two approaches offer and try to minimise the drawbacks of both. Therefore, it was a conscious decision that a multimethod and multistage data collection would result in getting a more holistic, accurate and truthful answer to the research problem.

The choice of multi-method design determined the range and scope of the issues and questions to be studied and the way data was collected and analysed. These subsequently posed serious problems how to generalise from findings gathered on a local level and how to establish trustworthiness of the study. The latter was also influenced by many ethical dilemmas that had to be addressed throughout the research process. Finally, some consideration had to be given to researcher-related factors, such as me being a teacher of English, a teacher of young children and a member of the HEIs that was being researched, and how they might have influenced the findings.

These problems notwithstanding, the chapter that follows in volume two presents the analysis and discussion of the data that was collected.

