An exploration of the perceived value of the *Interact* approach to teaching Modern Foreign Languages in the formation and practice of a sample of secondary-school teachers at different career phases in England.

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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May 2021

Declaration

I hereby certify that this thesis results entirely from my own work. I further declare that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or qualification at any other university.

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Date: Monday 17 May 2021

Word length: 81 200

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The point of departure for this study is an approach to the teaching of Modern Languages in English secondary schools called *Interact,* which has long been advocated at a university-based teacher-education course where I am currently a tutor and was formerly a student. *Interact'*s distinctive attributes include a strong endorsement of the target language, the creation of an immersive language-learning experience, and the promotion of spontaneous classroom talk as key drivers for learners' sustained engagement in the subject. This advocacy may place *Interact* at odds with prevailing performative views of the secondary-school curriculum as a product to be delivered rather than as a project to be jointly constructed by classroom participants.

In light of the above, the aim of the study was to explore the perceived value of *Interact* in the eyes of pre- and in-service teachers who were familiar with the approach through their engagement with the teacher-education course where *Interact* is being promoted. The focus of this investigation was twofold. Firstly, what sense did the research participants make of *Interact* as a language-teaching proposition in the current educational climate? Secondly, what value did they attach to it as a teacher-education proposition? *Interact* was therefore used in this study as a vehicle for the exploration of participants' views on language learning and teaching as well as on learning to teach. In essence, this is a study on the part that *Interact* has played in the formation of participants' professional identity.

This interest in participants' perceptions was explored through an interpretivist lens and guided the choice of qualitative data-analysis approach. Data were generated firstly through three sets of questionnaires completed by a cohort of twenty-three postgraduate student teachers over the course of one academic year. Interviews were also carried out with ten student teachers and fourteen early-career and experienced teachers. In line with the pragmatic cast to the research design, I adapted an analytical framework drawn from the teacher-education literature that enabled me to tease out four broad categories of participants' responses to *Interact,* namely eventual rejection, renouncement, appropriation or personalisation. *Interact* was found to be a conceptually convincing approach based on sound communicative principles, and

valued if aligning with teachers' conceptions of their roles and perceived room for manoeuvre. Its appeal was also a factor of the Gestalt quality of student-teachers' experience on their postgraduate course, leading to the recommendation that teacher preparation attend to the design of student experience in ways that engage them on a cognitive, perceptual and affective level. This study further shows the merit in teacher education adopting a strong subject identity that may serve as a reference point amidst pervasive technical-rationalist orientations to teacher preparation.

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Abbreviations

DES	**Department for Education and Science**
DfEE	**Department for Education and Employment**
DfE	**Department for Education**
DfES	**Department for Education and Skills**
GCSE	**General Certificate of Secondary Education**
HEI	**Higher Education Institution**
HMI	**Her Majesty's Inspectorate**
ITE	**Initial Teacher Education**
KS	**Key Stage**
MFL	**Modern Foreign Languages**
NC	**National Curriculum**
NQT	**Newly Qualified Teacher**
OFSTED	**Office for Standards in Education**
PGCE	**Post Graduate Certificate in Education**
SLA	**Second Language Acquisition**
TL	**Target Language**

1 Background to the Research

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the context and motivation for the study that follows, central to which is a Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) pedagogical proposition called *Interact, which* seeks to promote secondary-school language learners' spontaneous use of the target language (TL). The study reports the findings of research conducted with initial and experienced teachers who were familiar with *Interact.* To contextualise the research, I map out below the English educational context in which *Interact* emerged and outline the key elements and purpose of *Interact*. It is a moot point whether to describe *Interact* as an approach or a method and, as this will have implications for my study, I provide a brief definition of the two terms. I then explain my motivation for undertaking this study, which originated from a personal disquiet regarding the continued relevance of *Interact* in a changing educational climate. Therefore, I briefly chart those changes in this introductory chapter and I conclude by outlining the research questions and by providing a summary of the purpose and content of subsequent chapters.

1.2 Context: Modern Foreign Languages Teaching policy in England

To understand the rationale for this study, it is important first to outline the educational policy context in which a particular approach (*Interact)* to MFL teaching in secondary schools in England came to be proposed. In so doing, *Interact* will be examined from the point of view of a 'first-order' (Murray and Male, 2005) pedagogical proposition, that is, concerned with secondary-school pupils' learning of MFL. In later sections, *Interact* will also be explored from a 'second-order' perspective (Murray and Male, 2005) as a teacher-education proposition. The following section therefore charts the introduction of the first National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages published by the then Department for Education and Science (DES/WO 1991) and its commitment to a communicative agenda, which would influence the proponents of *Interact*. Prior to the advent of the comprehensive school system (DES Circular 10/65, 1965), MFL teaching had predominantly been the preserve of the

educational elite (Dobson, 2018), its purpose having been mainly to enable students to access works of literature (Lightbown and Spada, 2006, p.138). According to Johnson (2008), pedagogy and content were modelled on the study of ancient languages, which was then seen as best served by an approach traditionally called Grammar-Translation. The democratisation of education and ensuing gradual introduction of MFL in comprehensive schools necessitated a reformulation of the purpose and relevance of studying MFL with concomitant pedagogical implications (McLelland, 2018). Great Britain's entry into the European Economic Community in 1973 further cemented among stakeholders the importance for MFL to serve learners' future career prospects, as suggested by the British Overseas Trade Board (1979), and equip them with some measure of communicative competence in European languages. According to Dobson (2018), educational projects led by the Council of Europe (Trim and Girard, 1988) had a direct influence on the Modern Foreign Languages Working Group (DES, 1990) which had been convened by the DES to advise on the proposed new National Curriculum for Modern Foreign Languages (DES/WO, 1991). The Council of Europe project recommendations (Trim and Girard, 1988) were considered at a national conference on the teaching of MFL in England in 1989 (Dobson, 2018). The conference report highlighted issues in MFL teaching as being:

> a narrow interpretation of what is meant by communication and authenticity; a failure to distinguish adequately between practice and the use of the language; unnecessary use of English; and insufficient attention to…the conveying of meaning (Salter, 1989, pp.4-7).

Seeking to address the above shortcomings and provide guidance on how MFL departments in secondary schools should more correctly interpret the above-mentioned 'communication and authenticity', the first iteration of the National Curriculum for MFL (DES/WO, 1991) declared communicative competence to be the overall aim of classroom-based language learning. Furthermore, the accompanying guidance material – Programme of Study (DES/WO, 1991) – advised that the TL should be seen as 'the natural means of communication from the very beginning' (DES/WO, 1991, C1). This commitment to the communicative aims of language learning, and to the TL as 'the natural means of communication' in the classroom, was renewed in subsequent revisions to the National Curriculum for MFL but practical guidance was

much reduced due to concerns over workload (Dobson, 2018). Grenfell (2000) cites this reduction of the initial Programme of Study, from 195 pages in 1992 to 10 pages in the 1995 document, as one of the reasons for a lack of coherence between stated aims and pedagogy. And whilst there was general consensus among MFL teachers that a TL approach was most conducive to achieving communicative competence, the paucity of practical guidance on how to achieve this (Mitchell, 1994; Klapper, 1997; Grenfell, 2000) led some to argue that MFL were missing a clear pedagogy (Macaro 1997; Norman 1998). It was to offer possible solutions to this missing pedagogy that, in the early 2000's, a team of teacher educators from different Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) collaborated over the implementation of practical strategies to promote TL use by MFL secondary-school learners. It is to their pedagogical proposition, later called *Interact* (Christie, 2013), which I now turn.

1.3   *Interact*: an introductory overview

Two key sources provide the basis for this introductory overview: the work of Harris, Burch, Jones, and Darcy (2001), and of Christie (2011), as they constitute the only published materials that directly relate to *Interact.* The earlier work by Harris *et al.* (2001) reports the outcome of classroom-based projects aiming to offer practical guidance for the implementation of a TL approach, and thus provide the earlier-mentioned and hitherto 'missing pedagogy' (Macaro, 1997). Jointly funded by the now-defunct Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research (CiLT) and the then Teacher Training Agency (established in 1994, relaunched as the Teacher Development Agency in 2005 and amalgamated within the Department for Education from 2010), a team of teacher educators set up a project with the aim of experimenting with, and offering 'concrete, practical, step by step guidance' (Harris *et al.*, 2001 p.2) for MFL teachers wishing to promote their learners' use of the TL. To this end, they invited experienced MFL teachers and Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) student teachers to trial specific techniques in their respective MFL classrooms and report on their perceived impact on learners' ability to communicate in the TL. The resulting classroom-based informal findings were published in a book titled *Something to say? Promoting spontaneous classroom talk* (Harris *et al.,* 2001). In this 150-page pedagogical book, Harris *et al*. (2001) support the MFL National

Curriculum's (DfE/HMSO, 1995) commitment to promoting learners' communicative competence; they further stake their beliefs in the use of the TL to achieve this and illustrate how to proceed on the basis of their classroom-based projects.

Unlike later UK-wide secondary school-based initiatives aimed at supporting learners' use of the TL, such as the Talk Project (Leith, 2003) or later work by Hawkes (2012) in England, or Crichton in Scotland (2010), Harris *et al.* (2001) implicitly tend towards a 'strong' (Howatt, 1984, p.279) version of communicative language teaching (CLT). This 'strong' version entails learning a language *by* using it whereas a 'weak' version means learning a language *with a view to* later using it. In other words, in a 'weak' communicative setting, the classroom is the place where learners undertake the preparatory work that would enable them later to engage in genuine communicative exchange. In the 'strong' version, the classroom is the setting for such exchanges. Furthermore, as the title of Harris *et al.* (2001) indicates, the authors sought to promote 'spontaneous classroom talk' and suggest ways of developing 'spontaneous interaction language or SIL' (2001, p.4). Whilst Hawkes' (2012) study of a TL project in a secondary school in England found learners' spontaneous talk to be a welcome by-product, spontaneity in Harris *et al.* (2001) is actively pursued, the underpinning belief being that self-initiated use of the TL, by and amongst learners, is the engine that drives the language-learning process.

The second foundational document for what would come to be known as *Interact* is Christie's (2011) doctoral thesis, which explored how the pedagogical guidelines within Harris *et al.* (2001) were applied in a secondary school in England. Whereas the work of Harris *et al.* (2001) represents a pedagogical proposition and, to some extent, a call to action, Christie's (2011) is an exploratory and *a posteriori* doctoral study, based on longitudinal classroom observations of, and interviews with two MFL teachers in a comprehensive school in England. Both teachers (one experienced and one newly qualified teacher) were familiar with *Interact,* following their teacher-education course at the University where this approach is promoted. Christie (2011) did not set out to test the language-learning credibility or effectiveness of *Interact.* His research questions were more investigative in nature, focusing on the observed characteristics of pupils' spontaneous talk and on the classroom conditions which

seem conducive to pupils' expression of spontaneity (2011, p.20). He noted the techniques used by skillful MFL teachers to orchestrate or 'engineer spontaneity' (Christie, 2011, p.299), an apparent oxymoron which captures both the process and purpose of the approach: that of planning and designing activities with the intention of eliciting learners' spontaneous interaction in the target language. Underpinning the above is a belief that spontaneity is a key impetus in language learning. The term '*Interact*' first appeared in a later publication (Christie, 2013) aimed at further disseminating this approach among secondary-school MFL teachers in England; it is the term adopted in this study.

1.4   *Interact:* an approach or a method?

So far, *Interact* has been called an 'approach' and it is important to clarify the terminology. Anthony (1963, p.63) distinguishes between an approach and a method in the following way: an approach is 'a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning.' A method, on the other hand, 'is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material' (Anthony, 1963, p.63). This distinction leads Anthony (1963, p.65) to hold that an approach is an abstract concept constituted by a set of beliefs and principles, as we shall explore later (section 2.2), whereas a method has a concrete existence in the form of a documented plan of action. To borrow Anthony's synthesis (1963, p.65, emphasis in the original), 'an *approach* is axiomatic, a *method* is procedural.' It remains a moot point whether *Interact* ought to be considered an approach which, by the above definition, should remain open to personal interpretation, or a method, and therefore, to an extent, an externally-designed if not prescribed plan of action. The reason for this foray into definitions of approach and method is linked to my motivation for the present study, which I explain in section 1.5 below. A starting, informal hypothesis was that those who understand the 'spirit' of *Interact*, and therefore discern its underlying communicative principles, by the same token eschew a more literal and dogmatic conceptualisation. This personal hypothesis also ventured that those practitioners who regard *Interact* as an approach rather than a method (Anthony, 1963) are more likely to exert some level of personal agency in interpreting and applying those communicative principles. For this reason, Chapter 2 will be partially dedicated to the

exploration of both procedural and axiomatic aspects of *Interact* in order to gain definitional clarity. Beyond matters of definition, and returning to the overall purpose of *Interact,* both Harris *et al.* (2001) and Christie (2011) acknowledge the pedagogical and managerial risks involved in advocating a MFL teaching proposition which promotes spontaneity, as the latter is essentially unpredictable, organic and contingent (van Lier, 1996). Christie (2011) concludes that this requires strong convictions and specific interactional skills from secondary-school MFL teachers and that it presents them with specific challenges which are explored more fully in Chapter 2. As I now explain, these challenges also possessed a personal dimension relating to my motivation for undertaking this study.

1.5 Motivation for the study

My initial encounter with the above approach was as a young French national embarking on a PGCE MFL course in 1992-3 at an HEI in England. The MFL tutors at this HEI were keen advocates of a TL approach and one of its members would later be involved in the project that would result in the publication of Harris *et al.* (2001). This initial encounter held an equal measure of culture shock – my own language-learning experience having been based on grammar-translation – and enthusiasm – here was an approach that would motivate all learners and enliven the MFL classroom. Having experienced first-hand the communicative shortcomings of grammar-translation, I found the notion of a TL approach intellectually appealing. The following years spent teaching MFL in a local secondary school, however, saw my ardent advocacy challenged by the negative reactions of some of my classes, colleagues, students' parents and caregivers. The approach, I felt, was being misconstrued by them as 'fun and games in the TL' and perceived to be lacking the rigour associated with the systematic study of the formal aspects of the language.

A few years later, I joined my former tutors' team as a colleague on the MFL PGCE programme. Over the course of the next 22 years as a teacher educator, I would encounter on a yearly basis a broad gamut of impromptu reactions to this approach from student teachers and their school mentors. These ranged from the 'fun and games in the target language' caricature mentioned above to the more sophisticated

understanding such as that displayed by the teachers interviewed by Christie (2011). As mentioned above (1.4), this prompted my interest in researching the differing conceptualisations of *Interact* and their ensuing implications for practitioners' dispositions towards it. One research focus therefore centres on the nature of participants' understanding of *Interact* with a view to exploring how this understanding influences their stances and possibly their practice.

A second impetus for the research relates to concerns about the continued legitimacy of *Interact* in the current educational climate. In the intervening years between my own PGCE in 1992-3 and the present study, the educational landscape had become a 'quasi-market', ushered in by the 1988 Education Reform Act (Thomas, 2013), but made more explicit by the first government publication of the so-called 'school league tables' in 1992 (Leckie and Goldstein, 2017) based on General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination results. The latter had turned into 'high-stakes' (Harlen, 2007) examinations, informing parental choices and an inspection regime focused on school performance (West, 2010). The adverse effects of the transformation of the educational context into a quasi-market (Ball, 2003; Harlen, 2007; West, 2010; Thomas, 2013) have been well documented. Of interest here is the impact of high-stakes GCSE examinations on MFL teaching. D'Arcy (2006) compared the TL content and interaction between Key Stage 3 learners (aged 11-14) and Key Stage 4 (14 to 16) MFL classes and noted that the latter were generally devoted to examination preparation. The auspicious MFL policy context outlined earlier, which had favoured a TL approach and an ambition to see 'Languages for All, Languages for Life' (DfES, 2002) was gradually replaced, in this new 'age of measurement' (Biesta, 2009), by a more competitive, accountability-driven climate. MFL would later lose its status as a compulsory subject at KS4 in 2004, along with its appeal and consequent weight in the secondary curriculum; GCSE examination entries showing a marked decline (Churchward, 2019, p.6). Furthermore, during the same period, a number of national policy initiatives from the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) aimed at raising standards in literacy and numeracy, such as the Key Stage 3 Strategy (DfEE, 2001), saw a gradual encroachment of English as the medium of instruction in MFL classrooms. This was permitted through a subsequent revision to the National

Curriculum for MFL (DfEE/QCA, 1999) which relaxed what had hitherto been seen as the 'dogma' (Butzkamm, 2003, p.30) or 'diktat' (Macaro, 2008, p.104) of the 'total-TL' classroom.

The above, together with GCSE examination specifications ill-suited to the measuring of genuine communicative competence (Grenfell, 2000; Mitchell, 2003) had resulted in an educational context inimical to a TL ethos. In my professional life, I was privy to a number of anecdotal 'home truths' through a range of sources and encounters, which pointed to a concern that the target-language approach advocated at my HEI was now perceived as no longer 'fit for purpose'. For some pre-service and experienced teachers, *Interact* had arguably become an anachronistic proposition in view of the current, approved, place of English in the MFL classroom. Others, who still agreed with the language-learning principles underpinning *Interact*, felt they were not at liberty to apply these in practice and disclosed their internal dilemma between espoused TL principles and school policy. This educational climate change led me to harbour some reservations about the continued relevance of a TL approach in MFL teaching, which contributed to my motivation for undertaking this study. The emergence of the above concerns coincided with my changing role within the institution.

I was appointed course leader and sole tutor on the PGCE Secondary Modern Foreign Languages programme in 2012-13 and felt it incumbent upon me to investigate the 'home truths' mentioned above more rigorously since my professional responsibility entailed adequately preparing future teachers for the realities of the classroom. At that professional juncture, I needed to explore the perceived relevance of *Interact*, including envisaging discarding the approach and overhauling the content of the MFL PGCE course. Should it be replaced by a pedagogical proposition more in tune with current demands, then I also needed to consider the views of experienced MFL teachers as to what this would entail. *Interact* had been the hallmark of the PGCE MFL course at this teacher-education institution for at least twenty years and, if there was to be such an overhaul, then a secure understanding of the validity of the enterprise was required, based on firmer ground than anecdotal misgivings. What therefore

started as an informal investigation arising from a sense of professional responsibility later coalesced into a desire to formalise the endeavour through this doctoral thesis.

1.6 Research questions

The study involves two sets of research participants:

- my first 'solo' cohort of PGCE student teachers who would be inducted in the *Interact* approach and

- experienced MFL teachers who are familiar with *Interact.*

Both sets of research-participants' understanding of *Interact,* their experience in implementing the approach in school and their stance on its continued legitimacy would inform the future direction of the PGCE MFL course. As a new course leader, my initial research objectives had an evaluative bent in the sense that I sought to explore the possible dissonance between the PGCE MFL course – and its advocacy of *Interact* – and the secondary-school MFL teaching climate. Exploring whether *Interact* remained a credible and current pedagogical proposition for beginning and experienced MFL teachers constituted, in my mind, a professional imperative. As noted earlier (1.2), the impetus for this study was primarily a concern with the continued validity of a language-teaching pedagogical proposition within the changing landscape of MFL teaching in secondary schools in England. In simple terms, as a 'first-order' (Murray and Male, 2005) language-teaching proposal, did it still have '*Something to say?*' (Harris *et al.*, 2001). Ultimately, though, lies the parallel question of its continued legitimacy at a 'second-order' teacher-education level. Expecting pre- and in-service MFL teachers to adopt a strong version of CLT and actively promote spontaneity in the MFL classroom (1.3) requires them to take instructional risks (1.4) that might run counter to an increasingly challenging educational policy context (1.5). The research therefore began with the following three areas of interest in mind:

1. What is the nature of the research participants' understanding of *Interact*?
2. What issues have the research participants found with regard to its implementation in schools?
3. What value does *Interact* still hold, if any, for these research participants?

The risk involved in receiving answers to these three questions which might point to the welcome demise of *Interact,* and therefore call for a complete reconceptualisation of the core message of the PGCE MFL course, invited some deep personal introspection. Was the mission of the PGCE MFL course to design a programme that closely aligned with the reality of the classroom? In the present context, this might entail preparing student teachers to successfully navigate the compliance currents (Ball, 2003). Or was the mission to nail our colours to the *Interact* mast and provide student teachers with a strong message by way of an anchor in these troubled waters? As a result, a fourth research interest arose in the course of the study, which widened the scope to engage with the broader purpose of a teacher-education programme. This fourth area therefore explores the role and place of a university-based teacher-education course and asks:

4. What role does *Interact* play in the formation of the professional identity of the research participants?

Together, all four foci seek to explore the perceived value of *Interact* in the formation and practice of a sample of secondary-school teachers at different career phases in England.

1.7   Chapter outline

This thesis comprises seven chapters. In this introductory chapter, I have presented the overall context, purpose and motivation for my study, the central focus of which is a Modern Foreign Languages teaching approach – *Interact* - aimed at promoting spontaneous use of the target language. I also outlined the challenges associated with advocating such an approach in the changing climate of MFL teaching in secondary schools in England. Chapter 2 explores *Interact* in more detail and highlights its procedural and axiomatic features based on the work by Harris *et al.* (2001) and Christie (2011, 2013, 2016) with a view to clarifying its communicative stance in relation to other language-teaching approaches and methods. I firstly review the language-learning literature and draw, in particular, on van Lier (1996) and Benson (2008) to examine key concepts that are central to *Interact,* such as the expression of learners' spontaneity, identity, authenticity and autonomy. Secondly, I turn to the

literature on teacher education to identify the implications inherent in the pursuit of the above concepts from the point of view of pre- and in-service MFL teachers. To this end, I review teacher-education programmes that have endeavoured to support the congruence between conceptual understanding and practical application, and I then consider the contextual and policy constraints that might impede those endeavours. Chapter 3 delineates the ethical and methodological underpinnings that frame and guide this research study. Issues of positionality and the need for sensitive research are addressed, which are particularly pertinent in view of the fact that some of the research participants are my own PGCE students. I then explain the pragmatic 'cast' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.174) adopted within a broader qualitative approach and my choice of an eclectic analytical strategy involving the adaption of a framework (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017). Chapters 4 and 5 present the analysis of findings arising from the two main research methods: Chapter 4 focuses on the results from the three sets of questionnaires completed by a student cohort at the beginning, mid-point and end of their MFL PGCE course together with interview data obtained from ten PGCE student teachers within that cohort. Chapter 5 relates findings arising from the interviews with fourteen MFL teachers in post, most of whom were alumni and therefore familiar with *Interact*. Chapter 6 then discusses the above in relation to the research questions and to the literature reviewed in previous chapters whilst Chapter 7 concludes with a synthesis of previous chapters and an overview of the implications for future research and for teacher education.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 positioned *Interact* in relation to its educational context and pedagogical purpose. It outlined how *Interact* had emerged as a proposition which was 'of its time' in that it espoused the initial National Curriculum's (DES/WO, 1991) avowed commitment to equipping language learners with communicative competence in the TL. With the ultimate intention of investigating how research participants' interpretations of *Interact* may hinge on whether they view it as an approach or as a method, I firstly revisit Anthony's (1963) definitions of method and approach (2.2). These definitions will then serve as a heuristic tool for a more detailed analysis of the procedural (2.3 – 2.5) and axiomatic (2.6 – 2.8) aspects of *Interact*. The source material for an examination of its procedural characteristics is the work by Harris *et al.* (2001) and Christie (2011; 2013; 2016). To explore *Interact's* axiomatic principles, I also draw on the wider language-learning literature with a focus on key concepts central to *Interact,* such as learners' spontaneity, identity, authenticity and autonomy, with particular reference to the work of van Lier (1996) and Benson (2008). Whilst the above will consider *Interact* at a first-order level, concerned with its contribution to language learning, as noted in Chapter 1, my study is ultimately intent upon an exploration of the value of *Interact* in both the formation and later practice of secondary-school teachers in England. Therefore, Chapter 2 will then proceed to examine it as a second-order teacher-education proposition (2.10). For this purpose, I consider the relevant literature with a view to investigating the impact of university-led teacher-education courses on student and in-post teachers. I conclude with an overview of the contextual constraints that the current performative culture (Ball, 2003) may exert on them as well as on initial teacher education (ITE) in my setting.

2.2 Method or approach?

As explained in Chapter 1, an initial impetus for the research arose from the perceived necessity of considering whether to overhaul the PGCE programme and its advocacy of *Interact*. In the first instance, I wished to ascertain how the participants perceived it and whether they saw *Interact* as a set of procedures to follow (method) or as a set

of principles (approach) to guide their practice. Although I realise that their personal representations might well be changeable and more complex than a simple binary choice between method and approach, I reasoned that such a choice represented, at least initially, a useful heuristic device for the purpose of distinguishing broad features of *Interact* and its eventual interpretation. To reiterate Anthony's original definitions (1963, p.63): an approach is 'a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith' whereas a method is 'an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon the selected *approach*. An *approach* is axiomatic, a *method* is procedural.' (Anthony, 1963, p.65, emphasis in the original).

Before examining the above in more detail, it is worth noting that other delineations exist, such as Richards and Rodgers (2001) who expanded upon Anthony's proposed framework to include germane constructs such as: design, procedure, syllabus, and thus presented a more sophisticated structure. Furthermore, one should note that Anthony's (1963), and Richards and Rodgers' (2001) frameworks are not without their detractors (see Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Indeed, the very concepts of method and approach have been called into question. Kumaravadivelu (2006, p.170), for instance, considers the concept of method to hold 'little theoretical validity and even less practical utility. Its meaning is ambiguous, and its claim dubious.' Although Kumaravadivelu's argument has merit, the concepts of approach and method will nonetheless be retained here to categorise the ways in which *Interact* could be interpreted by observers and practitioners. This is firstly because the terms 'approach' and 'method' form part of educators and teachers' vernacular. Secondly, because detractors were not necessarily taking the labels to task so much as the perceived prescriptive intent behind certain methods. For example, when invoking the 'death of the method', Allwright (1991) was calling into question what he perceived to be increasingly regimented and dogmatic conceptions of language teaching encapsulated in textbooks and language courses. Nevertheless, the consensus remains that, in definitional terms at least, methods are concerned with observable procedures whereas approaches operate at the level of principles and beliefs and are thus not

necessarily explicit or visible (Johnson, 2008; Ellis,R., 2009). It is against this backdrop, and with the above definitions in mind, that I now examine *Interact* as if it were a method and will later consider it from the point of view of an approach.

2.3 *Interact* as a method

As discussed (2.2), and following Anthony (1963), a method is procedural, concerned with the pedagogical implementation of a set of beliefs about the nature of language learning. It enacts and realises 'a set of assumptions' (Anthony, 1963, p.64) and tends to possess 'distinctive features' (1963, p.66). A method is therefore observable, describable and holds identifiable traits. As will be shown in this section, *Interact's* practical and distinctive features point to its procedural nature. *Interact's* practical intention is foregrounded in the foundational document '*Something to say*? *Promoting spontaneous classroom talk'* (Harris *et al.,* 2001) which deliberately sets out to offer pedagogical guidance for MFL teachers. The structure of the book follows a standard planning procedure, commonly referred to as Presentation, Practice and Production or 'the three Ps' (Harris *et al.,* 2001, p.3) and offers concrete suggestions for embedding the TL in all three planning phases. Each chapter outlines the incremental series of steps which lead to the next phase and offers scripted examples of typical or transcribed teacher-pupil interaction. In its detailed guidelines and suggested sequential order of planning and teaching, *Something to Say* adheres to Anthony's (1963, p.65) previously mentioned definition of a method as 'an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language to students.' Furthermore, its distinctive features, which lead Christie (2011, p. 3) to state that 'Modern foreign language lessons which employ [*Interact*] immediately strike the observer as being different', lend weight to the argument for considering *Interact* as a method. On the basis of his understanding of Harris *et al.* (2001) and of his own observations in the course of his exploratory study, Christie (2011, p.3) paints the portrait of a typical *Interact* lesson, featuring ten common characteristics (2011, p.25), some of which are detailed in the next section. There is therefore a definable set of features, the combination of which, argues Christie (2011), gives *Interact* its distinctive identity. It is an identity that has endured: the activities and steps outlined in *Something to Say* (2001) continue to be observed in Christie's (2011) study, suggesting an internal coherence and longevity

not usually associated with a personal interpretation of a loose set of general language-learning principles. Transcripts of teachers interviewed by Christie (2011, p.19) also suggest a common language, 'an in-house jargon' with its specific acronyms and shortcuts. A description of these procedures and associated language follows, which gives access to the shared jargon of *Interact*-inspired practitioners. They arise both from the work of Harris *et al.* (2001) and Christie (2011; 2013; 2016) and are listed below not only for the purpose of clarifying what *Interact* stands for but also to consider how it compares with other target-language teaching methods and approaches. This comparison is intended both to illustrate common features between *Interact* and other CLT-inspired approaches as well as to highlight the ways in which *Interact* could be conceptualised as a method.

2.4   *Interact* **procedures and techniques**

As stated above, I now turn to an examination of the procedural features of *Interact* with a view to establishing and relaying to an unfamiliar reader an understanding of its constitutive characteristics and associated terminology. The following description of *Interact*-as-method necessarily relies for its documentary sources on the work of Harris *et al.* (2001) and Christie (2011; 2013; 2016) but will be enlisting the broader language-learning literature as and when pertinent.

2.4.1   Target Language Routines

To situate the purpose of TL routines within *Interact,* it is first necessary to outline the latter's stance vis-à-vis the TL. As mentioned in Chapter 1, *Interact* adheres to a 'strong' version of CLT (Howatt, 1984) whereby TL acquisition is predicated on TL use. Strong versions of CLT tend therefore to lean towards promoting the TL as the normal means of classroom communication. This entails expanding the use of the TL beyond content matter to include all domains of classroom discourse, thereby increasing learners' exposure to the TL (Macaro, 2001) to better consolidate their retention of vocabulary and phrases (Crichton, 2009, p.29). *Interact*-inspired lessons would therefore be expected to be taught mostly if not entirely in the TL. However, Mitchell (1989, p.204) cautioned against equating TL immersion with TL acquisition by learners which, in her mind, betrays a naïve view of transfer from teacher TL input to learners'

intake. Her secondary classroom-based study of learners of French in Scotland demonstrated that extensive TL exposure did not necessarily translate into pupil intake. Bearing this in mind, Harris *et al.* (2001) suggest practical ways in which teachers can enable learners to process and appropriate TL structures through the use of day-to-day classroom *Routines,* such as taking the register or setting homework. Since *Routines* are a familiar and legitimate occurrence in a secondary-school lesson, they provide a ready-made vehicle for the 'negotiation of meaning' (Long, 1996) felt to be conducive to language acquisition. In an *Interact* lesson, these *Routines* are used not only to maximise TL exposure but also to invite learners to manipulate meaningfully the language of *Routines* in their interaction. As such, *Routines* require the active participation of learners in negotiation and decision-making. For instance, all participants will collectively discuss and decide on issues such as who will undertake which role and why; who will ask and grant permission; and what type of homework will be set. There are thus many routines in an *Interact* lesson: for volunteering, for setting homework or learning objectives, for peer and self-evaluation, opinion and justification, the management of a team competition, and so on. The content of these routines tends to focus on the 'here and now and us' of the classroom; that is, it refers to learners, topic, activities, teacher and the nature of the relationships between them all. *Routines* thus exploit the classroom context as a legitimate focus for discussion (Harris *et al.,* 2001, p.21).

2.4.2   Language of interaction

Content or *topical* language refers, in Harris *et al.* (2001), to the linguistic structures associated with a topic under study. The language of *interaction*, on the other hand, encompasses managerial, organisational, social or regulative classroom discourses. We have seen above that Mitchell (1989) cautioned against a naïve view of input-intake transfer, which posits an automatic correlation between teacher TL use and learners' TL repertoire. Mindful of this, *Interact* asks teachers to explicitly plan for the hand-over of linguistic structures. In his study of classroom discourse, Walsh (2011) too urged language teachers to pay close attention to the language of interaction in order to maximise linguistic gains. This said, his suggestions for developing classroom interactional competence amount to what might appear as little more than teachers

recording and auditing its features against a self-evaluation teacher-talk (SETT) framework of his creation (Walsh, 2011, pp.110 and 177). *Interact* goes further by exemplifying ways in which this language of interaction can be meticulously mapped out and handed over to learners. *Interact* categorises this language of interaction in the form of 'pupil-interaction language' (PiL) and 'teacher-interaction language' (TiL). TiL is a simplified yet idiomatic version of the TL which pays attention to familiar, current and future structures. These structures are selected for their 'maximum transferable value' (Christie, 2013, p.27), both in relation to their grammatical features and to their communicative potential. Structures are 'drip-fed' (Harris *et al.*, 2001, p.75) according to a careful plan for the handing-over from TiL to PiL, following a 'lifecycle of phrases' (2001, p.127) from their births (their first appearance in TiL) to their explicit hand-over (their first appearance in PiL). Lastly, *Interact* teachers are asked to actively engineer the emergence of 'spontaneous interaction language' (SiL, c.f. Harris *et al.* 2001, p.75). The 'lifecycle of phrases' is deemed complete when these phrases appear in learners' spontaneous repertoire, that is, their first appearance in SiL.

2.4.3 Teacher clone

Simply put, *teacher clone* is a technique which sees teacher-led activities mirrored by pupil-led activities. In Harris *et al.* (2001, p.29) they are exemplified in relation to pair work where the teacher conducts a whole-class repetition activity which is then handed over to the pupils. For instance, pupil A takes on the role of the teacher and mimes or mouths or draws in the air a linguistic item for pupil B to guess. In Christie (2013, p.37), *teacher clone* is observed in the MFL classroom for purposes beyond the imitation of a teacher's language and activities. In these cases, learners negotiate who should take up some of the teacher's roles, including calling the register, counting team points, orchestrating choral repetition, choosing between volunteers or keeping scores. Beyond the linguistic advantage of developing a broader repertoire of requests and other communicative functions such as expressing opinions and disagreement, what is actively being pursued by the MFL teachers in Christie's study (2011) is a classroom atmosphere conducive to the negotiation of institutional roles and rights. Learners are thus seen to take on responsibilities which could be deemed to be

beyond their normal sphere of activity in a typical UK secondary classroom. This resonates with Allwright and Hanks (2009, p.2) who advocate seeing secondary-school students as 'practitioners of learning' and not simply as 'targets of teaching' (2009, p.2), capable of decision-making with regard to their learning. This means entrusting students with a wider institutional remit, in line with Harris *et al.*'s (2001, p.21) earlier suggestion. Christie (2011) contends that the skilful *Interact* teachers his study focused on shared decision-making rights with their classes over procedures, activities and roles. They were thus observed playfully but purposefully inviting learners to react, query, disagree with or modify requests in the TL. According to these teachers' interviews (Christie, 2011), the intention was not only to expand learners' discoursal TL repertoire but to invite them to invest personally in setting the direction of the MFL curriculum and their own language-learning trajectories.

2.4.4 'Crappi' activities

This rather unfortunate acronym (coined by a former trainee and now well-established in the PGCE course literature, c.f. Christie, 2011, p.19) aims to provide a mnemonic for trainees when planning activities. It stands for C:hallenge, R:elevance, A:udience, P:ersonalised, P:urpose, I:nteractive. Its objective is to confer on all classroom activities a communicative purpose manifested by what Stevick (1996) calls the 'resolution of uncertainties' whereby learners use the TL to resolve conceptual or linguistic ambiguity. It is felt that this promotes within learners a mindset open to speculating, guessing, risk-taking in 'their struggle to arrive at meaning' (Harris *et al.*, 2001, p.22). Even the most repetitive activities ought to integrate aspects of guesswork, of unpredictability and of personal choice. In pair work, Harris *et al.* (2001) suggest that learners be left to decide how much scaffolding they are prepared to offer their partners, for example: how much help they will provide when miming / mouthing / humming / drawing their secretly chosen language structure for their partners to guess. This provides a playful incentive for conversational partners to pay genuine attention to one another's attempt at communicating. For Littlewood (1981, p.29), this 'information gap' is a staple of communicative language-teaching approaches. In *Interact*, however, it is imbued with greater personal choice as to the concept or item

of vocabulary to be guessed and the manner in which the guessing activity will be performed.

2.4.5 Team competition and games

Ludic activities are not the prerogative of *Interact,* they are frequently used in a range of language-teaching approaches (see Talak-Kiryk, 2010 or Alpar, 2013 for extensive reviews on the place of games in the language classroom). Games, especially in primary and secondary MFL classrooms, are used for their motivational benefit and linguistic potential. For instance, team competition in *Interact* fulfils a dual purpose. First, it supports extrinsic motivation for otherwise disengaged teenagers – a 'sugaring of the MFL learning pill' – and second, it provides further opportunity to extend in a playful manner the language of requests and justification for team points, and the concomitant language of disagreement and counter-argument. Heated student-initiated debates in the TL in the three Key Stage 4 classes (including a lower-set Year 11 class) in Christie's study around the awarding (or not) of team points attest to the intensity of the emotions felt by the participants concerned (Christie 2011, pp.177-184).

2.4.6 End activities

In their overall plans of action, MFL teachers following *Interact* are invited to outline in detail an 'end activity' (Harris *et al*., 2001, p.76) which would gather all the linguistic (topical, interactional, and spontaneously occurring) strands together in a final project. The final project may involve group discussions around a topic of interest or the resolution of a set task and should provide the arena for extended, self-initiated language production. These 'end activities' are a common feature of other target-language teaching approaches, such as Task-Based Language Teaching (Ellis, R., 2009), and were indeed inspired by Willis' (1996) framework for task-based learning. As such, they serve a similar purpose in creating a forum for learners to involve themselves in collaborative completion of a task which requires them to use the target language. Chapter four of Harris *et al.* (2001) is dedicated to the description of such 'end activities' trialled in a number of MFL lessons together with an evaluation of their successes, weaknesses, and suggestions for future practice.

2.5 *Interact* as a method: some concluding observations

In the above sections, the methodological features of *Interact* were outlined to justify its conceptualisation as a method. To summarise, *Interact* possesses those characteristics associated with methods in Anthony's (1963) framework in that they are observable, identifiable and distinctive. They are manifested through a common set of procedures and techniques with a unique jargon shared across teachers and time. Arguably, the benefits of methods over approaches can be found in the pedagogical support they provide for novice teachers (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). One such benefit includes 'the reassurance of a detailed set of sequential steps to follow in the classroom' (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.246). This is particularly useful for beginning teachers in that 'many of the basic decisions about what to teach and how to teach it have already been made for them' (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.246). However, this sequential set of procedures, which lends *Interact* lessons the semblance of a 'well-choreographed spectacle' (Christie's 2011, p.19) is a double-edged sword. Christie's expression highlights a potential danger, for the uninformed observer, of equating *Interact* with a show, a performance, a choreography, the slickness of which masks its internal complexity and theoretical underpinnings. This may lead to a representation of *Interact* similar to the 'fun and games in the target language' caricature mentioned in Chapter 1; a representation devoid of a larger purpose beyond its successful execution precisely because its theoretical principles are hidden from view. So what are these potentially hidden principles and how do they lend themselves to conceiving of *Interact* as an approach? It is to these questions that I now turn.

2.6 *Interact* as an approach

For Anthony (1963) and for Richards and Rodgers (2001, p.33), an approach reflects its proponents' implicit or explicit theories, both in relation to the nature of language and to the processes at play in language learning. As previously mentioned, in Anthony's view (1963, pp.63-64) an approach consists of:

a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic… It states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith – something which one believes but cannot necessarily prove.

The list of concepts embedded in this quotation – assumptions, point of view, philosophy, faith or beliefs – places 'approach' at the level of the intangible, the unprovable, potentially hidden from view not only from the recipient or observer but also, if implicit, from the practitioner. However, as Harris *et al.*'s (2001) book title indicates, with '*promoting spontaneous classroom talk*', one of *Interact*'s underpinning assumptions at least becomes visible. In what follows, I set out to explore the principles underpinning the promotion of 'spontaneous classroom talk' in both *Interact*-specific and in the wider language-learning literature. I go on to propose that 'spontaneity' in *Interact* is seen as the hallmark of authenticity, of alignment between learners' identities and their language-learning endeavour, and of autonomy, all of which underpin *Interact*'s assumptions regarding the prerequisites for a genuine communicative approach to language learning.

2.7 Spontaneity: a definition

The following generic definition of spontaneity aims to outline its associated components prior to a closer examination of the concept in the language-learning literature. A spontaneous action or event, according to my synthesis of the Merriam-Webster online dictionary definition (2020), has one or more of the following attributes: it 'proceeds from natural feeling or native tendency', is self-initiated, develops or occurs without any apparent cause or external influence, is not apparently contrived or manipulated and can arise from a momentary impulse. This definition points to a nexus of related constructs incorporating elements of autonomy and authenticity: autonomy in that a spontaneous action appears to be emanating from the self, unprompted or unsolicited, and authentic in the sense of being true to self, uninhibited and free from artifice. Spontaneity then expresses and thus reveals the self in a candid, unaffected manner. With regard to the literature on language learning, spontaneity is rarely addressed and remains rather under-researched with reference to the above characteristics; instead, the literature tends to adopt a narrower view of spontaneity which equates it with fluency in the form of extended

and self-produced student output. Recent work on spontaneity in the foreign or second-language classroom (Willis, 2015; Ramdani and Rahmat, 2018; Abdulah, 2019) seems to indicate that a distinction is drawn between spontaneous versus planned language use where spontaneous refers either to fluency exercises or to self-initiated but prepared student presentations. The above-mentioned literature also focuses on promoting spontaneity through the use of games (Abdulah, 2019) or on alleviating learner anxiety (Yalçın and İnceçay, 2014) related to undertaking 'spontaneous' speaking tasks or improvisation exercises. Yet, it does so by limiting spontaneity to its self-initiated aspect exemplified in learners' extended but rehearsed output without reference to the immediacy and unpredictability of 'real time' interaction. In Harris *et al.* (2001) and in Christie (2011, p.204), however, spontaneous talk encapsulates both self-initiated as well as impulsive 'heat of the moment' aspects of classroom interaction that portray a more expansive characterisation of spontaneity than is the case in the above-mentioned improvisation exercises. In this respect, the sections that follow aim to contribute to this hitherto rather under-discussed aspect in the language-learning literature. Central to the above-mentioned expansive characterisation are attitudinal and discoursal aspects of spontaneity, which form the focus of the following review.

2.7.1 Attitudinal spontaneity

In this section, the rationale for *Interact*'s commitment to attitudinal aspects of spontaneity will be examined. Attitudinal spontaneity, where 'attitude' broadly denotes a mindset, an outlook, a way of being, comprises an amalgam of three distinct concepts: identity (Zimmerman, 1998), authenticity and autonomy (van Lier, 1996), each of which I now examine in turn.

2.7.1.1 Identity

In relation to identity, a clarification of terms is necessary in order to justify the synonymous use, in this thesis, of the terms 'identity' and 'self'. Some authors, as will be seen below, prefer to distinguish 'self' from 'identity' and reserve the term 'self' for a stable, recognisably unique core entity, and 'identity' for a more malleable, transient, contextual concept. For Rodgers and Scott (2008, p.739), 'self' remains

intangible, unknowable, but has an internal coherence and integrity which 'allows one to move in the world with a certain confidence' whereas identity is, metaphorically speaking, closer to the surface and therefore more attuned to, and contingent upon relations and contexts. 'Self, then, might be thought of as the meaning *maker* and identity as the meaning *made'* (Rodgers and Scott, 2008, p.739, emphasis in the original). Other authors, however, consider self and identity as synonymous and use the two terms interchangeably (Lauriala and Kukonnen, 2005, cited in Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009, p.179). This allows them to talk of 'ought-to and ideal selves' (Dörnyei, 2005). In line with the above authors, and for stylistic variety, I shall use 'identity' and 'self' interchangeably. In the language-learning literature, identity is of particular importance since language learning in a communicative setting goes beyond the notion of gaining an external body of knowledge; it also incorporates the acquisition of linguistic tools for the purpose of self-expression. In other words, the TL in a CLT context becomes a means of expressing one's own identity. A pedagogy based on spontaneous use of the TL cannot therefore ignore the self. Having explained the synonymous use of self and identity in this thesis, I now turn to an examination of its place in *Interact* and in the wider language literature.

One of the key characteristics of spontaneity, as mentioned in the earlier generic dictionary definition (2.7), is that it is self-initiated. This means that spontaneous action emanates from the self; that is, it proceeds from the inner motives of the actor. These inner motives in *Interact* are to be respected and nurtured as they provide the personal incentive necessary for learners' sustained engagement. The starting premise of '*Something to Say: promoting spontaneous classroom talk'* is that language learners do have 'something to say' and that this is of value rather than best left at the classroom door. As their book title implies, Harris *et al.* (2001, p.17, emphasis in the original) stake their beliefs in 'the importance of meaning, of having *something to say,* that pupils feel is genuinely important for them, that engages them on a personal level both emotionally and cognitively.' In this attention to emotional aspects of learning, there are also clear reminders in Harris *et al.* (2001) of earlier work by humanistic educational writers such as Rivers (1964), Moskowitz (1978) or Stevick (1996). Indeed,

the title of the book is strongly reminiscent of Stevick's (1996, p.195, emphasis added) work:

> Insofar as the student is bouncing back what the teacher is throwing at him, his performance is reflective. Insofar as performance is self-started, on the other hand, the student does not start from the assigned task of following a language model that the teacher or the textbook has provided. Instead, he starts with *something he wants to say* and with a person to whom he wants to say it.

Stevick's above distinction between self-started versus reflective performance is akin to Littlewood's (1981) 'self-initiated' TL use. With respect to the latter, Littlewood (1981, p.64) explained that, should learners be primarily concerned with the exchange of real meanings that matter to them, then 'they have the greatest chance of relating to the foreign language with their whole personality, rather than merely manipulating it as an instrument which is external to them.' A distinction is thus posited between a view of the TL either as a tool for expressing one's own identity or as an 'external instrument' to convey borrowed meanings. Littlewood (1981, p.93) goes on to state that 'the development of communicative skills can only take place if learners have motivation and opportunity to express their own identity and to relate with the people around them.' He thereby reiterates the centrality of the self in a communicative pedagogy, since it is the investment of a learner's 'whole personality' (1981, p.64) which provides them with the impetus to communicate. Littlewood's arguments above highlight the importance of analysing the ways in which the TL is apprehended by language learners and teachers. For Harris *et al.* (2001, p.111, emphasis added), a MFL syllabus consisting entirely of the 'repetitious diet of predominantly situational language based on topic areas that are almost in every sense *foreign* to the learners' may leave some learners feeling alienated. In other words, such a transactional MFL syllabus, disconnected from learners' 'whole personality', may not be conducive to their sustained investment. Writing in the context of MFL teacher education in England, Hulse (2015, p.159) concurred that classroom language in MFL secondary schools was often 'cut off from the senses, feelings, emotions…[and thus] meaningless. For language to have meaning it must affect us in some way.' We shall see below that differing conceptualisations of the TL depend upon classroom participants' perceived (mis)alignment between their school identity and their 'whole

personality' and that it is the process of identification – in its dual meaning of 'recognising' and 'espousing' – which permits the TL to be seen as a *bona fide* means of self-expression. I therefore move on to an exploration of the ways in which a classroom culture can mould particular conceptions of 'self' as language learners. In so doing, we shall see that *Interact* is underpinned by an assumption that inner motives, in the form of 'transportable identities' (Zimmerman, 1998), not only have a legitimate place in the classroom but that spontaneous talk depends on it.

Zimmerman (1998) was interested in the ways in which multiple identities manifest themselves in interaction. His identity framework briefly consists of three categories: *discourse, situated* and *transportable* identities*.* As *discourse* identity relates to discoursal aspects of spontaneity, it will be the focus of section 2.7.2. Below, I review the nature of, and interplay between institutionally assigned *situated* identities on the one hand and teachers and learners' *transportable* identities on the other. *Situated* identity, for Zimmerman (1998, p.90), refers to roles, functions or characteristics that are conferred by, claimed or assumed within a given context. In the classroom, *situated* identities would be those of teachers and students, although other identities can also be claimed (the studious learner, the class 'clown', etc.). *Transportable* identities (Zimmerman, 1998, p.90), as the name indicates, can be transported from one setting to another and denote those usually visible characteristics that carry culturally significant meanings (age, gender, ethnicity, physique, etc.). They can also express otherwise hidden personal affiliations or interests, when shared by participants, if felt to be relevant to their interactions. Zimmerman analysed different types of interaction (e.g. emergency calls) and demonstrated that the interplay between these identities had a significant impact on the quality of the ensuing interaction, as these identities were in turn claimed or rejected, acknowledged or dismissed. His key argument is that an acknowledgement and alignment of identities contribute to the success of the interaction whereas misidentification can lead to a breakdown in communication. We shall examine the discoursal implications of the above in section 2.7.2 but return here to the distinction between *situated* and *transportable* identities and their import in the MFL classroom.

A classroom culture can strive to keep a clear demarcation between interactants' *situated* and *transportable* identities - the latter being metaphorically left at the classroom door - or it can acknowledge both in an alignment between the contextual and the personal. This is not to claim that either of these two classroom cultures is superior. Rather, the aim is to examine the reasons why *Interact* seeks to involve both *situated* and *transportable* identities. A comparative study by Legenhausen (1999, cited in Ushioda, 2011) serves to exemplify the differing impact of these two classroom cultures on learners' view of the TL and of themselves as language learners. In Legenhausen's study, two separate groups of German and Danish 12-year-old students were recorded practising conversations in their respective English-as-a-foreign-language classroom. Both groups had similar linguistic competences but their interaction was strikingly different. The German students' conversation was stilted, formulaic and centred on topics reminiscent of their English text-book content whilst the Danish students' conversation was free-flowing, natural, and on topics that would not have been out of place in their own day-to-day native encounters in Danish. Legenhausen (1999) attributes the qualitative differences in linguistic behaviour to the learners' foreign-language classroom culture. Whilst both educational systems promoted a communicative approach, this was interpreted in the German context as an ability to perform 'pseudo-communicative' dialogues 'where the emphasis is on practising language rather than expressing personal meanings and identities' (Ushioda, 2011, p.14). In other words, and with reference to Zimmerman's (1998) framework, the German students were orienting towards their *situated* identities as language learners and treating the TL as an 'instrument which is external to them,' to borrow Littlewood's (1981, p.64) formulation. In the Danish context, however, learners were able to 'speak as themselves' (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14).

A classroom culture which brings the outside world in and validates learners' actual interests is the reason, according to Legenhausen, for the Danish students' willingness to interact conversationally with one another, for they 'do not construe a contrast between authentic and didactic tasks' (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14). This is a classroom which validates their *transportable* identities and

which thus transforms the TL into a tool with which they can express 'their whole personality' (Littlewood, 1981, p.64). Harris *et al.* below (2001, p.63, emphasis added) show similar leanings when they advocate personalising curriculum content and activities so that they authenticate learners' *transportable* identities:

> The intention is that by personalising tasks in this way, we provide pupils with some choices about what they say and a purpose, a wish to communicate. Hopefully, it can make the language real and relevant, and recognise and validate, albeit in a limited way, *their own lives, feelings and past experiences.*

Personalising curriculum content thus entails enlisting learners' *transportable* identities, as learners' wholehearted investment in the language-learning task is predicated on their perceived alignment between their *transportable* and their *situated* identities. Valuing their 'whole personality' then is a prerequisite if learners are to endorse a view of the TL exemplified by the Danish students in Legenhausen's (1999) study. Indeed, the same conflation between 'authentic and didactic tasks' (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14) can be seen in typical *Interact* lessons, the 'most striking feature' of which, argues Christie (2011, p.3, emphasis in the original), 'was *pupils'* use of the target language: spontaneous, fluent, playful, argumentative, often not about the lesson's focus.' Furthermore, through their numerous spontaneous exchanges in the TL (Christie, 2011, pp.177-184), these pupils demonstrated an apparent espousal of the 'TL lifestyle', which is a classroom culture 'where the target language is accepted as the natural means of communication and pupils are willing to speak it spontaneously' (Christie, 2011, p.311), including in private speech between learners or in heated classroom debates. This willingness to speak in the TL spontaneously points to a congruence between, and a validation of both *situated* (as a language learner) and *transportable* (personal or core) identities.

Spontaneity in *Interact* is therefore pursued for its potential to reveal and ratify participants' *situated* and *transportable* identities. In turn, learners' espousal of the TL lifestyle is indicative of the fact that they 'identify' - or recognise the role that the TL can play in expressing their 'whole personality' - and that they also 'identify *with*' the TL lifestyle. This identification is akin to the notion of authentication proposed by van Lier (1996) for whom 'authenticity' is not an essential quality but rather the outcome

of a process of recognition and ratification. In his study of interaction in the language curriculum, van Lier (1996) suggested a framework based on three inter-related concepts: awareness, autonomy, and authenticity. It is to the latter that I turn, as it adds a useful lens to the analysis of *Interact*'s pursuit of spontaneity in the classroom in so far as spontaneity is associated with candid revelation of self.

2.7.1.2 Authenticity

van Lier (1996) distinguishes between different levels of authenticity, which are outlined below, and argues in favour of seeing authenticity as the desirable outcome of a process of authentication in ways that echo Legenhausen's purposeful meshing of 'authentic and didactic tasks' (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14). van Lier (1996, p.136) differentiates between *curricular, pragmatic* and *personal* authenticity. Briefly, *curricular* authenticity is a factor of alignment between, on the one hand, the syllabus, teaching activities and resources, and, on the other, the target-language world. For van Lier (1996), however, this 'first level' category offers a narrow view of authenticity since it is mainly concerned with the provenance of teaching material or the classroom-based simulation of 'authentic' interaction. This, he argues, can ultimately create more contrivances than it hopes to resolve. Harris *et al.* (2001, p.2) hold similar views: '[H]owever hard we try, the classroom is not the railway station or the dinner table.' This leads van Lier (1996) to suggest considering authenticity not as an essential characteristic of teaching material or language use but as a process of alignment which teachers and learners ought to actively engage in, both on a pragmatic and personal level.

Pragmatic authenticity takes into account the actual classroom context in which participants interact and therefore their '*situated* and *transportable* identities', to borrow Zimmerman's (1998) terms. In positing '*pragmatic* authenticity', van Lier (1996) seeks to acknowledge the multiplicity of classroom participants' identities, roles and agendas. *Pragmatic* authenticity is thus to be understood as an acknowledgment of these different identities and an alignment between intention and enactment. In van Lier's (1996, p.143) words:

> [T]he authenticity of a specific instance of classroom interaction cannot be judged or evaluated in isolation from the context of educational history and ritual constraints on the teacher-student relationship. Authenticity of context therefore partly, and in some cases perhaps largely, determines authenticity of interaction… Interactional authenticity is a crucial ingredient in the language classroom, but we cannot define it in isolation from pedagogical purpose and educational and cultural context.

Where curricular authenticity had deemed one type of interaction (e.g. genuine communicative exchange) more authentic than others, van Lier contends in the above quotation that one should not ignore the authenticity inherent in language *learning* behaviour. He thus argues against privileging *curricular* authenticity (authentic teaching material, simulation of target community linguistic behaviour) over *contextual* or *situated* authenticity (language *learning* behaviour). Therefore, according to van Lier (1996), both personal and pedagogical orientations constitute authentic TL use if one takes note of the *situated* and *transportable* identities of classroom participants as language *users* as well as language *learners*. In contrast with the simulated role-plays and pretend transactional situations which contrived to re-create life-like scenarios in the classroom – 'the railway station or the dinner table' (Harris *et al.*, 2001, p.2) - van Lier (1996) argues above for transparency between means and ends. As long as learners knowingly conflate 'authentic and didactic tasks' (Leggenhausen 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda 2011, p.14), then even a grammar drill or a choral repetition is rendered authentic. Therefore, the German and the Danish students in Legenhausen's study (1999) both demonstrate *pragmatic* authenticity, albeit in different ways, so long as they are cognisant of, and willing to embrace the differing purposes behind their respective language-learning practices. Where these two student groups differ, however, is in the validation of the Danish students' *transportable* identities and ensuing investment of their 'whole personality' (Littlewood, 1981, p.64) – their personal authenticity as we shall see below – which in turn leads them to hold a different conception of the TL as a *bona fide* tool for self-expression, hence the more natural, free-flowing and conversational tenor of their classroom interaction.

Personal authenticity, in van Lier's (1996) framework, is to be understood from an existentialist perspective. That is to say, it takes into account the whole of the individual's human experience, his or her cognitive, emotional and embodied world, in essence: their whole personality. Personal authenticity as manifested by learners would take the form of a deep interest in their own development, an active participation in their learning, a sense of responsibility and personal accountability and the commitment towards the accomplishment of a given task, sustained by intrinsic motivation. In this, there are strong links with the concept of autonomy, and indeed van Lier (1996, p.142) refers to the autotelic person put forward by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) as a synonym for the personally authentic learner whilst remaining aware that this is an idealised portrait. The autotelic person, as the term suggests, self-selects (auto) a purpose (telos), a *raison d'être*. van Lier (1996) goes on to say that personal authenticity is nurtured through a commitment to transparency of means and ends (*pragmatic* authenticity) and the creation of a classroom ethos where learners' whole personality is validated and called upon in their language-learning endeavour, such as was demonstrated by the Danish secondary-school learners of English in Legenhausen's (1999) study. The authentic learner envisioned by van Lier, however idealised, is true to both his/her *situated* and his/her *transportable* identities and sees classroom-based learning as an extension to learning in general. For van Lier (1996, p.144) personal authenticity encapsulates awareness and autonomy. In relation to awareness, to be personally authentic is to be both self-aware and clear about the purpose of a given learning task (*pragmatic* authenticity). Autonomy is a measure of personal authenticity in so far as learners 'own' and feel responsible for their actions. Autonomy represents a substantial field in research literature about language learning and I will address it here solely with reference to its connection to spontaneity in *Interact.* The definition of 'autonomy' which follows will thus remain unsophisticated and largely uninformed at this stage by that extensive literature. This said, two key authors, Benson (2008) and Smith (2003), will inform the exploration of the concept of autonomy that follows.

2.7.1.3 Autonomy

At first glance, spontaneity and autonomy do not seem to capture the same phenomena, with spontaneity pointing to an instinctual, unplanned impulse, as seen in the earlier dictionary definition (2.7) whereas autonomy suggests free will, self-determination and independence. Yet the key argument expounded in this section is that *Interact'*s pursuit of spontaneity essentially constitutes a pursuit of autonomy.

The etymology of autonomy reflects its political and legal roots since the word comes from 'auto' (self) and 'nomos' (rule / law) thus linking autonomy with self-governance. In the language-learning literature, an often-cited definition (Benson, 2008; Dang, 2010; Huang and Benson, 2013) sees autonomy as the: 'ability to take charge of one's own learning' (Holec, 1981, p.3). Although this definition has since then been scrutinised from a range of theoretical angles (Dang, 2010, 2012) and elaborated upon (Dickinson, 1987; Smith, 2003; Lamb, 2005; Benson, 2008; 2011), there is broad agreement over its core constituents, which include 'the ability to understand and manage learning processes responsibly and effectively' (Dang, 2012, p.53). For Huang and Benson (2013), issues of choice and self-determined direction are necessarily matters of personal relevance since they require learners to engage in an internal negotiation between curriculum content and their own interests, needs and aspirations. For Benson (2008) too, one cannot dissociate autonomy *in learning* from *personal* autonomy: 'If learning is viewed as part of life, and not as a preparation for it, it seems reasonable to suggest that autonomy should be understood similarly in both contexts' (Benson, 2008, p.22) where 'both contexts' refer to personal life and to educational setting. In the language-learning literature, Benson (2008) continues, autonomy is construed differently by teachers and learners. Simply put, for teachers, autonomy tends to be treated as a curriculum and/or organisational issue. This means that teachers profess to promote learner autonomy when they enable their students to take control of certain aspects of curriculum or organisational procedures. Learners, argues Benson (2008, p.15), have a different perspective on autonomy, which 'is primarily concerned with learning, in a much broader sense, and its relationship to their lives beyond the classroom,' or in other words, their '*transportable* identities' (Zimmerman 1998; Ushioda, 2011). Benson therefore advocates a more learner-

centred view of autonomy, for better alignment and personal relevance between curriculum and learners' interests. This is in line with earlier injunctions to let learners 'speak as themselves' (Legenhausen, 1999), to take account of their 'whole personality' (Littlewood, 1981) and their transportable identities, and therefore to personalise the MFL curriculum (Harris *et.al*, 2001, p.63). I propose that it is from these self-revealing and self-actualising angles that spontaneity in *Interact* should be understood. Furthermore, I examine below the related suggestion that *Interact* should be considered as promoting a strong pedagogy for autonomy.

A pedagogical proposition which foregrounds such an expansive definition of spontaneity necessarily calls upon the inner motives and *transportable* identities of learners and commits to promoting learners' autonomy in ways that go beyond the delegation of organisational decisions. Such a proposition would lean towards what Smith (2003, pp.130-132) called a 'strong pedagogy for autonomy', as will be illustrated below. Smith distinguishes between weak pedagogies for autonomy, which adopt a deficit model since their premise is that learners initially lack autonomy, and strong pedagogies which see students as already autonomous. In the weak version, autonomy is the desired but eventual outcome of education whereas in the strong version, it is the starting premise and the foundation on which to build an appropriate pedagogy.

The implications of a weak pedagogy for autonomy are less problematic for teachers in the sense that their role is to enable learners to gradually develop their autonomy within institutional constraints. However, if the starting premise is that learners are autonomous beings, capable and willing to exercise personal choices and considered to be 'practitioners of learning' rather than simply 'targets of teaching' (Allwright and Hanks, 2009, p.2) as we saw in section 2.4.3, then pedagogy becomes a matter of negotiation between institutional directives and learners' exercise of autonomy. It follows that a strong pedagogy for autonomy entails conceiving of the curriculum as a 'project' (van Lier, 1996, p.216) rather than as a body of knowledge, and viewing classroom interaction as the necessary – and welcome - locus of such negotiation. *Interact*'s leanings towards a strong pedagogy for autonomy can be seen in the already-mentioned conviction (2.7.1.1) in Harris *et al.* (2001) that learners come to the

classroom armed with 'something to say'. They further advocate that: 'There should be opportunities, for example, in the presentation phase of the lesson for pupils to use the target language to negotiate the words *they* want to learn, since independence lies at the very heart of spontaneity' (Harris *et al.* 2001, p.4, emphasis in original). There are many further instances of implicit or explicit references in Harris *et al.* (2001) to learner autonomy or independence, the two terms being used interchangeably. And all these instances encourage teachers to implicate learners in matters not only of lesson content but also in areas that are usually the preserve of teachers, such as the co-creation of syllabus or even the choice and direction of activities and of assessment protocols. For example: 'Pupils should be invited to contribute their own suggestions as to useful language the class needs to learn' (Harris *et al.,* 2001, p.50). The authors refer to Dam's (1995) work on learner autonomy in advocating that, in the 'end activities' towards the final stages of a unit of work, pupils should 'use the TL to negotiate the project they wish to undertake, how they will tackle it and to evaluate their own progress. Clearly these types of task involve the *direct participation in authentic communicative interaction* referred to in the introduction' (Harris *et al.,* 2001, p.57, emphasis in the original). It is argued here that these invitations for learners to have a stake in curricular, tasks and evaluation decisions pertain to a 'strong pedagogy for autonomy' (Smith, 2003) and are further indications of *Interact*'s stance on spontaneity, taken as an expression of learners' self-determination.

To summarise, *Interact* is founded on the following assumptions: learners are autonomous beings whose *transportable* identities and whole personalities can contribute to, rather than hinder their investment in language learning. Validating these would help learners identify (with) the TL as a genuine tool for self-expression. We saw in 2.7.1.1. that the TL in a CLT classroom is seen as the means of expressing one's own identity. In line with an expansive definition of spontaneity, we shall see below that the TL in *Interact* takes on, as a result, discoursal features that are usually associated with conversational interaction.

2.7.2 Discoursal spontaneity

In the following section, I begin by outlining features of discoursal spontaneity. I then examine *Interact's* rationale for the pursuit of spontaneity in classroom interaction in relation to the wider language-learning literature. The latter points both to the benefits for learners of engaging in conversational discourse as a means of deploying and developing their linguistic proficiency but also to the challenges associated with promoting discoursal spontaneity in an instructional setting.

We saw in section 2.7 that the concept of spontaneity in language teaching is often associated with self-initiated, extended student output and linked to the concept of fluency. The latter has been defined as the ability to talk fluidly, without undue hesitation, and to manipulate language structures effectively to transmit a message (Fillmore, 1979). Fluency is thus associated with speed and with automatic retrieval of a large linguistic corpus that enables the fluent speaker to talk at length and convey meaning. It is in its automatic, rapid recall and response that fluency is most germane to discoursal spontaneity, if the latter is reduced to speed of reaction. However, for CLT proponents, this is to reduce fluency to a solo linguistic performance and ignore the context-sensitive and communicative intent of human interaction (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1983). In proposing their often-cited model of communicative competence, Canale and Swain (1980) were duly recasting language mastery within a more socio-culturally attuned framework, attentive to the socio-linguistic and strategic competences needed for effective communication *with others*. Language mastery, in the extensive CLT literature, is not solely the concern of the individual in isolation but in interaction with others. Therefore, fluency in CLT has an added quality criterion beyond linguistic *appropriateness*, in the form of socio-cultural *appropriacy.* It becomes a matter of being fluent *with* other speakers or, as McCarthy (2005, p.26) suggested, of being 'confluent', that is, able to engage in 'the cooperative construction of meaning across speaker turns in dialogue' and this requires good listening skills as much as speaking ability (Willis, 2015).

However, the case has long been made that the communicative classroom may not generate the kind of genuine interaction envisaged by early CLT supporters (Nunan, 1987; Legutke and Thomas, 1991), and we saw in section 2.7.1.2 that communicative

activities can mimic rather than enact authentic discourse. This led Walsh (2011) to favour the expression 'interactional competence', in lieu of 'communicative competence', as the former better captures the collaborative construction of meaning. It is noteworthy that Christie (2013) later chose the term *Interact* to define the essence of the pedagogical proposition first promoted by Harris *et al.* (2001). Furthermore, we saw in section 2.7.1.1 that effective interaction relies upon the personally authentic investment of both speakers and listeners. For Walsh (2011), it is in conversation-style discourse that this investment is most called upon by both parties, thereby prompting interlocutors to develop their ability to be 'confluent'. If, following Walsh's (2011) argument and in line with Christie (2013), interactional - rather than communicative – competence should constitute the ultimate pursuit in language learning, then this calls for the creation of an interactional classroom culture that values *confluence*, arguably best served by promoting conversation-style discourse (Walsh, 2011) or spontaneous classroom talk (Harris *et al.*, 2001; Christie, 2013). This, however, may present problems of feasibility and legitimacy with regard institutional expectations, as mentioned in Chapter 1. A report by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2015, p.5) concurred that 'teachers' lack of use of the target language to support their students' routine use of the language in lessons, as well as providing opportunities for them to talk spontaneously' constituted barriers to learners' enjoyment and progress in the subject. However, Chambers (2013) noted the contextual impediments preventing student-teachers' use of the TL. These and other institutional pressures will be further explored in section 2.10. To set the scene for the possible challenges associated with promoting classroom-based discoursal spontaneity in the form of conversation, a preliminary examination of the constitutive features of conversation is necessary.

van Lier (1996) lists the following features which make 'conversation' recognisably different from other types of interaction: conversations are unplanned, 'locally assembled' (1996, p.69) by the parties involved, unpredictable in their sequence and outcome, and display 'reactive and mutual contingency' (1996, p.69) in the sense that they attend and respond in the moment to interlocutors' contributions. Walsh (2011, p.189) focuses on interactional aspects of conversation and adds that, because of their

focus on message and on performing a primarily communicative function, conversations tend to have a 'jagged profile' in the form of hesitation, back-channelling, errors and repairs, silences or interruptions. Thornbury and Slade (2006, p.25), on the other hand, pay attention to its intersubjective dimension: 'conversation is the informal, interactive talk between two or more people, which happens in real time, is spontaneous, has a largely interpersonal function, and in which participants share symmetrical rights.'

Transposed to an educational setting, it is debatable whether conversation should have a place in the language classroom (Seedhouse, 1996) since it relies on symmetrical rights, tends towards the organic and unpredictable, and can veer away from the teacher's intended topic for discussion. Conversations in classroom may therefore be regarded as potentially unsanctioned, off-topic 'asides', lacking the status accorded to main discourse, although such binary 'on/off-the-record' categorisation masks the true complexity of classroom discourse (Richards, 2006). This presents serious challenges to a pedagogical proposition such as *Interact*, intent on promoting spontaneous classroom talk. It must not only contend with the institutionally embedded interactional architecture of the MFL classroom but also present a case for a positive link between spontaneous classroom talk and language learning. In what follows, I explore those institutionally embedded interactional patterns before turning to an examination of the literature linking spontaneous talk and language learning.

Institutionally embedded interactional patterns have tended to follow a well-established format called Initiation–Response–Follow-up or Feedback (IRF) pattern (Bellack and Davitz, 1966; Sinclair and Coulthard, 1975), also termed Initiation-Response – Evaluation (IRE) (Mehan, 1979), whereby the teacher initiates the interaction, learners respond and the teacher evaluates said responses. There are institutional as well as pedagogical reasons for the prevalence of this pattern of interaction, in that it reflects the asymmetrical rights apportioned to teachers and their learners as well as their differing levels of subject knowledge. However, such three-part interactional sequences may have detrimental effects on learner engagement since 'the opportunities for learners to make any kind of contribution is

severely limited. All they can do is provide responses in the "slots" provided' (Mercer, 1995, p.19). There has been extensive research and collaborative work done to alleviate the potentially restrictive effects of this interactional three-part sequence on learners' ability to formulate deep thought and extended talk in the primary-education sector (Alexander, 2001, 2006; Mercer, 1995). In the language-learning literature, the IRE/F pattern has also been found to have a detrimental effect on learner participation (Consolo, 2000; Lin, 2000). Richards (2006, p.52) contends that:

> in the language classroom the dominating presence of this teacher-controlled pattern is widely recognized as representing a serious challenge to teachers and teacher educators in the context of communicative language teaching.

This challenge is both at the level of form and substance. In terms of form, the rigid IRF/E pattern controls the moves and linguistic repertoire, exposing learners to a limited diet of discourse types. With regard to substance, as the teacher initiates the exchange, he/she is also in control of the topic for discussion. For Walsh (2011, p.22), this has the pernicious effect of socialising learners and teachers into certain types of interactional behaviour which facilitates 'smooth' discourse profile but precludes learners' more active participation. A number of researchers have suggested ways in which to subvert the IRE/F pattern and more specifically its third turn: the Evaluative or Feedback / Follow-up move (Cullen, 2002; Haneda, 2005). However, Richards (2006) believes that the shortcomings in this three-part interactional sequence cannot be resolved by manipulating some or all of those moves. For Richards (2006), this is to tinker with a flawed mechanism and to overlook the real engine that drives interaction. The latter is to be found in the inner motives of learners, and it is only by attending to learners' *transportable* identities (Zimmerman, 1998), to their personal authenticity and autonomy (van Lier, 1996) that teachers can move beyond tinkering and thus powerfully transform the nature of classroom interaction in ways that promote learning. This resonates with van Lier's (1996, p.165) following assertion:

> true conversational teaching must at some point break out of the IRF mould if it is to allow students to develop their own voice, to explore and invest in their own agenda, and to learn to choose and plan their own trains of thought and action.

In the above then, van Lier (1996) calls for a more free-flowing, contingent and spontaneous mode of engagement to elicit and nurture learners' own agency. To break the mould, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) and later van Lier (1996) have respectively argued for 'instructional conversation' and 'pedagogical interaction' to mesh those features of conversation explored in this section, namely self-initiated and self-revealing, with those of pedagogy. Richards (2006, p.54) too is a proponent of 'classroom conversation' for its potential to invite learners to engage emotionally and to invest in their attempts at self-expression. He exemplifies this with foreign language lesson transcripts which demonstrate learners' high emotional investment when the discussion turns to personal matters and interlocutors then become attentive to the linguistic work needed to clarify their thoughts, marshal their arguments and counter others'; an attentiveness that van Lier (1996, p.177) called 'conversational vigilance'. Richards (2006, p.71) makes the point below that message and form combine forces in 'conversation':

> This is the stuff of conversation and is not simply a matter of fluency rather than accuracy, or a focus on content rather than form: for those directly and fully engaged in the business of talk and the construction of shared understanding, these are all resources to be used, important elements in the interactional endeavour.

Richards (2006) claims above that attention to form becomes an imperative in the service of persuasive discourse as learners enlist all their grammatical and structural knowledge of the TL to give power and precision to their arguments. Swain (1985) had earlier posited that the driver which pushes learners to notice and address the gap in their incomplete command of the TL was the effort deployed in making their output 'comprehensible' to interlocutors. Both van Lier (1996) and Richards (2006) suggest that it is 'conversation', with its invitation for learners to 'speak as themselves' (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14), that provides the impetus for self-initiated 'pushed output' (Swain, 1985). Fundamentally, the above-mentioned authors argue that it is only by enlisting and validating learners' authentic and autonomous selves that the classroom becomes the genuine locus for their wholehearted investment and the forum for their personally meaningful interaction. In essence, discoursal aspects of spontaneity are contingent upon attitudinal aspects.

Contrary to Seedhouse (1996), who had earlier questioned the legitimacy of conversation in a classroom setting, van Lier (1996, p.171) advances that '[c]onversation, or any language use which plays with contingencies, … can therefore be expected to be the most stimulating environment for learning.' A case has been made above to consider discoursal spontaneity as a form of conversation and to see *Interact's* commitment to promoting spontaneous classroom talk as underpinned by a belief in its language-learning benefits.

2.8 *Interact* as an approach: some concluding observations

In the above sections (2.6 – 2.7), I examined the rationale for considering *Interact* as an approach based on underpinning language-learning principles that are encapsulated within an expansive definition of spontaneity. Essentially, *Interact* is in alignment with a strong version of CLT (Howatt, 1984) and a strong pedagogy for autonomy (Smith, 2003) and both value self-expression in the service of self-actualisation. Language learning in this context meshes the didactic with the authentic, and the individual with the collective, as it calls upon learners' cognitive and affective investments in the 'here and now and us', in an effort to develop their 'confluence' (McCarthy, 2005). Language learning is thus better construed as experiential rather than purely academic and this requires a different way of being in the classroom, one that is mindful of learners' core identities and supportive of their autonomy. Teaching for spontaneity is necessarily contingent, conversationally vigilant, and open to the idea of curriculum-as-project (van Lier, 1996, p.216). It is not an invitation to a cacophony of voices or a purely reactive and improvisational affair, however; rather, it is a principled pursuit of spontaneity which courts conversational unpredictability to harness its learning potential.

The above, argue Harris *et al.* (2001, p.111) 'implies risk-taking not only by the pupils but also by the teacher.' Risk-taking for language learners, as we saw in sections 2.7.1.1, necessitates an investment in the 'TL lifestyle' (Christie, 2011, p.311) which asks them to 'speak as themselves' albeit in a foreign language. Likewise, for teachers, *Interact* is an invitation to invest in the TL lifestyle. This would entail envisioning the curriculum as open to negotiation and their roles as being co-constructors of lesson

content and classroom conversations. The challenge here lies in reconciling potentially conflicting views of the curriculum and, more broadly, of education (see 1.5) and of teachers' roles within it. The teachers in Christie's (2011) study certainly seem to have accepted this challenge, as was demonstrated by their strategic deployment of procedures for the creation of a TL lifestyle. Would the same obtain for my research participants, and what of the risks alluded to by Harris *et al.* (2001, p.111) in the above quotation? It is these questions that I shall address in section 2.10 but first I will offer the following concluding observations on the distinction between method and approach.

2.9 Method *and* Approach

The binary distinction between method and approach adopted in sections 2.3 to 2.8 was a structural and heuristic device which served to outline methodological and axiomatic features of *Interact.* In summary, its methodological aspects encapsulate a set of procedures and techniques with their associated in-house terminology, which have endured over time and are distinctive and recognisable (Christie, 2011). As a method, *Interact* provides guidance and support which may be of particular value to beginning teachers (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Yet Christie (2011, p.19) highlighted the 'showmanship' conveyed by *Interact* lessons (2.5), in the form of a 'well-choreographed spectacle,' which could mask its internal intricacy and underpinning principles from external observers but also potentially from novice teachers. Indeed, novice teachers might justifiably prefer to attend to methodological aspects first before paying tribute to its axiomatic intentions. *Interact*, however, is presented in the literature (Harris *et al.,* 2001; Christie, 2011, 2013, 2016) as an integrated pedagogical proposition: a method *and* an approach. As we saw, the methodological procedures outlined in sections 2.4 are not an end in themselves so much as an overall strategy aiming to create a classroom climate conducive to the safe emergence of spontaneity. It remains a moot point, and a focus for this research, as to whether the intended imbrication of method and approach is fully understood by the participants in my study.

To this end, my research aims to explore pre- and in-service teachers' conceptualisations of *Interact* and tease out their putative awareness of its procedural and axiomatic features. Thus far, in its examination of concepts such as spontaneity, identity, authenticity and autonomy, this literature review has considered *Interact* mainly from a 'first-order' (Murray and Male, 2005) perspective, that is, from the perspective of the language learner. However, as mentioned earlier (2.8), Harris *et al.* (2011, p.111) alert us to *Interact's* associated 'risk-taking', which raises questions as to the feasibility and legitimacy of such an endeavour from the teacher's point of view; questions which motivated my research, as explained in Chapter 1. Therefore, whilst previous sections considered the constituent features of *Interact* and examined its rationale in relation to the literature on language teaching, in the sections that follow, the focus shifts from *Interact* as an MFL teaching 'first-order' proposition to *Interact* as a 'second-order' (Murray and Male, 2005) proposition, that is, one pertinent to the field of teacher education.

2.10 *Interact:* Implications for teacher education

One of the aims of my study outlined in Chapter 1 is to explore the research participants' conceptualisations of *Interact* and the issues it presents in the formation of their MFL teacher identity. I use conceptualisation in a broad sense, which incorporates not only the product, that is, the images conjured up by *Interact* in participants' minds and the expressions they use to describe it but also the process by which they arrive at those images and the factors that play a role in this conceptualisation. To this end, the literature on university-based initial teacher education will be interrogated to illuminate the ways in which student teachers make sense of their formal teacher-training programme, as this is the context in which the student teachers in my research operate. Therefore, whilst teacher education constitutes an extensive field within the wider education literature, I will concentrate more specifically on the qualitative impact of university-based input on student teachers.

However, to justify the scope of this review, one needs to note the paucity of research relating to the specific domain of MFL teacher education. To borrow Freeman's (1996,

p.374) expression, this remains an 'unstudied problem'. Whilst Freeman (1996) had applied the label to language-teacher education more generally, the literature on English as a foreign, second or instructional language has since then greatly expanded (Borg, 2012) but UK-based MFL teacher education has not followed suit. The scarce studies that examine the influence of teacher education on the belief systems of PGCE MFL students (Gutierrez-Almarza, 1992; Cabaroglu, 1999; Hulse, 2015) further demonstrate the dearth of research in this field and the need for more current investigation, to which the present thesis aims to contribute. In what follows, I begin with an exploration of a key issue which renders the above-mentioned conceptualisation potentially problematic, namely the often-cited 'theory-practice divide' (Knight, 2015; Douglas, 2016) and its concomitant 'problem of enactment' (Kennedy, 1999, p.70). I then proceed to review the ways in which particular teacher-education programmes sought to alleviate the above-mentioned gap between their university 'message' and its recipients and I finally expand the discussion to an examination of the institutional and broader contextual constraints that may affect the value of said message in student and established teachers' eyes.

2.10.1 Theory-practice divide

The teacher-education literature abounds with references to the 'theory-practice' divide where 'theory' is taken as a shorthand for the generic and public body of knowledge that forms part of the academic content of university-based teacher education (Boyd, Hymer and Lockney, 2015). Theory is therefore usually seen as abstracted from foundational disciplines and separate from classroom practice (Thomas, 2007; Douglas, 2016; Korthagen, 2017). Although these disciplines sometimes include the wider political, social and cultural contexts of education, at the very least, the content matter of 'theory' is invariably understood in the literature to consist of developmental and learning theories, disciplinary subject knowledge, as well as generic or subject-specific pedagogical skills (Shulman, 1987; Philpott, 2014; Guilfoyle, 2018). The separation between university-based educational theory and its subsequent practical implementation in school settings leaves student teachers faced with the above-mentioned 'problem of enactment' (Kennedy, 1999, p.70), in other words, with the arduous task of transforming theoretical understanding into

pedagogical application. This proceduralisation is par for the course in any professional formation, argues Eraut (1994; 2007). Yet, enactment is rendered all the more problematic if the university message is perceived to be disconnected from student-teachers' concerns and from the realities of the classroom (Philpott, 2014).

Thus, the power of theory to (fail to) influence student teachers is variously predicated on their perception of its relevance for their future professional practice (Philpott, 2014; Sjølie, 2014), its connection with student-teachers' pre-course beliefs (Britzman, 2003; Borg, 2006, 2011; Hagger *et al.*, 2008), with their dispositions for reflective practice (Eraut, 1994; Biesta, 2015) and attitudes to learning from experience (Mutton, Burn and Hagger, 2010). Powers of conviction can also depend on the credibility of university tutors (Munby and Russell, 1994; McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017; Sjølie, Francisco and Langelotz, 2018) along with organisational matters such as timeliness, course structure or frequency and duration of exposure (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1981). Additionally, temporal and physical distance creates a disconnect in student-teachers' minds between university input and school-based experience (Philpott, 2014). Where authors have considered the credibility of the theoretical message itself, they have done so in relation to its alignment with student-teachers' pre-course expectations of what teacher education is for (Britzman, 2003; Hobson, 2003; Sjølie, 2014). The more practical their expectations, in the sense of seeking readily implementable guidance, the greater their tendency to dismiss 'purely' theoretical message (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Tang *et al.,* 2019). Conversely, student teachers hoping for a more theoretical bent to their professional development were found to be more positively inclined towards the message of their university-based teacher education, as was the case with Knight (2015) and Burch (2020). Ultimately, initial expectations coloured the nature of their understandings and informed in turn their incipient professional identities and practices (Twiselton, 2004).

McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) add a useful multidimensional layer to the binary contradistinction between theory and practice. Their study investigated the rationale behind student-teachers' adherence or rejection of educational theory during their four-year undergraduate university teacher-education programme and offers worthy avenues for investigation in relation to my study for reasons that follow

the description of their framework and attendant categories below. On the basis of interviews with twenty-three student teachers, the authors defined four broad categories: *embracers, acceptors, resisters* and *rejecters*, demarcated by two axes. The horizontal axis positions interviewees according to their positive or negative impressions of their university input and its impact on their subsequent practice. Along that axis, *embracers* and *acceptors* both held favourable opinions whilst *resisters* and *rejecters* expressed negative ones. The vertical axis, on the other hand, functions as a marker of critical consideration. Where *embracers* only adopted theoretical propositions after careful reflection, *acceptors* tended to demonstrate uncritical adherence. The same obtained for *rejecters* who were deemed to be 'automatically dismissive' (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017, p.54) whereas *resisters* demonstrated a reasoned and articulate justification for their dismissal. Therefore, this vertical 'criticality' axis consists of an internal-external spectrum referring to the degree to which educational theory had been internalised, as a tool for thinking, or had remained external, as a body of knowledge 'out there' (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017, p.55) in academic circles. In other words, regardless of their respective positive or negative opinions, respondents were deemed to have an externalised orientation if they evinced an understanding of educational theory as a unitary, uncontested body of knowledge to adopt or reject wholesale. Conversely, the internalisation process was characterised by expressions of ownership and agency, of an emerging identity as independent thinkers entitled to their own stance vis-à-vis their university message. This leads McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) to conclude that student teachers who *resist*, rather than *reject*, this university message may in fact demonstrate a healthy agentic response towards said message.

The above identification of four categories is useful in teasing out distinctions between hitherto binary interpretations of adoption versus rejection of theory. It is one of the reasons why McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) above framework will be adopted as a lens with which to examine the data in my study. Other reasons are outlined in what follows. Beyond the above mapping, McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) offer a rationale for student-teachers' differing orientations towards educational theory which may also be of relevance. They locate it in the perceived

legitimacy of teacher-educators' authority in students' eyes. They further differentiate between institutional authority, which confers accreditation rights, and authority deriving from tutors' experience and expertise. The nature of this authority, they argue, may in turn influence the credibility of their message for good or ill. It is thus a useful reminder that issues of power and status need acknowledging in programmes such as theirs and mine where teacher accreditation sits within the university's remit. This may lead some of the student teachers among my research participants to equate their PGCE with *Interact*, unwittingly endowing the latter with certification powers and complying with its instructions in order to qualify.

Interestingly, McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) identify 'migrating' students whose positioning was difficult to locate due to apparent internal contradictions within their interviews. The fact that these particular interviewees were second, third- and fourth-year students suggests to the authors that 'migrating' students may be in transit between categories. Since my research includes established teachers, it adopts a long-term perspective which allows for an analysis of the legacy of *Interact* from the vantage point of time and space away from participants' initial teacher-education programme. It thus potentially captures the 'wash back in' in contradistinction to the 'wash out' observed by Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981). The latter refers to the all-too brief impact of university input in informing subsequent teachers' practice especially if teacher-education programmes were of short duration.

This 'wash back in', once the tribulations of the novitiate are over (Brouwer and Korthagen, 2005; Knight 2015), points to a number of factors that may be pertinent to my study for reasons that follow. Knight (2015) explored the processes at play that might explain the enduring but changing legacy of theory in a cohort of PGCE primary students who were then interviewed again during their first year in teaching. Based on their pre-, during and post-PGCE interviews, his student teachers firstly revealed a conception of the nature of theory which developed through three identifiable processes: from 'prescribed to owned, generalised to situated and accepted to questioned' (Knight, 2015, p.151). In this regard, they arguably demonstrated progression along the axis of *criticality* in McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework. Secondly, Knight (2015, p.153) adds that theory came to be valued for

different reasons over time, with each three 'loose stage' adding to, rather than superseding the previous one. These three stages consisted of 'theory as knowledge to be applied in practice. Theory as a way of making sense of practice. Theory as a tool for critical thought,' which may this time indicate a progression along McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) *internalisation* axis. In essence, within the PGCE students and Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) in his study, Knight (2015) found that borrowed theory was utilised as a tool to make sense of their situated practice and thus underwent an appropriation process to eventually become a personal thinking tool. In relation to my study, as indicated earlier, the inclusion of PGCE students, NQTs and more experienced teachers in the data set will permit a longitudinal perspective on the role played by *Interact* in regard to the above-mentioned processes and developmental stages. To this end, McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework will be deployed (see 3.8.5) to better analyse instances, if any, of appropriation of *Interact* and explore what this may mean in terms of the value of *Interact* in my research participants' professional lives.

To summarise, a 'problem of enactment' (Kennedy, 1999, p.70) arises out of a felt disconnect between university message and school-based practice, whether this disconnect is a natural and developmental occurrence in any professional formation (Eraut, 1994, 2007; Philpott, 2014) or exacerbated, in teacher education, by issues such as perceived lack of relevance, legitimacy and credibility of message and messengers. In what follows, I therefore turn to an examination of aspects of university-based teacher education that are pertinent to my study and focus in particular on the means by which different teacher-education programmes have sought to bridge the 'theory-practice divide' and thus legitimise their message. This will then provide the backdrop against which to situate *Interact* as a teacher-education proposition.

2.10.2 Bridging the gap

Three teacher-education programmes will be examined below, selected not only for their prominence in the teacher-education literature but also for the ways in which they sought to bridge the gap between university message and fieldwork. In common

is their attention to the congruence between message and medium as a key strategy for interweaving the intellectual work with the practical experience required in becoming a teacher. In this, they share a belief in the value of experience as the interface between theory and application, and adhere to Eraut's (1994, p.33) conviction that 'it is experience, even in the form of first-time application of a new idea, that confers meaning to the idea. Transmission alone can only appeal to the intellect.' In what follows, the three programmes will serve as an illustration for an expanded notion of experience that implicates the self, and as an invitation to consider teacher education not solely as an occupational enterprise but also as a personally transformative and 'edifying' (Barnett, 2009, p.432) one. It will therefore be argued below that Harris *et al*.'s (2001, p.111) earlier-mentioned (2.8) emphasis on 'risk-taking' by teachers is best framed against a conception of teaching as essentially contingent and uncertain, calling in turn for a 'pedagogy for uncertainty' (Shulman, 2005a).

2.10.2.1 Congruence: a definition

Before examining these three programmes, it is important to clarify what we mean by 'congruence' in this context. Different typologies of 'congruence' or 'coherence' (Canrinus *et.al.* 2017) exist, such as *conceptual* coherence which is the result of the sequentially logical progression and internal linkage of all the teacher-training course components, and *contextual* (Muller, 2009) or *structural* (Hammerness, 2006) coherence which aligns theoretical and field-experience. The notion adopted here, however, is narrower and focuses solely on university-based experience and on the ways in which the course content, format and delivery enact espoused principles. In simple terms, to borrow Darling-Hammond's (2006, p.194) words, the programmes reviewed below seek to 'walk the walk'. This congruence, as will be explained in what follows, is a mark of the integration between method *and* approach (2.10) and is a noted feature of the PGCE Secondary MFL teacher-education programme where *Interact* is promoted (Burch, 2020).

2.10.2.2 A pedagogy of enactment

Congruence, in the first example below, takes the form of foregrounding practice in a university-based teacher-education course. To address the 'problem of enactment', Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald in the USA propose a 'pedagogy of enactment' (2009, p.273). They argue that, if teacher education is to make a difference to student-teachers' professional lives, then it needs to fruitfully mesh approach and method, and provide student teachers with opportunities to enact 'core practices'. The authors thus place clinical practice at the forefront of their programme and engage their students in 'approximations of practice' that see them 'rehearse and enact discrete components of complex practice in settings of reduced complexity' (2009, p.283), i.e. at university. The aim is 'to develop fluidity with these practices' in the safe 'laboratory-like settings' (Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald, 2009, p.283) provided by the university. Thus, they argue, a gateway between the practical and the theoretical is created whereby practical experience of pedagogy serves as a precursor to student-teachers' theoretical understanding. The thrust of their proposition then lies in taking 'clinical practice seriously' (Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald, 2009, p.273) alongside reflective and theoretical components, for better integration of the diverse elements that constitute effective teacher education. This said, a danger lies in reducing practice to rehearsal of future fieldwork in safe settings. A reductive view of practice may privilege 'demonstration and coaching' (Eraut, 1994, p.66) and thereby emphasise replication at the expense of interpretation (Eraut, 1994).

2.10.2.3 A Gestalt pedagogy

For this reason, Korthagen (2010) and his colleagues in the Netherlands adopt an expansive view of practical experience and advance the notion of a 'Gestalt' pedagogy. They too believe that university-based teacher education should replicate the conditions and activities that student teachers will ultimately engage in, hence their self-adopted label of 'realistic teacher education'. Although arrived at independently, my PGCE Secondary MFL programme shares many of the elements advocated by Korthagen (2010), as illustrated by Burch (2020). For example, in both programmes - as in many around the world - student teachers are invited to teach individual or small groups of learners within their university setting in preparation for the longer

practicum. For Korthagen (2010, p.101), however, these concrete experiences ought to engage 'the whole of a teacher's perception of the here-and-now situation, i.e. both his or her sensory perception of the environment as well as the images, thoughts, feelings, needs, values, and behavioral tendencies elicited by the situation.' This is a 'Gestalt' pedagogy (Korthagen, 2010, p.102) which includes sensory perception and emotive connotations, and is reminiscent of Dewey's (1997, p.41) view of experience as being: 'truly experience only when objective conditions are subordinated to what goes on within the individuals having the experience.' Since Korthagen (2010, p.104) believes that 'teaching is to a large degree a gestalt-driven activity… the presentation of theory is not sufficient to influence the more perception-driven gestalts.' In ways that echo Eraut's (1994) point earlier (2.10.2) regarding the primacy of practice over transmission to fully understand 'a new idea', Korthagen (2010) puts realistic and practical experiences centre stage which are then deconstructed and reflected upon by student teachers through mediation with skilful teacher educators. Both his and Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald's (2009) programmes therefore are mindful of the congruence between their message and the medium through which this message is presented and received, and both are attentive to the meanings that students derive from these concrete and powerful experiences. Korthagen's (2010) programme, though, invokes an expanded view of experience that delves into its sensory and emotive dimensions, and thus explores the 'self' in a move away from conceiving of teacher education as purely an intellectual or technical pursuit.

2.10.2.4 Edifying teacher education

The third set of teacher-education models examined here are to be found in Darling-Hammond's (2006) comprehensive survey of US-based 'exemplary programs' and they too invoke the 'self' as the locus of the transformational work needed in becoming a teacher. Darling-Hammond (2006) concludes that these programmes also advocate greater congruence between theory and practice and adopt a Gestalt view of pedagogy in that they see learning to teach as involving cognitive, perceptual and affective elements. By way of illustration, Darling-Hammond (2006, p.277) cites Biber and Windsor (1967, p.6) who believe that a 'powerful teacher education' is founded on 'the conviction that intellectual mastery cannot be divorced from affective

experience if the goal is to facilitate personal and professional competence.' To this end, 'these programs not only "talk the talk" … but also "walk the walk" (adopting these methods and attitudes in their work with student teachers)' (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p.194). But by that, Darling-Hammond (2006) did not mean that these impactful programmes simply exemplified and modelled their pedagogical approaches in ways that rendered their pedagogy transparent and replicable in school settings. For her, to 'walk the walk' goes further: since learning to teach is a gestalt, so should teacher education be, which demands an embodiment of, and attentiveness to the whole of the human experience involved in teaching others to teach. In this respect, congruence between message and medium is more than a pedagogical strategy, it is a philosophy which seeks to embody what it advocates.

A corollary of this is to view learning to teach not only as an epistemological endeavour but one that calls on, and works on the self. In other terms, learning to teach becomes an ontological enterprise that goes beyond the developmental acquisition of skills and knowledge and becomes personally transformative (Barnett, 2012). In his earlier work, Barnett (2009, p.435) argued that epistemology meets ontology when 'the process of coming to know has person-forming properties' and is thus 'edifying' (2009, p.432). In such situations, 'knowing has implications for becoming' (2009, p.432) and although his work addresses the broader context of Higher Education rather than teacher education more specifically, nonetheless his advocacy for 'a pedagogy that engages students as persons, not merely as knowers' (Barnett, 2012, p.47) resonates with the philosophy adopted by the teacher-education programmes reviewed here. Barnett (2012, p.74) further calls for a Higher Education curriculum that aims to destabilise students' sense of certainty and invites them to move beyond disciplinary expertise or technical mastery towards 'new modes of human being.' Congruence between medium and message then requires 'the actual learning processes themselves …to be both high-risk and transformatory in character' (Barnett, 2012, p.47). In essence, to argue for a curriculum which calls forth 'new modes of human being' as mentioned above (Barnett, 2012, p.74) is to embrace a view of learning (to teach) as experiential and transformative.

The above-mentioned transformative intent of teacher education and its attendant epistemological and ontological dimensions will be explored further in the discussion chapter (6.3). For the moment, we will note the apparent parallels here between 'first-order' – school teaching – and 'second-order' – teacher education – domains (Murray and Male, 2005) and recall van Lier's (1996) invitation to see the curriculum as a 'project' (2.7.1.3), one that is open-ended and subject to negotiation rather than 'a script to follow' (Loughran and Hamilton, 2016, p.8). If the school curriculum is not a product but a project, then teaching becomes a relational, contingent and 'uncertain experience' (Britzman, 2003, p.3). Such a conception of 'first-order' teaching and learning is diametrically opposed to the simplistic view according to which 'teaching is telling, listening is learning' (Loughran and Hamilton, 2016, p.3). According to Loughran and Hamilton (2016), such a view persists in some quarters and contributes to clouding the complex reality of the classroom and, in turn, of what can reasonably be expected from second-order domain, that is, from teacher education. Instead, in advocating 'pedagogies of uncertainty', Shulman (2005a, p.18) was emphasising the 'inherent and unavoidable uncertainty' of professional practice and, putting experience centre stage, he asserted that 'in the presence of uncertainty, one is obligated to learn from experience' (Shulman, 2005a, p.19). By experience, I would venture that he had in mind an expansive definition in accordance with his portrayal of professional practice as complex and contingent.

2.10.2.5 The artist teacher

We have reviewed so far three teacher-education programmes which have sought to mitigate the perceived 'theory-practice' divide by redressing the balance between the two and by foregrounding the self as the locus for the 'personally confronting' (Loughran and Hamilton, 2016, p.5) but ultimately transformative work necessary to contend with the uncertainty of the classroom. The above-mentioned programmes are not alone in foregrounding the self in a bid to overcome the binary 'theory-practice' dichotomy. More recently, for example, Carmi and Tamir (2020) put forward a model composed of rational, technical but also 'aesthetic' dimensions. Alongside 'teacher as intellectual' and 'teacher as a competent practitioner', the authors propose 'the artist teacher… who allows his own personality to become an explicit

part of his teaching' so that they develop their own 'signature approach' (2020, p.13) in clear reference to Shulman's (2005b) 'signature pedagogy'. The 'artist teacher' is indicative of Carmi and Tamir's (2020) view of learning and teaching as, again, an uncertain, unpredictable, creative and relational experience. In this, it echoes Eraut's, as mentioned earlier. To recall, Eraut (1994, p.66) had cautioned against a replicative model of professional preparation, one that favours 'demonstration and coaching,' on the basis of its belief in the primacy of technical competence. Contrastingly, Eraut (1994, p.66) argues, if professional 'practice is conceived in terms of artistry, preparation will emphasise variety of experience, responsiveness, invention and a quick reading of a situation as it develops.' Artistry then, for Carmi and Tamir (2020) and for Eraut (1994), is linked to particular conceptions of teaching and of learning to teach which, far from 'telling and listening' (Loughran and Hamilton, 2016, p.3), require creativity, judgement and 'presence' (Carmi and Tamir, 2020, p.13).

2.10.2.6 Constructive dissonance

This overview of a variety of teacher-education programmes was intended to illustrate the broader conceptions of first and second-order domains of learning and teaching that underpin these programmes' espoused principles and influence their congruent internal architecture. We have seen how these programmes seek to address the seemingly intractable theory-practice divide by adopting a 'practice what you preach' approach with the laudable intention of alleviating the 'problem of enactment' (Kennedy, 1999). In positing a view of learning to teach as experiential and transformative rather than purely intellectual or technicist, they are committed to smoothing the affective as well as cognitive trials of transfer from university to school contexts. Besides, congruence adds integrity and coherence to the university message so that it appears more credible and feasible, less remote or irrelevant. Moreover, a gestalt approach to teacher education allows student teachers to 'live' this message and, in my professional context, 'experience' *Interact* rather than learn about it.

Congruence is not without its peril, however. It may unwittingly produce the impression of 'ease', of cognitive and experiential assonance and, in my context, contribute to the allure of *Interact* rather than invite critical reflection. It is worth

reiterating that despite *Interact* being committed to a pedagogy for autonomy (2.7.1.3), one supportive of a contingent and uncertain view of classroom reality and of the curriculum as an open-ended project (van Lier, 1996), nonetheless its methodological aspects (2.4) may induce a representation of it as a fully-formed proposition to be faithfully rehearsed and replicated. It remains a focus of this research to analyse the representations held by the participants in this regard.

An associated danger of a congruent message-and-medium lies in the qualitative nature of the student-teachers' experience. Britzman (2003, p.30) warned about 'the myth that experience makes the teacher,' pointing to a common sense but not necessarily valid belief that experience informs and educates. Similarly, Dewey (1997, p.25) cautioned against equating experience with learning, noting that experience can indeed be 'miseducative' were it to have 'the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience.' Citing experience that merely reinforces the technical aspects of teaching, Dewey warned that it can provide the illusion of competence but ultimately also condemn the technically competent teacher to a 'groove or a rut' (1997, p.25). In such eventuality, it may lead to a scenario whereby 'practice makes practice' (Briztman, 2003). This leads Eraut (1994, p.63) to speculate that, should student teachers be deprived of opportunities, or be disinclined to 'theorise', that is, to internalise theoretical concepts as thinking tools, then they run the risk of 'consign[ing] [theories] to some remote attic of the mind.' In turn, they could become 'prisoners of their early school experience, perhaps the competent teachers of today, almost certainly the ossified teachers of tomorrow' (Eraut, 1994, p.71).

When Knight's (2015) PGCE students (see 2.10.1) were prompted to explain the processes at play behind their appropriation of theory as a critical lens, they referred to their engagement in unfamiliar settings, such as their short special educational needs school placement, and in unfamiliar practices, for example their *viva voce* assessment presentation, as impetus for a re-thinking of the role of theory in their teacher education. Knight (2015, p.156) concluded that 'these experiences challenged and disrupted students' thinking' for the better. In agreement with Knight, and based on his one-year research study of the PGCE MFL course where *Interact* has long been advocated, Burch (2020, p.32) suggests that 'it behoves us to develop a teacher-

education pedagogy that de-familiarises the familiar and familiarises the unfamiliar so that new ways of seeing are encouraged.' In this, Burch (2020) alerts us to the fact that not all congruence is ultimately beneficial. He notes, however, that the educational climate in which his and my research participants operate may not afford teacher-education programmes the luxury of time to pay due care and attention to the orchestration of (de)familiarisation experiences. It is to this educational climate that I now turn, to contextualise some of the constraints and challenges that my research participants, both pre- and in-service teachers, daily need to negotiate.

2.10.3 Contextual constraints

In Chapter 1, I presented the MFL teaching climate in which *Interact* was first mooted and made the case that it may have outstayed its welcome in view of the many subsequent changes to the first iteration of the National Curriculum for MFL (DES/WO, 1991) and a raft of national initiatives. These interventions, as we saw in Chapter 1, had put paid to the hitherto recommended place of the TL as the main medium of classroom communication. In the intervening years since the start of my study, the MFL landscape had suffered further bad press. An inspection report (Ofsted, 2015) with the unflattering title '*Key Stage 3: the wasted years?*' indicated that 'achievement [was] not good enough in just under half of the MFL classes observed' (Ofsted, 2015, p.5) and attributed the low number of GCSE MFL candidates to its perception as subject that was not enjoyable or accessible. Later initiatives in the form of the English Baccalaureate (DfE, 2010), meant to improve the status of MFL in the school curriculum, have done little to stem the tide (Hagger-Vaughan, 2020). Against this increasingly inhospitable backdrop towards the TL, I widen the scope below to examine the broader educational context in which my research participants operate and its potential influence on the formation of their professional identity. This will firstly necessitate a foray into the literature on Initial Teacher Education (ITE) located within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in order to better understand the shifting sands of teacher preparation. I will limit this foray to the UK and more particularly England since other UK-wide jurisdictions have their own national educational policies.

A focus on England is further justified by its position as a 'distinct outlier' (Beauchamp *et al.*, 2015, p.154) in relation to the other UK nations for its shift towards an increasingly school-based teacher education. A shift characterised by 'a (re)turn to the practical' (Beauchamp *et al.*, 2015, p.154) and the attendant marginalisation of university-based ITE, as will be addressed below. I will then expand the discussion to include a review of the secondary-school teaching climate and draw on relevant literature to outline some of the constraints that are brought to bear on the in-post teachers among my research participants.

2.10.3.1 The turn to the practical

In what follows, I firstly detail the ways in which this 'turn to the practical' (Furlong and Lawn, 2011, p.6) impacts upon the nature and structure of the PGCE course and affects in turn the professional identity of PGCE students. The main argument pursued in this section is that two related forces, in the shape of the 'turn to the practical' and the marginalisation of university-based teacher education, have favoured a perception of teaching as a 'craft' (Philpott, 2014, p.64) and of teacher education as an 'apprenticeship' (Philpott, 2014, p.64), which both profoundly influence professional identity formation, including its attendant labels, to wit the change from 'student teachers' to 'trainees'. As mentioned earlier, unlike other UK nations, England has, for the past thirty years or so, followed a trend similar to the USA (Zeichner, 2014) tending towards a shortened, practice-oriented teacher education and away from the rather awkwardly named 'universitification and masterfication' (Helgetun and Dumay, 2021, p.81) in evidence elsewhere in continental Europe. This 'turn to the practical', already noted by Hoyle in 1982 (n.p., cited in Furlong and Lawn, 2011, p.6), is partly the result of convergent policies and educational bodies which purported to professionalise teaching (Zeichner, 2012; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Carmi and Tamir, 2020). Furlong and Lawn (2011) attribute it to an ideologically driven political climate favouring an apprenticeship model of teacher education, which has led to 'a profound reconceptualization of the teacher, from scholar to professional craftsperson' (Helgetun and Dumay, 2021, p.80).

This turn to the practical accompanied a gradual loss of monopoly by HEIs over teacher education and a concomitant increase in governmental oversight in the formation of teachers. For instance, Helgetun and Dumay (2021) argue that the creation of the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) in 1984 represents an initial attempt by the government to establish some control over which teacher-education course would meet its approval to grant powers to confer Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). In its first incarnation, CATE also spearheaded the design of professional standards of competencies for pre- and in-service teachers. Helgetun and Dumay (2021) further chart the different incarnations of CATE, from the Teacher Training Agency (1994) until its final amalgamation within the Department for Education (2018). Despite its various guises, it retained its certification remit and its central role in the creation of a standardised definition of the competent teacher. Standards that have contributed to the gradual shift, as noted above, 'from scholar to professional craftsperson' (Helgetun and Dumay, 2021, p.80) as a result of their increased emphasis on skills and competences (Biesta, 2015). This is at the expense of a vision of teaching as an intellectual, research-informed and developmental profession (Beauchamp *et al*., 2015, p.160). This turn to the practical has already been well documented (Furlong *et al*., 2000; Zeichner, 2014; Beauchamp *et al*., 2015) and has occasioned a 'falling from grace' (Furlong and Lawn, 2011, p.6) of the constitutive disciplines of teacher-education courses, namely history, philosophy, psychology and sociology, as a consequence of a much reduced university input. Further separation of the theoretical from the practical elements of teacher education, in favour of the latter, was ushered in by *Circular 3/84* (DES, 1984) which had the effect of initiating the de-coupling of the academic PGCE from its professional Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) element. The decree absolute was signed by the *Carter Review of Initial Teacher Training* (Carter, 2015, p.14) which advised that a PGCE is but 'an optional academic qualification.'

The theoretical and disciplinary 'fall from grace' and its concomitant replacement with a more skills-based and preparatory practicum-focused content have led to a fundamental change in the nature and culture of university-based ITE in England, argue Murray and Mutton (2016). Murray and Mutton (2016, p.63) further contend

that, as a result of the above interventions, the 'practical turn' is more pronounced in England than in any other country which has followed the same route. They add: 'These interventions have changed ITE fundamentally by making it a more school-focused enterprise… with experiential, practical and contemporary knowledge of teaching becoming central.' Murray and Mutton (2016, p.58) finally note that the ideological drive underpinning the gradual marketization of teacher education can be revealed in the changing nomenclature in government policies, in which teacher-education institutions are now known as 'providers'. This cements for them the UK government's 'disregard for the value of ITE' as a worthy contributor to teacher education (Murray and Mutton, 2016, p.58).

Further devaluing of ITE was heralded by *Circular 9/92* (DfE, 1992) which stipulated that two thirds of a PGCE course should be spent in school. Furthermore, the parallel transmutation of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) in 1992 into the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) granted inspectors potentially more punitive powers over both schools and HEIs, ushering an age of accountability with 'bite'. Finally, the more recent issue of the Core Content Framework for ITT providers (DfE, 2019) alongside the Ofsted Inspection Handbook (2020) serves to reinforce the strong governmental hand on the tiller of teacher education despite its concomitant fragmentation into different pathways (e.g. School-Centred Initial Teacher Training or SCITT). In their assessment of the direction of travel of teacher education, McNicholl, Ellis and Blake (2013, p.264) conclude on a somewhat pessimistic note, suggesting that 'university-based teacher education has become derogated by the solipsism of policy (i.e. the privileging of a political view over theoretical perspectives).' The overall effect of the above-mentioned policies and interventions has been the erosion of the previous relative autonomy of HEIs, which had hitherto enjoyed 'judge, jury and executioner' powers over teacher education, and its attendant loss of status, roles and responsibilities. The purpose behind the above charting of the gradual marginalisation of HEI-based ITE is to explain the forces at play that might influence the ensuing priorities and allegiances of PGCE students, which I examine further below.

2.10.3.2 Rush to practice

As outlined in Chapter 1, my research participants include a cohort of PGCE students enrolled on a consecutive (i.e. post-disciplinary degree) one-year university-led course for which the combined target award comprises PGCE with QTS. However, the fact that two thirds of the PGCE course are school-based (24 out of 36 weeks) may contribute to the peripheral place of the institution in student-teachers' experience despite retaining both academic and professional accreditation powers. Whilst the literature on teacher education has tended to focus on the implications of competing authoritative discourses (Britzman, 2003) for student teachers, caught in the crossfires of potentially conflicting perspectives on what it means to be a teacher (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2011; Mockler, 2011; Leijen and Kullasepp, 2013; Lee and Schallert, 2016), the heightened focus on the vocational elements of teacher education in England may conduce to a more procedural and less conflictive view. Ellis *et al*. (2011, p.22) observe that 'the English model of teacher education is unusual in Europe in…its perceived 'rush to practice' – where trainee teachers are expected to demonstrate competence quite quickly in school.' This rush to practice adds a sense of urgency to university input, now focused on procedural and pedagogical preparation, and commit HEIs to ensuring that PGCE students are 'placement-ready'. Llewellyn-Williams (2010, p.187), in her study centred on a PGCE MFL programme in Wales, similarly found that the course emphasised 'the development of teaching techniques and strategies' at the expense of an understanding related to 'helping learners to learn', as a result of which, PGCE students became 'excessively focussed on teaching themselves how to teach.'

Closer to home, Cabaroglu and Roberts (2000) analysed the changing beliefs in England-based PGCE MFL students during the course of their programmes. They intimated that the pressures exerted on trainees to be inducted early within their placement schools might lead PGCE programmes to foreground the practical over the theoretical. Consequently, it seems university-based teacher education is complicit in, or pressed into, turning towards practice. More recently, in her study of a cohort of PGCE MFL students, Hulse (2015, p.157) observed that pervasive performative practices in schools not only curtailed her student-teachers' creativity but encroached on her PGCE tutor role, 'coercing us [students and tutor] into prioritising that which is

measurable above that which is human.' In view of the above, it remains to be seen whether the PGCE students among my research participants perceive their university input through the filter of the above-mentioned expectations and therefore conceive of *Interact* as a procedural prelude to their school placements or whether they are alert to its theoretical import. The question of the continued relevance of a strong pedagogical proposition in light of this 'rush to practice' (Ellis *et. al*. 2011, p.22) also remains pertinent, especially if running counter to my students' expectations about the PGCE course's practical utility.

2.10.3.3 Performative practices

To complete the contextual canvas and address some of the constraints that may be brought to bear on the in-post teachers among my research participants, I provide below an overview of the already well-documented research which has highlighted the increasingly performative aspect of the teaching profession (Ball, 2003). It is exclusively the latter's impact on the formation of professional identity that I examine below as my study is, at heart, an exploration of the ways in which *Interact* intersects with (student) teachers' professional identities and values. Mockler (2011, p.518) argues that 'teacher professional identity… is mediated by a complex interplay of personal, professional and political dimensions' and that to ignore the latter is to be blind to the power exerted by the 'external political environment' (Mockler, 2011, p.521). She goes on to explain that the thrust of this external political environment on education in the USA has tended to emphasise 'technical-rational understandings of teachers' work', meaning that the work of teachers is reduced to its instrumental application of pedagogical content knowledge. For Buchanan (2015), writing again from a USA perspective, these conceptions of teaching deprive practitioners firstly of their autonomy in their implementation of 'decisions made by others' (2015, p.701), and secondly of their own accountability since they are judged against externally-designed competence criteria. This leads them to 'often tailor their instruction to dominant accountability measures in order for their students, school, and themselves to be perceived by outsiders as successful' (Buchanan, 2015, p.705).

These performative practices and ensuing loss of teachers' autonomy vis-à-vis curriculum content or performance indicators may have profound consequences for the identities and allegiances of new and established teachers. Whilst Stone-Johnson (2014) found generational differences among teachers in their eventual resistance or acceptance of government intrusion in their daily work, noting that more recent entrants were less perturbed by the accountability agenda than their more established colleagues, nonetheless Buchanan (2015, p.712) maintains that this pervasive educational culture can seep into teachers' 'individual consciousness' and transform the way they see their roles and raisons d'être. In England, Ball (2003, p.220) also drew attention to the pernicious effect of the performativity agenda on teachers' 'souls', which leaves them 'ontologically insecure: unsure whether [they] are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent.' The appropriation of definitions of the successful teacher by external bodies (DfE, 2019) and the opaque and ever-changing nature of these externally devised quality criteria (Ofsted, 2020) have, by the same token, deprived teachers from having a say in their own formulation of professional competence. The fact that markers and assessors of teaching quality are externally located leads to ambiguous, shifting and 'shifty' professional identity, which for Ball (2003) implicates teachers in the 'fabrication' of their own new professional selves. It is within this performative culture that the student and experienced teachers in my research study navigate. The above backdrop was intended to better situate and understand the competing priorities, ambiguous allegiances and conflicted identities that emerge within such a context.

2.11 Concluding thoughts

The starting point for this chapter was an examination of *Interact* through the lens provided by Anthony's (1963) definitions of method and approach. In reviewing the language-learning literature, we saw in sections 2.4 and 2.5 that *Interact* shares with other MFL teaching methods a set of specific stages and procedures for the planning and teaching of MFL along with a distinctive terminology. *Interact* is also, however, underpinned by communicative principles and, as such, by a commitment to establishing the TL as the medium of classroom communication (2.6). Indeed, we

determined that *Interact* advocates a strong version of CLT together with a strong pedagogy for autonomy (2.7, 2.8) encapsulated by a TL lifestyle. As such, it represents a principled pursuit of spontaneity held to be the mark of willing, authentic investment by learners in fulfilment of the language-learning task. It remains to be understood that the procedural and axiomatic aspects of *Interact* are but two sides of the same coin (2.9) both in *Interact*-related publications and in the way it is presented on the PGCE course concerned.

In the present chapter, I firstly examined the implications for teachers (2.10) of such a strong commitment to the TL imbricated within a particular MFL pedagogy. Chapter 1 had charted the changing fortunes of the TL ethos in English secondary MFL classrooms, prompting personal misgivings as to the continued relevance of *Interact* for my student teachers. As mentioned then, this was the point of origin for my research and it warrants investigating how such a strong message is interpreted by its intended recipients or whether it is indeed welcome. In reviewing the literature on teacher education, I proceeded to identify the various factors that may impinge upon student-teachers' interpretation of their teacher-education message. I then focused on the ways in which university teacher-education programmes sought to alleviate the noted disjuncture between their intended message and trainees' eventual application (2.10.1). Solutions seem to revolve around the notion of congruence between message and medium (2.10.2) to better familiarise future teachers to the practices and activities they would later enact. As we saw, however, not all congruence is beneficial if only leading to too hasty a proceduralisation of technical skills at the expense of a deep engagement with learning. Those programmes that pay attention to the Gestalt nature of student-teachers' experience seem to embody transformative qualities that invite students to go beyond the mere acquisition of skills. Qualities that might stand them in good stead to confront with integrity the contextual challenges and performative culture set out in the final section of this chapter (2.10.3).

This performative culture and attendant 'rush to practice' have exerted pressure on teacher-education programmes to ensure trainees are appropriately equipped with the technical competences necessary for their early and prolonged placement experience. It remains to be seen how *Interact* is perceived by my research

participants in light of the above context and whether it continues to be a valued reference point, if at all, for the more experienced teachers among them. To this end, and in reiteration of the research foci introduced in 1.6, my study sets out to explore the following questions:

RQ1: What is the nature of the research participants' understanding of *Interact*?

RQ2: What issues have the research participants found with regard to its implementation in schools?

RQ3: What value does *Interact* still hold, if any, for these research participants? And,

RQ4: What role does *Interact* play in the formation of the professional identity of the research participants?

3   Methodology and Research Design

3.1   Introduction

As Chapter 1 indicated, the overall aim of this study is to explore the value of *Interact* in the eyes of my research participants and examine its reported impact – if any - on their thinking, their practice and their professional identity. The nature, purpose and underlying principles of *Interact* formed the focus of Chapter 2, surveyed against the broader canvas of the literature on language teaching and teacher education. The present chapter turns to the ways in which the above research intent and context frame the following enquiry. To this end, I aim to clarify below my philosophical stance vis-à-vis what constitutes reality and how one may claim to know this reality, and I will then proceed to relay how this stance informed my methodology and research design.

I therefore begin by discussing the methodological underpinnings of this study (3.2) and examine my ontological (3.2.1), epistemological (3.2.2), methodological (3.2.3) and ethical (3.2.4) positions. In so doing, I explain in turn the rationale for my interpretivist orientation, concerned with 'the subjective world of human experience' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.19) and, in line with Biesta (2010), I make a case for a transactional epistemology which allows for a view of knowing as constructing meaning in reflexive interaction with the world. I then provide a justification for the choice of a qualitative research strategy, considered to be more attuned to the above-mentioned interpretive leanings and which necessitates wrestling with the notion of interpretation (3.2.3.1). I conclude the methodological discussion with a consideration of ethics. In this regard, my dual role as a teacher educator and researcher requires 'sensitive research' (3.2.4.1) since it presents inherent positionality challenges. I address these (3.2.4.2) together with the ethical procedures (3.2.4.3) undertaken in my endeavours to treat participants and 'data' in a respectful and sensitive manner. Having established my methodological underpinnings, I proceed to outline the research design (3.3) and make a case for a 'pragmatic cast' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.174) within the above qualitative approach. Informed by a pilot study (3.4) which pointed to the need to expand the sample and nature of participants, and to include experienced teachers, I present

these together with the procedures pertaining to their recruitment (3.5). Insights gleaned from the pilot study also informed the selection and design decisions relating to the data generation methods (3.6), namely questionnaires (3.6.1) and semi-structured interviews (3.6.2), and further highlighted the 'problem of criteria' (Schwandt, 1998) inherent in interpretive research. This calls for a discussion, drawing on Tracy's (2010) framework, surrounding the establishment of criteria for judging the quality of research and the ways in which my study sought to adhere to them (3.7). This chapter concludes with a consideration of the data analysis approach (3.8). The adoption and adaption of a particular framework (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017) as an analytical lens for the interview data will be explained and an outline of the different phases and processes involved will be presented.

3.2   Methodological underpinnings

Crotty (1998, p.66) suggests that 'different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world.' I take this to mean that personal worldviews can act as a lens through which reality is perceived and can thus influence how we encounter, or indeed filter, this reality and what we hold to be 'true' or 'real'. Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.67) advise that researchers should be clear about their worldview and, in particular, about their views of reality and how we come to know this reality, as this will inform their research approach. They acknowledge that there is an array of orientations in regard to the fit between one's worldview and one's research endeavour, ranging from a 'purist' stance which states that a worldview should systematically guide all the stages of a research project, to an 'a-paradigmatic' stance which finds that such an imposition of worldview onto the research project curtails the researcher's creativity and flexibility. They avoid taking sides but suggest that researchers consider and acknowledge how their - possibly tacit - assumptions about reality, truth and knowledge do influence their research endeavours. In doing so, Savin-Baden and Major (2013) argue, a research study would gain in congruence between means and ends, between a view of reality (ontology) and a view of how we come to apprehend this reality (epistemology). Similarly, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) advocate that enquiry be guided by the purpose of the research rather than one's strict adherence to a paradigm. They cite Guba's definition of

paradigm as 'a basic set of beliefs that guide action' (Guba, 1990, p.17, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.23) and, along with Guba (1990), they deem a paradigm to encompass four terms: ontology, epistemology, methodology and ethics. Since, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), paradigms in themselves do not constitute singular, unitary and well-defined frameworks, at best then, they should *guide* the research endeavour rather than *drive* it and, at least, they should be made explicit by the researcher.

In light of the above suggestions, and drawing from the wider research literature, I situate my worldview below and explain the reasons why I would eschew a purist stance in favour of a considered pragmatic approach whilst still endeavouring to ensure congruence between conceptual underpinnings and methodological choices. In what follows then, I outline my views with regard to the four terms that constitute a paradigm. That is to say, I explain in turn the nature of the researched 'reality' (ontology) and draw on Popper's (1978) categories of research domains to frame my ontological stance and explain my interpretivist leanings. I go on to outline the reasons for adopting a constructivist stance regarding the nature of 'knowledge' (epistemology) before detailing the pragmatist orientation of my methodology. Ethical and positionality issues posed by my various roles as a university lecturer and researcher, and as a perceived exponent of *Interact*, will conclude the present section on my methodological underpinnings whilst my research design will be the subject of sections 3.3 to 3.6.

3.2.1 Worldview: my ontological orientation

Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.56) situate ontological orientations on a continuum with, at one end, *realism*, which posits that there is an objective reality independent of the human mind, and at the other, *idealism*, which considers reality to be a 'thing of the mind.' Other authors make a similar case albeit with different terminology. For example, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p.5) establish a *realist* versus a *nominalist* ontology where the latter considers reality to be 'the product of individual consciousness.' As illustrated in what follows, some research traditions hold that this *realist* versus *idealist/ nominalist* view of reality applies both to the natural and to the

social worlds whilst others draw a sharp distinction between different domains of enquiry. The latter argue that these different domains call for distinct and bespoke research methodologies. In outlining Popper's (1978) ontology below and, in particular, his categories of reality, I aim to set the scene for the subsequent justification of my study's pragmatist orientation and its transactional epistemology (Biesta, 2010).

Popper (1978) categorises reality in the following manner. He suggests the existence of three different but intersecting 'worlds' which shape our view of reality and of our place in it. World 1 consists of the physical world, the world of concrete objects, of living and non-living things and of forces and energy (e.g. radiation, gravity). World 2 is the 'mental or psychological world, the world of our feelings of pain and of pleasure, of our thoughts, of our decisions, of our perceptions and our observations; in other words, the world of mental or psychological states or processes, or of subjective experiences' (Popper, 1978, p.143). Issues of personal judgement, of morality, ethics and volition all belong to World 2, according to Popper (1978, p.143), which encompasses a broad range of conscious and subconscious processes, from dreams to deliberation. World 3 consists of 'the products of the human mind, such as languages; tales and stories and religious myths; scientific conjectures or theories… but also aeroplanes and airports' (Popper, 1978, p.144). World 3 then is endowed with material and/or conceptual existence; and its artefacts, be they ideas or objects, can be shared and changed by a community of people. All three worlds are real, even if lacking physical existence, provided they '*have a causal effect* upon us' (Popper, 1978, p.144 emphasis in the original). This means that, at the *realist* end of the continuum, physical, mental and social worlds (Worlds 1, 2 and 3) are considered real in so far as they are independent and external to the knower, tangible (if only as 'memory engrams' in the case of individuals' mental world, see Popper, 1978, p.146) and able to exert an influence on people. To view the social world as real in this sense is to equate it with a natural phenomenon capable of impacting on people through properties of its own. A *realist* researcher of the social world would therefore be interested in elucidating the relationship between social phenomena and individuals, and would argue that the research methodology most appropriate for World 1 should

equally apply to Worlds 2 and 3. In other words, the approaches associated with research in the natural sciences should also obtain in social sciences along with their claims of objectivity and impartiality. This research stance is usually referred to as 'positivist' (Bryman, 2008) and considers knowledge as 'something that is to be discovered, rather than something that is produced by humans' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.19).

At the other end of the ontological continuum lies *idealism,* ushered in by the American philosopher Kuhn (1962), whose key argument was that even scientific knowledge pertaining to material 'world 1' was not simply discovered but was also socially and culturally constructed. Gorski (2013, p.662) adds that, in its extreme version - indicated by his use of brackets - the idealist worldview contends that 'reality is (solely) constituted by language and language is (merely) a medium of (an impersonal) power…. [So that] social and natural reality are mere epiphenomena of human language.' That is to say, according to an extreme idealist viewpoint, even 'world 1' natural sciences only exist in the minds of researchers and in the words they share with a wider public. In effect, according to Gorski (2013) above, researchers at opposite ends of the ontological continuum, that is, positivists and constructivists, conflate Worlds 1, 2 and 3 but for different reasons. Positivists hold that all three worlds are real and warrant the same research objectivity whilst some constructivists deem all three to be 'a thing of the mind' and believe that all research is fundamentally a subjective enterprise. In-between, argues Gorski (2013), lie the interpretivists who consider the social world to be of a different nature to the physical world and who therefore contend that these distinct worlds require their own respective research methodologies. According to Schwandt (1998, p.236), 'interpretivism was conceived in reaction to the effort to develop a natural science of the social' but retained its preoccupation with objectivity in ways that prompted Smith (1989, p.158, quoted in Schwandt, 1998, p.224) to call interpretivism the 'middle ground' of methodology.

In relation to my study, I believe that an interpretivist view of social reality is better attuned to my research intentions precisely for its middle ground position. To occupy the middle ground is to hold the view that neither a purely objectivist nor an extreme

idealist stance best serves the aim and nature of my enquiry; moreover, the middle ground chimes with my personal standpoint in the following ways.

Whilst I consider World 1 to be a tangible and independent reality outside of the knower's world, I do not side with the realists' view that Worlds 2 and 3 phenomena should be treated on a par with natural or physical phenomena. I would suggest that there is a qualitative difference between all three worlds and that, in line with Popper (1978), each domain of reality requires its bespoke research approach. Furthermore, my study straddles all Popperian worlds. It focuses on research participants' individual conceptualisations (World 2) of *Interact*. The latter is deemed to be a World 3 object, that is, a pedagogical proposition with an embodied and shared reality (in published documents and, to some degree, in the present discussion) which is enacted in World 1. To recall Popper's (1978, p.144) argument: all three worlds are real in so far as they 'have a causal effect' and thus influence people's thoughts and behaviours yet they are subjective and unique to the individual. As such, their mental representations of *Interact*, born out of their experience, constitute the 'researched reality' of my study; and interpretivism is the approach of choice to elucidate those mental representations and examine how these then influence action.

This said, an interpretivist approach runs the risk of focusing singularly on individuals' reported experience at the expense of an acknowledgement of the macro context that shapes this experience. Since, as already mentioned (3.1), the 'central endeavour' of interpretivists is 'to understand the subjective world of human experience' and the meanings that their interactions with the world carry for them (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.19), an interpretivist approach may induce tunnel vision, preoccupied as it is with the inner world of research participants. Whilst earlier chapters, and in particular sections 1.5 and 2.10.3, have sought to address this issue by highlighting the broader forces at play in shaping this inner world, the present chapter will outline the methodological (3.2.3.1) and ethical (3.1.4) challenges inherent in adopting an interpretivist approach and the steps taken to avoid too narrow a focus. In summary, my ontological position draws from a view of reality that occupies the middle ground in acknowledging different worlds (Popper, 1978) and

leans towards interpretivism for its interest in the lived experience of the research participants concerned.

3.2.2 View of knowledge: my epistemological orientation

The differing views of reality examined above influence what counts as knowledge and thus give rise to different epistemological perspectives on the nature of knowledge. That is to say, the above-mentioned ontological continuum (3.2.1) extends to epistemological concerns so that the earlier issues regarding the nature of reality are rehearsed when applied to the nature of coming to know this reality. At the *realist* end, social scientists tend to favour a positivist epistemology (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.64) which sees knowledge as an independent, to-be-discovered reality. This means that social scientists should proceed with the same research tools and detached objectivity that are characteristic of the natural sciences. At the opposite end, the 'anti-positivist' camp comprises a broad range of philosophical positions which, despite their internal differences, share a rejection of the positivist tenets outlined above (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.17). In particular, their research interests lie in people's subjective experience and they have in common a belief that knowledge is a construction of the mind. Similarly, Schwandt (1998, p.236) opposes the *objectivists*' view of reality, as existing independently of observers, to the *constructivists'* view that 'knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by mind.' However, and in line with Gorski's (2013) above-mentioned (3.2.1) depiction of the 'extreme' version of idealism, Schwandt (1998) argues that, for many constructivists, the notion that knowledge is created rather than discovered goes beyond the common-sense idea that the mind is active in the construction of knowledge. Schwandt explains (1998, p.249, emphasis in the original) 'taken as a *psychological* claim, this is not particularly problematic… it is a belief that knowledge is not simply the impression of sense data on the mind, but instead is actively constructed.' However, he goes on to argue that some constructivists also make 'an *epistemological* claim as well. That is, they argue that knowledge does not discover a pre-existing independent, real world outside the mind of the knower.' In accordance with Gorski's (2013) earlier point, this suggests that many constructivists conflate all three Popperian worlds when proposing that there is no real world 'out there' to be

discovered, independent of the knower. Since there is no other reality than one's subjective grasp of it, and all knowledge is a creation of the mind, Schwandt (1998) continues, then knowledge for many constructivists only resides in people's minds. This, according to Schwandt (1998, p.249), condemns them to a form of solipsism, which contends that there is no other form of knowledge but knowledge of self. An untenable consequence being that knowledge cannot claim independent existence outside of the knower and thus cannot be shared and shaped by a community nor verified against a real world.

As per Schwandt's (1998) above conclusion, the *epistemological* claim does indeed seem to me to be a claim too far and the *psychological* - even if commonsensical - view of knowledge construction seems preferable. In light of the earlier discussion on the three Popperian worlds and their intersection with the above-mentioned domains and forms of knowledge, I hold that knowledge proceeds from the interaction between the individual (or collective) knower(s) and the worlds they occupy since there can be no 'pristine, unmediated grasp of the world as it is' (Eisner, 1991, p.46, quoted in Schwandt, 1998, p.248). This means that I deem the acquisition of knowledge to be a relational and creative construction and consider it a process rather than an outcome. This is also the view of Popper (1978, p.156) who claimed that '[I]t is the grasp of the world 3 object which gives world 2 the power to change world 1.' The use of 'grasp' in both Eisner and Popper's quotations reveals the conceptual prehension and manipulation necessary to make sense of, and act in the world.

Biesta (2010) adds an important distinction regarding the nature of knowledge construction which is relevant for this study as it focuses on the domain of education. Drawing on Dewey (1929), Biesta (2010) makes the case that, in education, a *transactional* as opposed to a *representational* epistemology is on more secure philosophical grounds. Biesta (2010, p.495, emphasis in the original) explains: 'Whereas a representational epistemology sees knowledge as a picture of a world independent from and unaffected by the knower—an idea which John Dewey has helpfully referred to as a 'spectator view' of knowledge—experimentation is always an *intervention* in that world.' By experimentation, Biesta refers more broadly to the

practice of teaching viewed from a responsive and contingent angle (see section 2.7.1.3). According to Biesta (2010, p.495):

> we have to give up the spectator view of knowledge—the one which assumes that knowledge is about observing a static, observer-independent reality—and rather have to concede that the knowledge we can gain through experimentation is knowledge about relationships and, more specifically, about relationships between (our) actions and (their) consequences. In contrast to a representational epistemology we can call this a transactional epistemology.

Biesta (2010) thus seems to suggest that reality is apprehended through our interaction with it and is in turn changed by our interaction. Personal and collective knowledge in the domain of education is then generated through participants dealing with their environment. As such, for Biesta (2010), (pedagogical) knowledge construction cannot claim to be purely objective nor purely subjective, thus echoing the earlier-mentioned ontological middle ground (3.2.1); it proceeds instead from on-going transaction between people's interpretations of reality, their actions in the world and their reflections of the impact of their actions on their environment and on themselves. Furthermore, pedagogical interaction being by nature complex and unpredictable, 'knowing' in this domain is never finite, accurate or certain. It is for this reason that Biesta (2010) suggests that the educational domain is better served by a transactional rather than representational view of knowledge creation.

Transposed to the domain of research methodology, and in relation to my study, this means that *Interact* practitioners develop an understanding of *Interact* that is never complete and neither objective nor entirely subjective but is contingent upon their day-to-day experience and reflection. 'Knowing' (about) *Interact* is a function of experimenting with it, and of experiencing its effect in the educational environment and upon oneself. Knowledge of *Interact* can therefore be deemed to be a construct of the mind, a coming to know of this world 3 object, both intellectually and affectively (world 2) and through action (world 1), which reflexively affects the 'knowers' and their knowledge as well as the world they interact with. It also follows that research participants' contributions in the form of verbal or written responses to questionnaires and interviews are not to be taken as a complete and final version of

their thinking about *Interact* but as a creative production generated through the data generation procedures, a point to which I shall return when examining the latter (3.6).

3.2.3 View of research: my methodological orientation

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), who drew from an earlier framework by Burrell and Morgan (1979), it is not only one's ontological and epistemological perspectives which frame one's understanding of what constitutes research. Considerations about human nature also 'have direct implications for the methodological concerns of researchers' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.6). Views of human nature in social sciences, argue Burrell and Morgan (1979, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.5), tend to fall into two broad categories. On the one hand, a *deterministic* assumption treats human beings as subject to broader sociological forces, operating in constraining environments that seek to perpetuate societal structures at the expense of personal agency. On the other hand, *voluntarism* sees human beings as agentic and resourceful, capable and willing to take charge of their destinies.

The implications of such distinct views of human nature influence the research agenda, claim Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p. 6), and lead researchers to pursue different goals via different methodological strategies. For instance, positivists in social sciences are drawn to explore human behaviour in order to extract 'the repetitive, predictable and invariant aspects of the person' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.18). The intention is to deduce, explain and predict general patterns of human behaviour and to discover the broader forces that structure such behaviour. The chosen perspective is a panoramic vista with a view to extracting general, 'law-like' understandings of what governs said behaviour. If, however, one's view of human beings is informed by assumptions which regard them as agentic, creative and responsible, then the gaze is trained on the individual and the intention becomes one of understanding the ways in which 'individuals and social groups create, modify and interpret the world in which they find themselves' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.6). That is not to say that broader forces should be ignored, lest the tunnel vision prevail (3.2.1), nor that individuals be considered as operating with total

freedom. Rather, it is a matter of perspective. In opposition to a 'nomothetic' viewpoint which privileges the general, my research focus is, to a degree, 'idiographic' with 'its emphasis on the particular and individual case' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.6) in that my intention is to explore, interpret and discern the sense that research participants make of *Interact* and the role the latter plays, if any, in the formation of their teacher identity. My research perspective is therefore more attuned to a qualitative research approach as illustrated below.

Qualitative research is concerned with the meanings that people assign to their lives (Bryman, 2008, p.22). Bryman (2008, p.22) cautions, however, that definitions of qualitative research abound yet with little consensus over its precise delineations. This is due to the fact that qualitative research emerged in reaction to positivistic research traditions (Bryman, 2008). It therefore tends to be defined in oppositional ways, in terms of what it is *not* rather than what it *is*. And since different social scientists and philosophers oppose different aspects of established positivist research, each point of contention gives rise to a particular 'qualitative' research strategy rather than the latter constituting a unified and coherent alternative framework. Indeed, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p.287) rather labour the point about the elusive nature of qualitative research:

> "Qualitative research" is a loosely defined term that includes a vast range of kinds of research, has a wide range of meanings and covers a heterogeneity of fields…so much so that Hammersley (2013) suggests that, given this range, the term may no longer be a 'genuine or useful category' (p.99).

Although Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p.xvii, emphasis in the original) do acknowledge that 'the very term *qualitative research* means different things to many different people,' it has retained its appeal precisely because of this flexibility; and they propose the following 'initial, generic definition' [whereby] 'qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018, p.10). This generic definition, however, remains rather imprecise regarding how exactly one is supposed to interpret other people's meanings. It

therefore posits the problem of interpretation inherent in research concerned with an emic perspective (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.12). The latter means that it is the insiders' views, the lived experience of subjects that is of concern in qualitative research. As a point of clarification, the term 'subjects' is here treated as synonymous with human beings and in antonymic relationship with inanimate objects. An emic or insiders' perspective, that is to say, a concern for 'the views of the people and their perceptions, meanings and interpretations' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.12) foregrounds people's subjective world as a focus of interest for research but, in doing so, opens itself up to methodological and ethical challenges. In what follows, I attend to some of the methodological challenges before turning to the ethical problems (3.1.4) posed by an interest in people's subjective world.

3.2.3.1 Methodological issues: the problem of interpretation

The methodological challenges posed by investigating people's thoughts - Popper's (1978) 'world 2' - pertain to the problem of interpretation and, more precisely, of establishing the 'truth-value' of one's interpretation. Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p.17) expressed the problem with reference to the 'double-faced ghost' which, they argue, has haunted qualitative research since its inception. They explain that, in embracing an emic perspective, qualitative research can fall prey to two assumptions. Firstly, that there is a knowledgeable subject who could accurately relay his/her lived experience; secondly, that the researcher is equally able to peer into his/her subject's lived experience and report it faithfully to his/her readers. This, they contend, is the naïve view of interpretation, which assumes one-to-one correspondences between a subject and his/her story and between the researcher and his/her story. Interpretation then confronts qualitative research with what Schwandt (1998, p.246) calls 'the problem of criteria': in the absence of an independent or established set of criteria for judging the validity or truth-value of a claim, how is one to determine the veracity of such a claim? Research participants' interpretations are not necessarily 'accurate', and 'simply amassing subjective data from participants does not ensure that the data are true or reliable,' caution Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p.26). It follows that qualitative research, in placing participants' interpretations as its focus of interest, thereby runs the gauntlet of potential accusations of partiality,

misrepresentation, incompleteness or inaccuracy. This may bring concomitant charges of solipsism – 'it is *my* truth' – or relativism – 'all truths are equal', argues Schwandt (1998, p.246). A possible solution advocated by Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p.17) is to adopt a more sophisticated understanding of the interpretive act, one which acknowledges the personal filters at play when constructing meaning and relaying one's own perceptions. Put simply, just as knowing is deemed to be a process of construction (3.2.2), so should interpreting be considered a process of re-construction. As mentioned in section 3.2.2, jettisoning a *representational* epistemology (Biesta, 2010), or - as Dewey put it, 'a spectator's view of knowledge' – entails moving away from a view of knowledge as a simple one-to-one correspondence between the world 'out there' and one's depiction of it; one that furthermore would leave both world and reporter unaffected by the research process. Instead, a *transactional* view of knowledge permits a consideration of the research endeavour as *creating* rather than merely *relaying* meaning, and as reflexively shaping the physical, social and mental Popperian worlds inhabited by all research participants concerned (Biesta, 2010).

This said, a more sophisticated notion of interpretation which embraces rather than obscures the subjective and creative construction behind the interpretive process does not obviate the need for research rigour. Indeed, the 'double-hermeneutic' (Giddens, 1984) involved in interpreting already-interpreted meanings calls for rigorous quality criteria if research is to optimise credibility and yield robust evidence. Research rigour is said to be accomplished through the establishment of, and adherence to quality criteria such as validity and reliability which, in a qualitative framework, 'might be addressed through the honesty, depth, authenticity, richness, trustworthiness, dependability, credibility and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.246). To this already long list, the above-mentioned authors add Teusner's (2016) advocacy for transparency not only in communicating all procedural decisions but most importantly in disclosing the ethically pertinent information regarding the relationship between researcher and researched. It is in this spirit of transparency that I shall elaborate in

section 3.7 on the ways in which my study sought to address some of the quality criteria listed by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) above and that I will draw upon Tracy's (2010) quality criteria in doing so but I first turn to the general ethical considerations raised by the decision to focus on participants' emic perspective in qualitative research.

3.2.4 Ethical considerations

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned methodological challenges in securing an emic perspective, that is, in gaining an insider's view of people's lived experience, there are ethical issues in seeking access to them. Such intentions and attendant procedures may be deemed intrusive when 'efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.19). For this reason, in the discussion of ethical concerns that follows, I draw on (3.2.4.1) the notion of 'sensitive research' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.228). Ethical considerations are heightened when participants are one's own students; this calls for particular vigilance and attention to issues of positionality (3.2.4.2). With this in mind, ethical procedures (3.2.4.3) intent upon minimising harm and protecting participants' autonomy and privacy are examined in the concluding part of this section.

3.2.4.1 Sensitive Research

Ethics have been defined as a set of orienting guidelines, based on moral principles, aimed at 'minimising harm, protecting privacy, and respecting autonomy' (Hammersley, 2017, p.59). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018) recognise that the above principles may be adhered to by the letter yet still lack the empathetic antennae that enable a researcher to sense when and how to act with tact, diplomacy and respect. For this reason, they prefer Cavan's definition of ethics as 'a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others' (Cavan, 1977, p.810, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.112) and therefore support the notion of 'sensitive' research (2018, p.228). Sensitive research encompasses ethical conduct but also extends to the 'emotion work' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.236) needed to attend to, and protect research participants' subjectivities. Whilst the above-cited moral principles (Hammersley, 2017) provide the bedrock of ethical conduct, I

consider sensitive research a more useful concept in that it permeates all strata of the research enterprise, finding the interstices where ethical dilemmas are not so easily discerned or resolved, and is thus more attentive to potential emotive issues. This is particular pertinent in my research endeavour, firstly because some of the participants are concurrently undertaking a PGCE and are thus undergoing the 'sometimes painful' (Ellis, V., 2009, p.165) process of teacher-identity formation, and secondly due to positionality issues (3.2.4.2). I believe, however, that my 20 year-long professional experience as a teacher educator has equipped me with the sensitive antennae needed to tactfully engage in such 'emotion work' and my priority will continue to be that of protecting all participants at the expense of my study.

Sensitive research, however, need not only alleviate emotive issues but also confront the covert and 'nagging issue of power' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p.244). Whilst my research was informed by the then current 2011 version of the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research, and undertaken upon receiving ethical approval from the Ethics panel at the accrediting university, (Appendix 1), it is interesting to note that the most recent BERA (2018) guidelines bring researchers' attention to those 'nagging issues of power' quoted above. The inherent 'power relationships' (BERA, 2018, p.13) may derive in my context from the institutionally-conferred position of senior lecturer as well as from the authoritative status bestowed by professional expertise and experience, and finally from the perceived legitimacy of the researcher alone to decide on matters of topic, scope, sampling, methodological and reporting strategies. These perceived power differentials may leave some participants feeling as if they are indeed being 'subjected' to research. It is perhaps the reason why the revised BERA ethical guidelines (2018, p.4) now emphasise establishing 'trust' between researcher and researched, and invite those researchers occupying dual roles in the eyes of the participants, such as university lecturers and researchers, to make 'very explicit' (2018, p.13) their positional stances vis-à-vis all parties involved. To this end, the ethical challenges pertaining to the diverse positions I occupy as a university tutor and researcher are discussed in more detail below.

3.2.4.2 Positionality

Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.71) suggest that researchers acknowledge their positionality in relation to three domains: the topic under study, the participants, and the research context and process. In line with their suggestion, I attend to these three domains in turn below but examine them with reference to the insider-outsider continuum (Hellawell, 2006) and relay the difficulties encountered in occupying, and being seen to occupy, diverse positions on this continuum.

In terms of the topic under study, Chapter 1 laid out my motivation for researching how *Interact* was perceived. To recall, my personal and professional trajectories had initially placed me as an insider since I was an alumnus and former *Interact* practitioner yet I came to harbour doubts about its currency in a changing educational climate. In effect, I had gradually developed an outsider's perspective in relation to *Interact* in no longer taking for granted its continued validity. In particular, I was anecdotally aware of its 'bad press', of its external reputation as a historical pedagogical proposition that was at risk of becoming obsolete. The impression I had gradually forged through my encounters with former trainees, subject mentors and with fellow teacher educators at other institutions was one that portrayed *Interact* as a 'unique' proposition with all the connotations such an adjective conjures up. The views from insiders, that is, from former students or colleagues who were familiar with the approach, were sometimes couched in apologetic terms in their justification for no longer applying *Interact*, although some did not hesitate to explain to me that *Interact* had never been a realistic proposition in the first instance and that they had felt short-changed by their PGCE course. Many also echoed the views held externally, suggesting that *Interact* had overstayed its welcome and was no longer in accord with current school-based MFL pedagogy. This was confirmed most memorably in an encounter with a fellow teacher educator at a conference who, not knowing I was employed by the university associated with this approach, confessed his amusement to me: 'can you believe it? They still peddle that approach over there!' It would be fair to say that, as a result of all these encounters, I had privately developed an ambivalent attitude towards *Interact*, to the extent that I considered steering the PGCE course away from it. The point of origin for this research then, as explained in Chapter 1, lay

in my personal disquiet at the idea that my continued 'peddling' of *Interact* constituted a disservice to my PGCE students' professional development. Therefore, and in relation to Savin-Baden and Major's (2013, p.71) advice in the above introduction, I believe that I set out on this research endeavour in a manner that was open to the prospect of discarding *Interact* so as to better serve the professional interests of the PGCE students in my charge. In this respect, I had perhaps travelled towards the distal end of the insider-outsider continuum as a result of the above-charted estrangement.

Regarding my position towards the participants, I consider this the most significant ethical and methodological challenge in my study. The number of potentially competing roles created ethical situations that needed careful negotiation. In addition to the already ambiguous 'judge and jury' roles of a PGCE tutor responsible for students' pastoral care but also their final accreditation, I was considered an insider: an *Interact* proponent, a present advocate and former secondary-school practitioner of the approach, and thus inextricably linked with it in the eyes of current and former student teachers. Some may therefore have felt unable to voice their criticism of it in my presence. Moreover, the role of the researcher probing for candid information about participants' perceptions of *Interact* added yet another hat, but one that purported to be that of a disinterested outsider. Humphrey (2012, p.581) claims that insider research is unavoidably 'characterised by a certain duplicity by virtue of the fact that the insider researcher has to hold together the two distinct roles of being an "insider" and a "researcher".' This would indeed test the notion of 'trust' expounded by BERA (2018, p.4) as mentioned earlier (3.2.4.1). The boundaries between all these roles were therefore necessarily blurred and, although I reiterated my neutral and non-judgemental stance in all my research-focused encounters, participants may well have provided answers that were mindful of all the hats I was perceived to wear.

As will be recalled from the introductory paragraph to this section, the third domain mentioned by Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.71) combines that of research context and process. In terms of context, the above section addressed the complex issue of my position vis-à-vis *Interact* in the eyes of my research participants and I invoked earlier the need to engage with research in a sensitive manner (3.2.4.1). Furthermore,

the authors (2013, p.73) explain that a researcher's positionality can be made clear by making methodological decisions explicit. In particular, they advise that researchers working within a qualitative framework, for example, demonstrate their awareness of the constructive nature of meaning-making and of the part they play in interpreting other people's meanings. I believe I have made a case for a representational epistemology and for an active involvement of the self in knowledge creation (3.2.2) and against a view of knowledge acquisition as impersonal and value-neutral. However, Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.71) add that researchers need to locate themselves within the research and acknowledge that the research process is not innocent nor does it leave participants, including the researcher, unaffected. They therefore invite researchers to be reflexive and attend to the ways in which their involvement 'is both integral and integrated into the research' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.76). Reflexivity then is construed as a tool to observe one's own travels along the insider-outsider continuum in order to capitalise on the different vistas thus afforded (Humphrey, 2012, p.583) but also alert us to one's own blind spots. Reflections on 'self-as-instrument' (Tracy, 2010), that is to say, my personal involvement in, and impact upon the research will continue to be threaded throughout the present thesis and will be elaborated upon in the discussion on quality criteria (3.7).

3.2.4.3 Ethical procedures

Having discussed the moral and ethical values underpinning my overall approach, encapsulated in the notion of 'sensitive research' (3.2.4.1), I now turn to procedural matters. Recalling the earlier definition of ethics, which according to Hammersley is intent upon 'minimising harm, protecting privacy, and respecting autonomy' (Hammersley, 2017, p.59), I outline below the ways in which I sought to address Hammersley's recommendations in the context of my study.

Hammersley and Traianou (2012, p.57) consider it naïve to wish to eliminate harm altogether and advise that researchers operate with a wider definition of harm in order to best recognise and minimise it. Harm can be construed in many different ways, from negative emotions arising in the course of interviews to additional

workload created by research tasks such as completing a questionnaire or finding a suitable slot in a busy work schedule for a one-to-one interview. I was mindful of the 'bureaucratic burden' (BERA, 2011, p.7) imposed by my research schedule (3.5.3) but hope that the spirit of sensitive research which underpinned all my endeavours enabled participants to feel safe and respected. Potential harm can also be caused by accidental disclosure of identity and inadequate data protection measure (Bryman, 2008, p.119). For this reason, all completed paper-based questionnaires and all interviews, in their audio and written formats, were kept in a locked and secure location for the duration of the study, to be destroyed upon its completion. All electronic data sources, such as transcribed interviews and their analysis in the Atlas-Ti™ software, were also stored on the password-protected and encrypted university OneDrive™ in line with BERA (2018, p.25) guidelines. Confidentiality was assured and maintained throughout the research so that participants' identities, and the information they provided, could not be accidentally revealed. This said, on the basis of the pilot study (3.4), it was decided to ask for participants' permission to write their names on the three paper questionnaires for traceability purposes; this then enabled me to interview a small number of questionnaire respondents. All transcribed interviews were anonymised and pseudonyms allocated. Furthermore, Hammersley and Traianou (2012, p.76) consider that a respect for participants' autonomy is the ethical *sine qua non* criterion for all social research enterprise and that its cornerstone is the notion of informed consent. To this end, a letter of information about the purpose of my study (Appendix 2) and an informed consent sheet (Appendix 3) outlining participants' rights and providing further information about data and privacy-protection measures were issued at the start of the project and again for each subsequent questionnaire or interview, as I did not want student teachers to assume that I would take their initial permission for granted in later stages of the research.

A complementary notion to 'minimising harm' is beneficence, which asks researchers to consider who benefits from the enterprise or the outcomes of the study. My concern here resides in the potential charge of 'selfish' research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.128). Was I treating the PGCE students as 'research fodder' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.128) in carrying out research *on* rather than *with* them

(Hammersley and Traianou, 2012, p.76)? Would this research make any positive difference to their professional lives? One could argue that this was not the primary aim of this research; nevertheless, as shown in Chapter 1, the intention was that future generations of PGCE students would benefit from the insights I would gain and from the lessons I would learn in the process. The potentially positive contribution in the shape of a better-informed PGCE course supports the case for this study being of value to future PGCE students and thus contributes to 'the production of valid, relevant, worthwhile and significant knowledge' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.121).

In addition to the above-mentioned responsibilities towards research participants, it is worth noting that both the third (2011) and fourth (2018) editions of the BERA ethical guidelines include a commitment to 'the quality of educational research' (2011, p.9). This means that a poorly executed research project would be deemed to have failed not only on methodological but also on ethical grounds. Researchers must ensure methodological rigour through the employment of 'methods that are fit for purpose' (BERA, 2011, p.9) and 'communicate the extent to which their data collection and analysis techniques, and the inferences to be drawn from their findings, are robust and can be seen to meet the criteria and markers of quality and integrity applied within different research approaches' (BERA, 2018, p.25). With this in mind, matters of research rigour and quality criteria will be addressed in section 3.7. These matters gained from the lessons learned through a pilot study (3.4), hence my delineation of these lessons later in this chapter, as a point of departure for a discussion on the measures taken to achieve rigour in my study. Firstly though, I explain below my overall research design which borrows from the pragmatist research tradition.

3.3   Research Design

In the previous section (3.2), I outlined my methodological underpinnings and explained my ontological and epistemological orientations. I made a case for occupying the middle ground in my view of reality, in line with Popper's (1978) worlds (3.2.1), since I sought to explore participants' subjective understanding (world 2) of an object made real (world 3) in the form of *Interact*-related publications together with participants' *Interact*-inspired practices (world 1). In brief summary, my

epistemological stance (3.2.2) leans towards a constructivist rather than representational (Biesta, 2010) view of knowledge, leading to an interpretivist orientation concerned with the meanings that individuals derive from their interaction in and with the world (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.20). It follows that my methodological inclinations (3.2.3) tend towards the idiographic rather than the general and favour an emic over an etic perspective; and that my research approach of choice sits within the qualitative tradition. In light of the above, I proceed to justify the pragmatic 'cast' or overtone (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.174) of my research design.

In the first instance, Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.172) take issue with authors presenting pragmatic qualitative research as 'purely interpretivist… or…purely objectivist,' which resonates with the earlier-mentioned middle ground. Instead, they advance that it 'marks the meeting point of description and interpretation, in which description involves presentation of facts, feelings and experiences in the everyday language of participants, as interpreted by the researcher' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.172). Whilst pragmatic research has been considered 'a-paradigmatic' by some (Merriam, 1998, cited in Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.173), the latter contend that it aligns with its philosophical origins, which can be traced back to the American Pragmatists of the 1930's, so that pragmatic studies incline towards a practical 'what works' approach. Therein resided its allure for me, having considered and then discarded a number of competing plausible research traditions in my initial methodological meanderings, including phenomenology and Grounded Theory. Reassured by Clarke and Visser (2019) who recount similar tortuous travels until their eventual selection of a pragmatic research methodology, I followed in their footsteps for the same reasons as theirs: an unease at the necessary contortions required in subscribing to a particular research tradition and a sense that adhering to either of the aforementioned would steer me away from focusing fully on my research questions. In view of the latter, the choice of a pragmatist stance was further justified on the grounds that it is 'an approach that draws upon the most sensible and practical methods available in order to answer a given research question' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.171). Moreover, on philosophical grounds, pragmatism holds that the

merit of a proposition resides in the positive difference it makes to people's lives, so that impractical or inopportune solutions, however theoretically plausible or ideologically attractive, ought to be rejected. In relation to my motivation for this research (1.5) and its intended benefits (3.2.4.3), a pragmatist cast held promise in that the future direction of the PGCE course would be guided by the outcome of the study and, in particular, by participants' reports of the merit, utility and benefits – if any - of *Interact* for their professional lives.

Thus unencumbered by methodological guidelines and untethered to particular philosophical viewpoints, I settled upon pragmatism as a research approach. This said, its flexible freedom is a double-edged sword, as it behoves the researcher to expound in detail their own ontological and epistemological perspectives as well as evince the ways in which their 'freelance' methodological ambition meets rigorous standards since, by definition, they do not cleave to particular research orthodoxies. In terms of the former, I have delineated both my ontological and epistemological stances (3.2). I will attend to the latter in section 3.7 where I explain the quality assurance measures undertaken in my study. Finally, my selection of a pragmatist approach is a considered and conscious decision precisely because it permits a range of research and analytical strategies 'depending on what is most beneficial to the study' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.174). For this reason, my research instruments involve both questionnaires (3.6.1) and semi-structured interviews (3.6.2), and my analytical approach (3.8) adopts an 'eclectic' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.174) and bespoke set of measures, including the application of an adapted framework drawn from McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017). The Pilot Study below acts as the springboard for a discussion on the selection and modifications of the chosen research instruments and on the broadening of the participants' sampling strategy.

3.4 Pilot Study

The pilot study focuses on the use of questionnaires as a research tool and was motivated by several factors examined below; chief amongst them was the fact that I chose to design my own questionnaires. Although there are many existing and well-established questionnaires which focus on foreign-language teachers' beliefs (see

Borg, 2006, pp. 175-196, for an extensive review), these tend to be highly structured, aiming to be replicable and yield precise and measurable outcomes for comparison with future studies. As such, there is an evaluative stance to these studies and associated tools, and an affinity with an objectivist outlook at odds with my interpretive intentions (3.2.1). It was important therefore that my bespoke questionnaires be 'road-tested' prior to their implementation (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2009) and in what follows, I describe the steps taken.

There are several campus sites at the university where I am currently employed and where this study was conducted. I thought it opportune to trial a version of the first questionnaire with a cohort of 37 PGCE MFL students who are taught by colleagues on a different campus to the one where I usually teach for the following reasons. Firstly, Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009, p.53) advise road testing a research instrument prior to its implementation, suggesting that 'trial runs allow the researcher to collect feedback about how the instrument works and whether it performs the job it has been designed for.' Secondly, the PGCE MFL course on the other campus operates according to a different calendar, with their course usually starting more than two weeks earlier than mine, giving me ample time to collect completed questionnaires and conduct an initial analysis that may reveal questionnaire-design flaws. Finally, these students were taught on my campus for the first two weeks of their university-based course since theirs was too small to accommodate such a large group at once. This meant that these students were present on campus for two weeks prior to the start of my PGCE MFL course thus obviating the need to post and collect questionnaires by mail. I proceeded to draft a pilot questionnaire, which at the time was anonymous, and those students who volunteered (35/37) to complete it did so at the end of a morning session, kindly cutting short their lunchtime break. The value in conducting a pilot study (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p.400) soon became apparent, as I belatedly realised that anonymity meant I could not trace which student had completed which questionnaire, precluding any further interview with specific students. Furthermore, the initial analysis of the questionnaires was a formative experience which taught me valuable lessons in questionnaire design; lessons which informed later questionnaires and which are detailed in section 3.6.1.

Beyond the above procedural errors, the initial analysis also had an impact on the scope of the study. The pilot questionnaire revealed a homogeneity in responses, which was to be expected since it was after all no more than a test of students' current understanding of university lectures. The majority of responses, with no noticeable dissenters, were extremely positive towards *Interact* and I became curious about the apparent discrepancy between respondents' laudatory attitudes and the admittedly anecdotal 'bad press' mentioned earlier (3.2.4.2). Were students simply 'telling me what I wanted to hear'? (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.241). The fact that I was unlikely to meet them again and that all questionnaires had been anonymous encouraged me to think that there was little pressure on them to do so. If later questionnaires continued in this positive vein, would this be an indication that some PGCE students only developed doubts towards *Interact*, if at all, later in their career? This was one of the reasons behind the decision to expand the scope of the study to include in-service teachers. Teacher-education literature certainly points to the discrepancy between beginning and experienced teachers' beliefs and practices (2.10) and alludes to the initial disillusionment felt by novice teachers 'whose ideals about language teaching may need to, at least temporarily, be put aside' (Borg, 2006, p.275) to best manage unfamiliar contextual priorities. To summarise, methodological decisions arising from the pilot study include jettisoning anonymity – but not confidentiality – in favour of traceability, and inviting alumni now in post in the hope of revealing a wider array of reactions towards *Interact*.

3.5   Research participants

For reasons outlined above, the range of research participants was expanded to include both the PGCE MFL student cohort (3.5.1) as well as number of respondents (3.5.2) who are familiar with *Interact* through a variety of sources. Of note, although the term 'respondent' has positivistic connotations, it is used throughout this and the following chapters interchangeably with 'participant' but more narrowly to refer to those participants who engaged with questionnaires. This is purely to avoid repetition rather than in adherence to a view of participants as mere respondents, as has been made clear in earlier sections. The same obtains for terms such as 'data' or 'findings' which may convey the idea that facts are waiting to be discovered. I believe that my

constructivist stance (3.2.2) has clarified for the reader that I do not consider knowledge production to be a 'fact-finding' mission. I therefore use those terms simply for stylistic reasons. What follows is a description of both categories of participants (pre- and in-service teachers) together with their respective recruitment strategies, in line with Borg's (2012, p.26) recommendation that researchers should demonstrate 'greater specificity and candour…about the rationale underpinning the selection of participants.' An overall data generation schedule then closes this section (3.5.3).

3.5.1 The PGCE MFL students

Although mindful of the positionality challenges (3.2.4.2) entailed in selecting participants from my own PGCE MFL group, the latter remain at the heart of this study since its overall intention (Chapter 1) was to gain an insight into the role played by *Interact* in the gradual formation of MFL teachers' professional identity. I adopted the following procedures to explain the project, recruit participants and administer questionnaires. During the first week of the PGCE course in September, I presented the research project to the entire PGCE MFL group. I gave out paper copies of the information sheets (Appendix 2) and consent forms (Appendix 3), to be completed and returned by the end of the week, if so willing, via my pigeonhole or under my office door in order to ensure discretion and avoid a 'sense of compulsion' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.502). The overall PGCE MFL group comprised 23 students at that stage; two late starters were to join the group two weeks later. In September, 21 out of 23 students decided to participate in this research. After collating all consent forms, at the end of the third week in the course, I then proceeded to administer the first of three questionnaires. Although captive in the sense that 21 students effectively constituted almost the entire PGCE MFL cohort on one campus, students' autonomy was preserved, enshrined in their rights not to take part and to withdraw at any point without the need to explain (3.2.4.3). Participants also selected which level of participation they were prepared to engage in; for example, they could choose whether to respond to any or all questionnaires, and/or to be interviewed on a one-to-one basis. In January, at another round of project presentation and informed-consent request, 23 students out of the now 25 strong group decided to complete the

second questionnaire but the number dropped back to 21 by May, for the third questionnaire, due to one student leaving the course and three exercising their rights to withdraw. For clarity's sake, the table below provides the number of questionnaire respondents out of the total PGCE MFL cohort whilst table 5 represents individual completion of all three questionnaires.

Table 1: Number of questionnaire respondents per total and per data generation point.

Questionnaire 1 (September)	Questionnaire 2 (January)	Questionnaire 3 (May)
21/23	23/25	21/24

There may be several reasons behind the very high level of questionnaire returns indicated in the above table. Among them was the fact that they had been completed at the end of a taught session, 'rapidly and on one occasion' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.502) since I had decided against asking students to complete the questionnaires at home. I felt it would be too much of an imposition on them to complete this in their free time and I was also concerned about a poor return (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.502). The ethical tension here between the need to collate information versus the wish to preserve participants' rights to disengage is evident. For this reason, I decided to continue with the practice, established in the pilot study, of asking those students who had previously signed the consent form if they would stay behind at the end of a shortened morning session in order to complete the questionnaire. At the end of my taught session, as promised, I placed all the questionnaire templates on my desk and left the room in order not to put any undue pressure on the group to stay behind to complete the questionnaire in their extended lunchbreak. Those who did not wish to do so could therefore leave the classroom to enjoy their early lunch break without my knowledge. The same procedure was repeated in January and in May, following students' comments stating that they enjoyed the discreet freedom to decide to whether to stay or not.

Since I was absent during all three questionnaire tasks, I do not know how long it took students to complete them nor can I vouch for the individuality and uniqueness of responses; students may well have shared their comments among the group. I

therefore relinquished control over the environment and had to trust that the questionnaires were completed with seriousness and by the intended respondents (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.502). I judged my absence to be preferable, however, since my presence may have unwittingly conferred on the questionnaire the air of a 'school task' to be dutifully completed in silence. Concerned about unwitting coercion, I also felt that my absence gave students a perhaps welcome opportunity to discreetly renege on their previously given consent.

Although the great majority of students had agreed to respond in writing to all three questionnaires (table 1), only 16 had also consented to being interviewed. I opted to interview 10 among those 16, firstly owing to the quality of their written reflections in the questionnaires, and secondly due to the fact that they had experienced working in MFL departments which held diverse views towards *Interact*, thereby prompting much reflection on their parts. I decided to delay interviews until they had started their second school placement (Feb-June) so as not to overwhelm them. As some of them were new to the country (see table 6, section 4.2), they needed to gain confidence linguistically and culturally as well as professionally. I also wanted them to garner experience in different school settings, which was likely to engender multiple perspectives on the reality of MFL teaching in secondary schools in England. The chosen pseudonyms reflect their respective nationalities and gender; there were three male student teachers in the overall PGCE MFL cohort and only one agreed to be interviewed.

Table 2: Pseudonyms, dates and duration of interviews with PGCE students.

During their final block placement but before questionnaire 3 (March / April)	After their final block placement and after their 3rd and final questionnaire (May / June)
Mathilda (25 mins)	Ceri (48 mins)
Lucy (32 mins)	Joanne (25 mins)
Emma (38 mins)	Tim (28 mins)
	Maria (22 mins)
	Rhiannon (42 mins)
	Gisela (40 mins)

	Sylvia (35 mins)

There are practical reasons for the two different interview periods (during and post-school experience). The students interviewed *during* their final block placement belonged to my supervision group, meaning I was supposed to observe them teach and conduct post-lesson feedback with them. For the three students interviewed during their spring term block placement, we managed to combine lesson observation and interview on the same day but chose different time slots in order to separate the two activities. This necessitated me returning to the school later in the day so that we could do the interview, a small price to pay in order to more clearly demarcate the two roles of tutor and researcher in the eyes of all concerned. The remaining 7 students interviewed at the end of the final school placement, upon their return to university for the final days of the course, had been supervised by colleagues. Their geographically distant placement locations precluded my interviewing them earlier in the year. In the event, however, I also deemed it preferable to delay interviews until such time when they and I knew the outcome of the PGCE course and their accreditation was certain, to alleviate any perception of 'power relationships' (3.2.4.1).

3.5.2 In-service teachers

The second category of participants is more heterogenous than the PGCE student group, the only common point being their knowledge of *Interact.* They thus reflect a broader range of experience and connection with *Interact* and include 'insiders' (Hellawell, 2006) in the form of '*Interact*-trained' alumni and partial 'outsiders' who have encountered the approach from third parties. This heterogeneity sought to provide a 'judicious combination of involvement and estrangement' (Harmmersley, 1993, p.219, quoted in Hellawell, 2006, p.485) whereby their familiarity with *Interact* would enable them to talk knowledgeably about the approach but from the distance gained through their professional experience. I hoped that this distance would permit them to express their views in a frank manner, unencumbered by issues of perceived

hierarchy or status, and allow them the freedom to disclose adverse opinions about *Interact*, if applicable.

The recruitment strategy involved e-mailing three entire former PGCE MFL cohorts who had graduated one, two and three years earlier with the intention of tracking changes in perspectives over time. The rather poor returns for each cohort (2 Newly Qualified Teachers out of 21, 4 teachers with 2 years' experience out of a former cohort of approximately 19 students and another 4 teachers with 3 years' experience out of a similarly sized group) may be an indication of the pressures felt by new entrants to the teaching profession. Consequently, I opted to opportunistically use my professional interactions with subject-specific mentors to approach them about their possible participation. Subject-specific mentors are MFL teachers employed by their school but with a supervisory remit towards university PGCE students. Our professional partnership agreement requires them to attend mentor-training events I organise alongside joint-observation of lessons taught by PGCE MFL students, whose supervision we both shared. Five such subject mentors volunteered to take part in the study, two of whom had only encountered *Interact* through their supervision roles and thus could be said to be placed further towards the distal end of the insider-outsider continuum (Hellawell, 2006). The table overleaf outlines interviewees' links to *Interact* alongside their pseudonyms and career experience.

Table 3: Pseudonyms, career experience and links to *Interact* of in-service interviewees.

Pseudonyms	Career experience in years	Former student	Subject Mentor
Rhiannon	1	✓	
Ceri	1	✓	
Hannah	2	✓	
Rob	2	✓	
Sylvianne	2	✓	
Joséphine	2	✓	
Julie	3	✓	
Marion	3	✓	
Margot	3	✓	
Cécile	3	✓	✓
Neil	8	✓	✓
Camilla	14	✓	✓
Simon	14		✓
Beth	27		✓
Total participants	14		

I opted for semi-structured individual interviews (3.6.2) with each of the above participants at a date, time and place of their choosing. All interviews took place during the two academic years that followed the above-mentioned interviews with the PGCE cohort. This provided the opportunity to re-interview two participants (Ceri and Rhiannon), who had completed the PGCE the year before and were now in post as Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs).

3.5.3   Data Generation Schedule

The following figure (1) presents the overall schedule for data generation. In September, the course is entirely campus-based with the exception of a one-day visit to a 'showcase' school where *Interact* is the MFL pedagogy of choice. The first

questionnaire was issued in the third week of the PGCE course, post said visit but prior to the trainees' first school placement (Oct-Dec). The PGCE students returned to campus for the whole month of January and completed the second questionnaire in mid-January. They embarked upon their second and final school block placement in February and completed the final questionnaire during a University day in May, three weeks short of the end of this final block placement in June.

Figure 1: Outline of the research schedule.

Sept Questionnaires 2013 → January Questionnaires 2014 → Interviews with 3 PG students 2014 → May Questionnaires 2014 → Interviews with 7 PG students 2014 → Interviews with established teachers 2015-6

3.6   Data Generation Methods

In what follows, I expand on the rationale for the selection of questionnaires (3.6.1) and interviews (3.6.2) as research instruments. In examining each tool, I investigate their general advantages and limitations, drawing on research methodology literature. I then outline the processes employed to mitigate these limitations in the context of my study. The potentially more intrusive nature of interviews calls for further examination of the ethical concerns presented by interviewing one's own students. Later sections will then examine the quality criteria and procedures (3.7) adopted in this study which informed my approach to data analysis (3.8).

3.6.1   Questionnaires

This section firstly examines the advantages of questionnaires by way of justification for their selection as a research tool. It then details the lessons learned from the pilot study (3.4) which informed the design and procedural decisions before outlining the ways in which each of the three questionnaires sought to answer the research questions.

The questionnaire as a research tool offers a number of advantages over other methods such as focus group or individual interviews; among these is its ability to elicit individual perspectives yet also capture a greater number of students' views with one

research instrument than would be feasible with one-to-one interviews (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2009, p.6). Other advantages of questionnaires include, circumstances permitting, increased thinking time and the opportunity to redraft and revise one's responses (Newby, 2014, p.301). This may be a welcome feature for respondents over the possible pressure of having to 'think out loud' in a different language than their native one. In essence, a questionnaire has the potential to garner elaborated responses that are the product of reflection rather than capture thinking in the act. This said, interpretive challenges remain (see section 3.2.3.1), especially in view of the fact that the researcher can only seek clarifications after the event, respondents permitting. Tymms (2017, p.223) advises that questionnaires may be a useful starting point on the methodological path towards employing more fine-grained tools such as interviews since questionnaires can clear the ground and alert researchers to otherwise undisclosed but pertinent issues. Indeed, Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009, p.37) caution that 'questionnaires are not particularly suited for truly qualitative, exploratory research' precisely because they do not generally yield the kind of rich data provided by more probing tools such as interviews. They nevertheless agree that, within a semi-structured format, open-ended questions can 'lead us to identify issues not previously anticipated' (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2009, p.37). With this aim in mind, the questionnaires were designed to establish a general overview of students' attitudes towards *Interact* yet remain alert to unsuspected avenues for investigation. As such, the questionnaires were meant to provide the canvas from which to tease out valuable strands for further enquiry.

Drawing on lessons learned from the pilot study (3.4), I opted for a semi-structured questionnaire format. On a continuum from highly structured questionnaires, which prioritise numerical data, to open-ended ones inviting respondents to answer freely, the pilot questionnaire had erred on the side of open-endedness, as I had wanted to elicit respondents' thoughts in their own words for authenticity's sake (Newby, 2014, p.301). Whilst this had generated a wealth of qualitative data, I was concerned about asking too much from students. The prospect of completing two more open-ended questionnaires may prove too daunting and off-putting (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2009). I therefore adopted 'the powerful tool of the semi-structured questionnaires' (Cohen,

Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.473), which combined 'clear structure, sequence and focus' yet retained the open-ended format 'enabling respondents to reply in their own terms' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.475). This format thus combined the potential for authenticity with the structure needed to alleviate the tasks of completing and analysing them.

Further salutary lessons learned from the pilot study (3.4) confirmed the absolute necessity to trial and test a questionnaire (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2009) and brought home the complexity behind questionnaire design. Design errors affected presentation (pagination, font, too dense a cluster of questions in hope of reducing the overall size) as well as wording. Embedded questions, variously called 'double-barrelled' (Bryman, 2008, p.240) 'or 'double questions' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.491), where two or more questions are inserted into one, left both respondents and researcher uncertain as to which one they had answered. Phrasing was ambiguous in some questions, leading to misunderstanding and therefore tangential answers. Besides, insufficient attention had initially been paid to the analysis so that an over-emphasis on open questions had resulted in overwhelming data. The final formative lesson drew from the fact that, as mentioned earlier (3.4), anonymity prevented the identification of potential interviewees.

Armed with these valuable insights, I proceeded to re-design all three questionnaires to achieve greater clarity and secure quality responses. For instance, these new questionnaires mixed open, closed, multiple-choice and scaled questions (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, pp.490-493) to present greater variety, reduce workload and thus alleviate respondents and analyst's fatigue. Following guidance from Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p.493), the sequence was organised so as to 'move from factual to abstract questions,' starting with easy-to-answer biographical questions and arranged so that 'open questions [appear] later rather than earlier.' Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009, p.48) concur that placing open-ended questions, which are by nature more labour-intensive, towards the end rather than at the beginning of a questionnaire positively influences respondents' sustained engagement. The opening biographical questions in the first questionnaire sought to gather information on students' previous language-learning and teaching experience, inspired by Block's

(2002) study. Block interviewed a group of students during their PGCE MFL course and then a year later, once in post as NQTs, and his study had revealed that the foreign nationals among them held different views on the National Curriculum for MFL than their British peers. In particular, they harboured strong reservations towards its perceived lack of 'attention to language as a formal system' and its 'emphasis on the use of games and 'fun' activities' (Block, 2002, p.24). Furthermore, Czerniawski (2011, p.439) cautions against losing sight of the influence of having been brought up in a different country on trainees' cultural and educational values and expectations. I therefore felt it important to gather biographical information which may help uncover whether having been educated abroad framed students' perspectives on *Interact.* Robson and McCartan (2016, p.258) stress that the first function of a questionnaire is 'to help achieve the goals of the research and in particular to answer the research questions.' I reiterate these below and explain the rationale for the series of sub-questions in all three questionnaires (templates and extracts of which can be found in Appendix 4).

RQ1: What is the nature of the participants' understanding of *Interact*?

In all three questionnaires, the above was couched slightly differently in order to reflect the different phases of the course. The first (September) questionnaire, however, did not specifically focus on *Interact* but rather sought students' views on the target-language approach in general. This was to purposefully steer them away from the propensity, evident in the pilot questionnaire, to restate sometimes almost *verbatim* the content of university-based sessions. The analysis of the pilot questionnaire had left me pondering whether their answers were indications of conceptual understanding of *Interact* principles or of actual appropriation and personal espousal. Therefore, later questionnaires sought to distinguish between students' description of *Interact* from their personal opinions. For example, to probe conceptual understanding, the January questionnaire asked a series of questions such as: *At this stage in your PGCE how would you define, in your own words, the Interact approach to teaching MFL? In other words: what does it advocate, what are its features, what does an Interact lesson look like?* This was repeated in the final questionnaire with a slightly different emphasis: *The previous questionnaire asked you*

to define in your own words the Interact approach to teaching MFL. Would you kindly have another go at this? Could I ask that you focus on what you think the purpose behind the Interact approach is, in terms of language learning? To elicit students' personal opinions*,* both the September and January questionnaires included the following sub-questions: *What benefits, if any, do you think a TL approach brings to pupils' MFL learning?* And: *What disadvantages or constraints, if any, are there to teaching in the TL (for both teachers and pupils) in your opinion?* The final questionnaire asked respondents to comment on whether their views on this had changed over the course of the academic year and, if so, in what ways and why.

RQ2: What issues have you found with regard to its implementation?

The above question was again phrased differently in all three questionnaires to reflect student-teachers' school-based experience. In September, for example, since they had yet to start their placements, participants were instead asked to imagine situations that might prevent the application of *Interact*, whereas in January and May they were invited to report on issues they had encountered. Each questionnaire started with placement-related factual questions, such as the number and type of classes students took over, and an indication as to whether their 'adopted' classes had previously been taught using a target-language approach. This was to gauge, albeit in a rudimentary manner, whether they had found their placements welcoming, indifferent to, or inimical towards a target-language approach. Students were then asked to represent, on a fairly crude Likert-scale inspired continuum, the extent to which they had adopted a target-language approach in their own teaching. A mark on the 100% end of the scale indicated that they had always spoken in the TL when addressing the whole class or individuals in a typical lesson. This was followed by an open-ended question, in both the January and May questionnaires, asking respondents to give reasons or circumstances that would explain their use of English. They were then asked to provide factors that had supported or impeded their implementation of a TL approach. For a more fine-grained resolution, the final questionnaire asked respondents which features of the approach they had sought to implement during their placements and whether they had found them effective in promoting what they had hoped to achieve.

RQ3: What value does *Interact* hold for participants?

All three questionnaires sought to distinguish between, on the one hand, respondents' opinion of *Interact*, that is to say, whether they thought positively or negatively about the approach in principle, and their adherence on the other: whether they were inclined to adopt the approach and enact it in practice. Whilst a negative view of *Interact* is likely to lead to its rejection, a positive one is not necessarily a marker of its adoption. *Interact* may remain at the level of a 'good idea' in some respondents' eyes, one that would be attractive to other people but not them. Conversely, the adoption of *Interact* may, in some circumstances, indicate strategic compliance (Borg, 2006) rather than a deep-seated belief in the approach. It was therefore important to provide respondents with the opportunity to distinguish opinion from enactment. For the former, they were asked to exemplify features or principles they would choose to retain in future and why. For the latter, both the January and May questionnaires invited them to exemplify aspects of the approach they had found useful or challenging to implement in practice and to explain why. Furthermore, all three questionnaires invited respondents to consider if they would envisage using this approach in their future career, with the final questionnaire enquiring *which Interact features would you see yourself adopting in your future career and why?* The focus on future career rather than on placements was meant as an invitation for respondents to project themselves into a setting that might allow them to feel some ownership of their future classes.

3.6.2 Interviews

Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.357) consider interviews to be 'the mainstay of qualitative research' although it has not always been the case, as Brinkmann (2018, p.577) notes in his brief history of qualitative interview. It has become the research tool of choice for its potential to gain direct access to participants' views, engage with them on an individual basis and explore in detail particular facets that are pertinent to the research study. The intimacy between researcher and interviewee created by the shared time and space of the interview format is a privileged encounter (Kvale, 1996), one that can lead to productive exchange, novel insights and a better understanding of issues that are central to the study, hence its prominent place as a

research tool in qualitative research (Robson and McCartan, 2016, p.286). Indeed, it would be difficult in the context of my study to justify researching the central themes explored in Chapter 2, namely authenticity, spontaneity and responsive interaction, and yet adopt a research methodology at odds with their humanistic underpinnings. Therefore, among the reasons for choosing interviews as a research tool are the opportunities they afford to open space for authentic, spontaneous interaction. In what follows, I examine the nature of the act of interviewing and offer a rationale for its selection as a research tool on methodological grounds. I then consider the ethical challenges pertaining to interviewing *per se*, compounded by the dilemmas of interviewing my own students before turning to the procedures I adopted in order to mitigate such challenges. I end this section with a brief explanation of the decisions regarding recording and transcription.

Kvale (2007, p.21) offers a deceptively simple definition of interview: 'An interview is literally an inter-view, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a common theme.' However, behind the simple formulation lurk methodological and ethical challenges. Before attending to the ethical challenges, I first turn to the methodological issue embedded in seeing interviews simply as an inter-change of views between two people. The risk here is in adhering to a representational epistemology (Biesta, 2010, c.f. 3.2.2) which assumes a simple correspondence between reality and one's interpretation of it. Transposed to interviews, this would mean believing that interlocutors can unproblematically translate their own lived experience into speech and then exchange these views with listeners who, equally unproblematically, translate these back into thoughts (see 3.2.3.1). Borg (2006) believes this assumption is not uncommon among researchers. In his extensive summary of international research on language-teachers' beliefs and knowledge, Borg (2006, p.279) notes that researchers may opt for interviews based on the assumption that teachers' 'beliefs can be articulated orally and that teachers are able to provide a verbal account of the cognitions underpinning their work.' This, for Borg (2006), may be a well-intentioned but ultimately misguided assumption on the part of the researcher, indicative of a perception of 'interview' as the unproblematic exchange of views which are themselves the direct translations of

thoughts into speech. Similarly, Brinkmann (2018, p.581, emphasis in the original) observes that those qualitative researchers wedded to a humanist belief in the authenticity of the subject often search for '*the* voice of the interviewee, thereby glossing over significant internal conflicts in narratives and descriptions.' As outlined in section 3.2.2, however, I cleave to a constructivist epistemology which considers 'knowing' as a creative process involving the interaction between individuals and the world they live in. Accordingly, to interview is to witness and partake in 'thinking out loud' rather than merely verbalise fully formed thought. This means that an interview is here seen as a creative act, capable of generating rather than merely exchanging knowledge. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p.507) concur when stating that an interview constitutes 'a social encounter, not simply a site for information exchange or capture.' Indeed, first among the quality criteria for interviews proposed by Kvale (2007, p.80), is 'the extent of spontaneous' answers a good interview should invite. As Morse observed, '[p]eople need time to absorb, reflect and *make sense* of a situation – and sometimes this occurs even during the interview itself' (2018, p.807, emphasis in the original). It follows that 'thinking out loud' will result in exchanges that adopt the contours of spontaneous conversation, in its halting and at times self-contradicting nature, but that this suggests deep thinking on the part of the respondent. In effect, in the words of Beer (1997, p.127, quoted in Finlay, 2002, p.531), '[i]nterviews augment experience, rather than simply reflecting it. They alter meaning, instead of delineating it. They change people.' Methodologically speaking, then, interviews conceptualised in this way are congruent with the constructivist epistemology adopted in my study.

From an ethical perspective, Kvale (2007) warns against a naïve notion of interview as a neutral encounter, devoid of personal, cultural and social layers of meaning and 'position play.' Behind the apparent informality suggested by his earlier-mentioned definition of interview as 'two persons conversing about a common theme' (2007, p.21), Kvale below is at pains to point out the unequal positioning and artificiality of the research interview – in contrast with the truly informal, every-day conversation (2.7.2)– when stating 'a professional research interview is not an egalitarian dialogue among equal partners but entails a specific power asymmetry where the interviewer

sets the stage for the interview, controls the sequence, and uses the outcome for his or her purposes' (Kvale, 2007, p.22). This power asymmetry is felt even more keenly when interviewing one's own PGCE students and I sought to minimise its effects by conducting interviews in their settings, 'on their turf' so to speak, and by clearly demarcating lesson debrief from research interview when returning to school later in the day. I had not anticipated, however, that some students would be anxious about contradicting their earlier questionnaire responses. I therefore amended my 'briefing' (Kvale, 2007, p.55), which explains to each interviewee the overall aim and the ethical and procedural aspects of the interview, by adding reassurance that the interview did not have a verification purpose and that I had expected their views on *Interact* to have evolved following their school placement experience. I did, however, have their questionnaires at hand in case I needed to elicit clarification or explore possible changes in beliefs or practices.

Procedural aspects of interviews consisted in preparing an interview protocol (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.367) which included a reiteration of the aims of the research, of the ethical measures to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and an explanation of the procedures pertaining to audio-recording, encrypted and secure storage of audio and written files, together with the confidential transcription that would follow. Mindful of in-service teachers' workload, and with the intention of allowing them the opportunity to think deeply about their perceptions of *Interact* in advance, I had sent them a preliminary set of questions regarding their views on, and experience of *Interact* (Appendix 5) that would guide but not prescribe the interviews. In this, the chosen format follows a semi-structured interview, which 'has a sequence of themes to be covered, as well as some prepared questions. Yet at the same time there is openness to changes of sequence and question forms in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told by the interviewees' (Kvale, 2007, p.65). A semi-structured format was therefore felt to usefully combine a focus on the research questions together with the flexibility to follow tangents or probe more deeply as opportunities arose. Other procedural aspects include the choice of audio but not video recording, despite the resulting loss of a means to record body language, due to fears about the intrusiveness of a video camera and its potential adverse impact on

respondents' willingness to engage. Intent upon fully concentrating on the interaction, I also avoided taking field notes during interviews (Kvale, 2007, p.94) but recorded them instead and immediately transferred audio files to the secure, password-protected Atlas-Ti™ software accessed through the university-encrypted system. Whilst most interviews were initially transcribed by the university-approved transcriber, I repeated the whole process myself for all interviews; firstly in order to improve their accuracy (some non-native respondents switched languages on occasions, knowing that I could understand them, and many used course-specific jargon unfamiliar to an external party) and secondly, to re-immerse myself in the interview experience. Morse (2018, p.807) submits that such re-immersion supports the validity of the ensuing analytical work: 'The bottom line is that to identify the interpretive intent of text, analysts must examine research data in their original form… and actually hear the interview to maintain validity.' I thus rediscovered, as Morse observed (2018, p.807), the intonation, hesitation, pauses, laughter and other paralinguistic clues which underline meaning and can better support interpretation than written transcriptions undertaken by a third party. Regarding the latter, Kvale (2007, p.93) points to the danger in equating the transcription process to a 'simple clerical task,' underlining its interpretive dimension, which requires decisions as to the detail, scope, and verisimilitude of the ensuing written transformation of a live event. In line with Kvale's (2007, p.95) argument about such decisions being ultimately guided by their fitness for purpose, I steered clear of the more detailed conventions of conversation analysis, for example, and opted for a simpler protocol, highlighting paralinguistic features only when deemed relevant to support meaning.

3.7 Quality criteria

In this section, I attend to the quality criteria which academic research should evince, offer a justification for adopting Tracy's (2010) eight quality markers for qualitative research and finally outline the processes I employed in order to improve the robustness and credibility of my research study.

As outlined in this and previous chapters, my study is a qualitative endeavour seeking to examine pre- and in-service teachers' understandings. As such, and as in all

interpretive enquiries, it is confronted with the 'problem of criteria' (Schwandt, 1998, p.246), the establishment of which would help determine the credibility of researchers' interpretation and reporting. All research endeavours demand the rigour necessary to demonstrate their investigative pedigree (Morse, 2018) but, in qualitative research in particular, the problem of interpretation (3.2.3.1) is rendered more complex in that its raw material is people's understandings, beliefs and the interpretation of their experience. As we saw (3.2.3.1), the analysis of such raw material is thus subject to the 'double-hermeutic' (Giddens, 1984), that is, the task of interpreting already-interpreted meanings. To eschew charges of solipsism or relativism (Schwandt, 1998, see 3.2.3.1) and secure confidence in the researcher's interpretation and reporting, the study must evince essential qualities. Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.470) chart the diverse labels these core qualities have assumed in the past: 'truth value' (Guba and Lincoln, 1981), 'trustworthiness' (Guba and Lincoln, 1985), 'authenticity' (Guba and Lincoln, 1989) or more broadly 'rigour' (Sandelowski, 1993) before offering their own 'plausibility.' I am, however, drawn to the all-encompassing 'goodness', first proposed by Lincoln and Guba (2000) and developed by Tracy (2010), for reasons explored below.

Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.472) admit that the above-mentioned proliferation of labels and definitions of 'quality' in qualitative research has led to a 'confusing mess,' one which could 'bewilder those new to the field' (Tracy, 2010, p.837). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018, p.271) also concede that some concepts overlap, leading to 'some blurring of the edges between validity and reliability in the literature.' In adopting Tracy's (2010, p.837) suggestion for a 'common language' to clarify and define quality criteria, I too hope to assuage the 'criteriology' debate (Schwandt, 1996). The fact that Tracy's (2010) article is among the most cited in *Qualitative Inquiry* and that her framework has been applied and tested by other researchers (Gordon and Patterson, 2013) were further encouragements towards its adoption. Tracy (2010, p.837) offers the following list of quality criteria: '(a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence.' In presenting the ways, below, in which my study sought to adhere to her quality markers, I am mindful that I may unwittingly give the impression

that this is a matter of auditing *post-hoc* my study against her list. It should be understood from this and previous chapters, however, that quality is fundamentally an ethical matter, as previously stated (3.2.4.3), and that what follows should be seen as demonstrating a commitment to fulfilling the ethical imperatives of good research which ought to permeate the entire endeavour (BERA, 2011, 2018).

For ease of referencing, I adopt Tracy's (2010) lettering in brackets although not necessarily the order of her list. A worthy topic (a) for research may be one of personal and professional significance arising from 'contextual priorities' (Tracy, 2010, p.840) such as those outlined in Chapter 1 and further examined in section (3.2.4.2) which compelled me to question the continued legitimacy of *Interact* in a changing educational climate (2.10.3). Although, initially, this questioning was personal and introspective, the ensuing research aims to make a significant contribution (f) at the very least in practical terms for my future students' benefits (3.2.4.3). Wider contribution to the field beyond the confines of my PGCE MFL cohort would partly be achieved through resonance (e) whereby the reader may find echoes with and derive insights into their own situation on the basis of the present thesis. Encouraging responses to my presentations of preliminary findings to colleagues at in-house research events and to a wider audience at the International Professional Development Association conference (IPDA, Stirling, Oct 2016) lead me to believe that this was the case for the audience concerned.

Meaningful coherence (h) is a measure of the theoretical and methodological congruence between the research aims and the methods employed. Ultimately, the reader will be the judge as to whether this study 'meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions / foci, findings, and interpretations with each other' (Tracy, 2010, p.840) to create a coherent and integral whole. At this stage, it is hoped that the focus of the study was adequately justified (Chapter 1) and explored in the literature reviewed (Chapter 2) and that the research design (3.3) rests upon careful consideration of methodological principles (3.2). Later chapters will then endeavour to demonstrate meaningful coherence overall.

Credibility (d) 'refers to the trustworthiness, verisimilitude, and plausibility of the research findings' (Tracy, 2010, p.842). To secure readers' confidence in the

robustness of findings and their credence in my interpretation, Tracy (2010, p.840) advocates 'showing rather than telling [by] providing thick description, concrete detail and explication of tacit knowledge.' To this end, illustrative extracts of transcripts in Chapters 4 and 5 will aim to *re*-present participants' voices within the broader context of their responses and thus mediate against selective cherry-picking of 'soundbites' (Morse, 2018, p.812). Contextualised extracts of questionnaire and interview responses can also be found in appendices 4 and 8 respectively. Credibility is further enhanced by calling on multiple perspectives, participants and research instruments. Otherwise known as 'triangulation' in objectivist paradigms, such diversity of instruments and viewpoints allows for a richer perspective and for a report that is likely to be more faithful to the kaleidoscopic nature of the lived reality of participants. Expanding the sample and categories of participants (3.5) and utilising different methods such as interviews and questionnaires (3.6) illustrate the attempts made to enhance the credibility of the present study.

Rich rigour (b) is characterised by substantive breadth of data and depth of analysis rendered possible by extended immersion in the field and in the data. Immersion in the broader field of MFL teaching and teacher education has been documented (Chapter 2), and so have the details pertaining to 'the care and practice of data collection procedures' (Tracy, 2010, p.841) in the present chapter. The next section (3.8) will turn to a key aspect of research rigour in Tracy's (2010) framework, namely the processes involved in, and the extent to which data are analysed. Tracy (2010, p.841) advocates transparency and honesty when enlightening the reader about the different phases of data analysis: 'Rigorous data analysis may be achieved through providing the reader with an explanation about the process by which the raw data are transformed and organised into the research report.' Such an explanation will therefore be provided in the next section (3.8).

Tracy (2010, p.841) insists, however, that rich rigour is a necessary but insufficient criterion for quality, and that painstaking effort, care and attention to detail may contribute to but not guarantee high quality work. The above advocacy for methodical transparency is thus combined with sincerity (e) as the hallmark of a researcher's integrity. To achieve this, Tracy (2010, p.842) invokes 'self-reflexivity' defined as

'honesty and authenticity with one's self, one's research, and one's audience.' As such, Tracy repeats her injunction to 'show rather than tell,' convinced that it is in the demonstration rather than the disquisition that such self-reflexivity will be enacted and achieved. She therefore recommends 'weaving one's reactions of reflexive considerations of self-as-instrument throughout the research report' (Tracy, 2010, p.842). The initial soul-searching disclosed in Chapter 1, in regard to the continued relevance of *Interact*, was later explored in greater detail in this chapter when confronted with the problem of interpretation (3.2.3.1). In discussing the ethical challenges inherent in being steeped in the researched milieu (3.2.4) together with the positionality issues arising from interviewing my own students (3.2.4.2), I hope to illustrate that self-reflexivity has been and will continue to be threaded throughout this thesis.

Finally, I side with Gordon and Patterson's (2013) only criticism of Tracy's (2010) quality criteria in that ethics (g) is but one element in Tracy's list rather than a fundamental and over-arching concern, as I have endeavoured to demonstrate (3.2.4.2). Tracy (2010, p.846) does acknowledge the centrality of ethics: 'They are not just a means but rather constitute a universal end goal of qualitative quality itself' but her listing of these quality markers is unavoidably suggestive of equivalence and itemisation. Having outlined the quality criteria that frame and guide this research endeavour, I now turn to an explanation of the analytical approach adopted.

3.8   Data Analysis

In line with a pragmatist bent to my research stance (3.3), I outline here the 'eclectic' strategy (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.174) to data analysis adopted in my study, characterised by the combination of both a Thematic Analysis-inspired approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 2013) together with the application of a framework, in a modified form, drawn from McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017). I aim to illustrate below the different stages in the analytical process, namely: immersion, coding, categorisation and theme generation, in order to render my analytical journey visible, as recommended by Tracy (2010) earlier (3.7), and further elaborate on my choice of analytical framework.

In adhering to a constructivist epistemology (3.2.2), I hold that the analytic process, that is, the 'systematic search for meaning' (Hatch, 2002, p.148, quoted in Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.435) requires the active involvement and subjectivity of the researcher in constructing rather than discovering meaning. Indeed, Braun and Clarke (2013, p.225) compare the process to that of a sculptor working creatively but within the parameters set by the raw material and available tools as well as his or her imagination and intentions. Since, as already mentioned (3.2), 'different ways of viewing the world shape different ways of researching the world' (Crotty, 1998, p.66), the researcher's vision and filters similarly inform his or her selection of research and analytical tools. This means that the analytic process starts 'as soon as the project begins' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.435) rather than upon completion of data generation, which is why I reproduce figure 1 below to represent the concurrent phases of data generation and data analysis.

Figure 1: Outline of the research schedule

Sept Questionnaires 2013 → January Questionnaires 2014 → Interviews with 3 PG students 2014 → May Questionnaires 2014 → Interviews with 7 PG students 2014 → Interviews with established teachers 2015-6

3.8.1 Immersion

Although similar analytical processes were adopted in relation to both questionnaire and interview narrative data, the questionnaires being analysed first in the sequence (Figure 1), I briefly relate their bespoke procedures below and the involvement of a critical friend for the first questionnaire analysis.

All three questionnaires having been individually completed by hand, I firstly proceeded to transcribe *verbatim* each respondent's completed questionnaire onto a database for ease of reference and legibility. I allocated numbers to anonymise all respondents and kept all biographical information provided on a separate spreadsheet. I then enlisted the help of a critical friend to analyse responses to the first (September) questionnaire. This critical friend was a retired colleague whose familiarity with the *Interact* jargon facilitated her understanding of my anonymised

database but whose retired status allowed for the dispassionate distance I sought. We proceeded to independently analyse the first set of questionnaires and I let her free to arrive at her own methodology for doing so. This was not a systematic attempt at achieving inter-rater reliability (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.269) based on a positivistic assumption that there is a correct procedure to arrive at an accurate reading of the data. Rather, the intention was to enlist a 'sounding board' whose familiarity with *Interact* and critical calibre would provide an alternative analytical strategy together with another possible preliminary interpretation of the data. The purpose was to check for 'researcher effect' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018, p.269) and to challenge my own data generation process in its early stages so that I became more aware of my proclivities and possible blind spots. In the event, the only minor discrepancies in our respective approaches and readings pertained to the terms we chose for our codes and our attention to the different levels of meaning. It highlighted for me the need to combine my initial close 'hovering' over the data with the benefit of a 'broad-brush' approach (Friese, 2014, p.127).

First in the sequence of steps within Thematic Analysis is the immersion process: an active familiarisation with the data, 'taking note of items of potential interests' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.202). The authors call 'noticings' (2013, p.204) the result of this initial immersion giving rise to 'loose overall impressions' (2013, p.204) that may later point to avenues for investigation. Similarly, Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.420) qualify this process as an intuitive 'gut-level' first encounter with the data as a whole. In relation to the interview data, the benefits of using Atlas-Ti9™ came to the fore in this regard since I was able to re-read transcripts alongside re-listening to the audio files whilst using the memo function to capture all my 'noticings'. The process was repeated sequentially for each group of respondents, in line with Figure 1, for chronological convenience but also in an effort to preserve the respective internal coherence of pre- and in-service teachers' groups. Once interviewing began, the same immersion process obtained but gained in speed, making use of some of the codes already established following questionnaire analysis.

3.8.2 Coding

Following the above immersive phase, I initially proceeded to inductively code 'anything and everything' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.206), so that I attached a 'descriptive label that captures the meaning of each data segment' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.421). In this 'first cycle' (Saldaña, 2012), I opted for open coding (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.422) meaning that I 'hovered' above the data with no *a-priori* codes in mind (Saldaña, 2012), capturing largely 'descriptive' (Friese, 2014) or 'semantic' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.207) codes that stayed close to the transcripts, sometimes borrowing interviewees' own words in '*in-vivo'* codes, such as '*it works'* or '*it makes sense.'* This was combined with more 'latent' codes (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.207) or 'pattern codes' (Elliott, 2018) where I attempted to read between the lines in order to 'identify implicit meanings' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.207). For example, 'seeing is believing' or 'biding my time' are attempts to translate participants' meanings in my own words. However, issues of positionality made themselves felt, resulting in a third level, one degree up in the inference scale from the above-mentioned descriptive and latent codes. In such instances, I also proceeded to code for intimations of guilt, face-saving and other emotive use of language, wishing to remain attuned to the affective dispositions which transpired. Therefore, '*it's a bit of a cop-out, isn't it?'* and other similar expressions were equally coded to retain the emotive tenor of the transcripts. The resulting list of 198 codes thus consisted of descriptive, latent and the above 'inference' codes which then needed re-organising so that there was no overlapping codes and to ensure a close match between codes and their respective exemplars in the data set (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.216). This process of 'categorisation' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.426) is exemplified below.

3.8.3 Categorisation

Categorisation is a process of 'tidying up' codes which 'involves movement from seeking the particular (individual codes) to seeking the general (patterns within those codes)' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.426). Although the nomenclature diverges according to authors, with some considering categories as themes (Creswell and Poth, 2018), I will retain the term 'category' for this half-way stage between codes and later

themes, and adopt Elliott's (2018, p.2852) definition: 'a category is a code, but of a higher order' whereas a theme has no code or data segment attached (Saldaña, 2012). In the first instance, synonymous codes were merged whilst other broader codes were sub-divided to arrive at a set of 'conceptually congruent' clusters of codes, meaning that 'all categories are at the same conceptual level' (Merriam, 2009, p.186, quoted in Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.426). This reduced the original list from 198 to a more manageable 52 codes, subsumed within their respective categories. I followed Friese's (2014) suggestion and allowed for a combination of 'flat' and 'hierarchical' categories as shown in the illustrative example below (see Appendix 6 for further examples of codes and categories). Categories are in bold, *in-vivo* codes are in italics.

Table 4: An example of categories and codes in interview data.

Features	Benefits	Challenges	Opinions	Labels	Others
TL ethos Techniques - *Routines*	For Teachers -*rewarding*	For Teachers For Learners	Positive Negative Undecided *It's a good idea but…*	Distinctive *Whole package* Idealistic *A recipe*	*It's what we do* No hard evidence
	For Learners -*Motivation* -*'it goes in'*	**Risks** -*Misunderstanding* -*Face value*			

The screenshot of Atlas-Ti9™ overleaf displays the most mentioned categories together with their 'groundedness' (Friese, 2014, p.32), here relating to the frequency of references to aspects of *Interact.* It demonstrates that routines were the most mentioned characteristic associated with *Interact*, closely followed by its emphasis on establishing a TL ethos. Though it should be noted that the numbers do not reflect the representativeness of each code; for example, there were 32 *references* to positive opinions, not 32 *respondents* who each expressed a positive opinion. Side by side stand *Interact*'s main benefit: 'it works' (50) and its main challenge: learners' resistance to it (51).

Figure 2: Screen capture of Atlas-Ti9™ categories, numbers = groundedness

○ UCA_challenges: limitations~		29
○ UCA_opinions_positive~		32
○ UCA_features_CM: techniques~		35
○ UCA_challenges_teachers: demanding~		36
○ UCA_labels_the whole package~		36
○ UCA_benefits_learners: enjoyment~		38
○ UCA_benefits_learners: motivation~		38
○ UCA_challenges_teachers: assessment~		42
○ UCA_labels_it's distinctive~		42
○ UCA_benefits_learners: confidence~		45
○ UCA_benefits: it works~		50
○ UCA_challenges_learners: resistance~		51
○ UCA_features_TL management: TL ethos		63
○ UCA_features_CM: routines		65

UCA refers to the previous name for Interact.

Although frequency can alert us to prominent features, it may also obscure 'the devil in the detail'. Braun and Clarke (2013, p.230) thus caution against later basing themes on prominence and remind us instead of the need to focus on the research questions even if this means discarding a portion of coded data. Therefore, descriptive features and benefits of *Interact* which had permeated the data do not feature so prominently in the analysis, as Braun and Clarke (2013, p.230, emphasis in the original) insist analysis is a 'selective' process which is 'about telling a *particular* story about the data, a story that answers your research questions.' Guided by the above, I endeavoured to relate possible candidate themes more firmly to my research questions.

3.8.4 Theme generation

For Savin-Baden and Major (2013, p.427), a theme is a 'unifying or dominant idea in the data and finding themes is the heart of the data analysis process.' In their use of 'finding', suggestive of themes lurking in the data awaiting their discovery, they are at odds with Braun and Clarke (2013, p.225) who emphasise the creative nature of theme generation, hence my choice of the above subheading. At that stage, 'candidate' themes (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.227) were considered, based on the above categories and on whether they seemed to capture their 'central organising concept' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.224). By this, the authors mean that a theme 'captures

something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.82, emphasis in the original). Braun and Clarke (2013) add that the themes that are retained are again not necessarily those with greater prevalence or frequency across the data set. Rather, the researcher will select the themes according to 'whether this pattern tells us something meaningful and important for answering our research question' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.230). It is at this point in my analytical journey that, after much deliberation, I departed from the canonical sequence of steps itemised above for the following reasons. My selection of candidate themes and subsequent written report on each seemed to fail to capture the processes at play in research participants' positioning vis-à-vis *Interact* or explain their rationales. Just as codes and categories had remained fairly descriptive, so were the candidate themes, such as '*on the road to and from Damascus'*. Although they said 'something meaningful and important' (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.230) as mentioned above, in that candidate themes captured the 'central organising concept', to wit the journey and eventual stances evinced by research respondents vis-à-vis *Interact*, they did not disclose the underpinning rationales or the mechanisms behind respondents' tales of 'conversion' to and away from *Interact*. Therefore, to gain analytical leverage and pry open the reasons why research participants seemed to travel to and from Damascus, I needed to find 'an approach that draws upon the most sensible and practical methods available in order to answer a given research question' (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.171) as already mentioned (3.3) when outlining the pragmatic 'cast' to my research design. My rationale for departing from a purely Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) approach is thus consonant with the pragmatic stance of this research. To this end, I turned to the teacher-education literature in search of a conceptual framework that might support the investigative work needed to interpret respondents' journeys. In what follows, I explain the rationale for the adoption of McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework but will leave its more detailed clarification and a justification for its alteration to a later section (4.3.2).

3.8.5 Conceptual lens: adopting a framework

In my literature search for similar studies as mine, I encountered a number of useful frameworks that could act as a conceptual lens for my data analysis. Initially drawn to Mutton, Burn and Hagger's (2010) conceptualisation of experience and of the ways in which PGCE trainees in their study displayed 'deliberative' or 'reactive' orientations towards learning from experience, I felt however that their study downplayed the university message since it purposely focused on their trainees' school-placement experience. Their model therefore did not seem to capture my respondents' tales of conversion, of travels to and from *Interact* and other epiphanies that spoke of visceral reactions to a 'powerful' message and its commitment to a strong version of CLT aligned to a strong pedagogy for autonomy (2.9).

On the other hand, as noted in section 2.10.1, McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) explore the notion of 'authority', both of the message and of the messenger, and of the allegiance it may conduce in student teachers. Their framework, outlined in Chapter 2 (2.10.1) and explained in more detail in what follows, offers a rationale for student-teachers' rejection or adoption of their university message on the basis of their critical consideration of its value for their professional development. In this, they encapsulate Mutton, Burn and Hagger's (2010) attention to trainees' attitudes to learning and their professional aspirations but also examine the perceived credibility and utility of university-based training in student teachers' eyes. They thus usefully distinguish between uncritical acceptors and reflective embracers, and reveal a hitherto unsuspected category of resisters in the form of critically reflective but unconvinced student teachers.

Furthermore, as we saw (2.10.1), McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) are attuned to expressions suggestive of 'externalisation' or 'internalisation' processes, meaning that the university-based theoretical message was framed either as being distant from trainees' practices or as central to the formation of their professional identities. This permits trainees to concurrently hold university message in positive but distanced regard, as a conceptually coherent message with little impact upon their practice or, on the other hand, as an integral and constitutive part of their teacher identity. Moreover, where Mutton, Burn and Hagger's (2010) framework had adopted a binary

representation, displaying trainees' reactions in oppositional terms, McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework consists of two intersecting axes demarcating four quadrants (see figure 3 below), resulting in a 'scattergram' of potential positionings. This allows respondents to be situated anywhere, either within quadrants or on their borders, as was illustrated in their cases of 'migrating' (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017, p.56) students and as will also be shown in mine (4.3). Their framework therefore enables both the categorisation of students' responses for better analytical traction and the flexibility to attend to idiosyncrasies. While McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework arises from their study involving student teachers on a four-year undergraduate programme, I will extend its application in my research to the data generated by in-service teachers on the strength of its capacity to capture 'migrating' respondents in flight.

Figure 3: McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) original framework
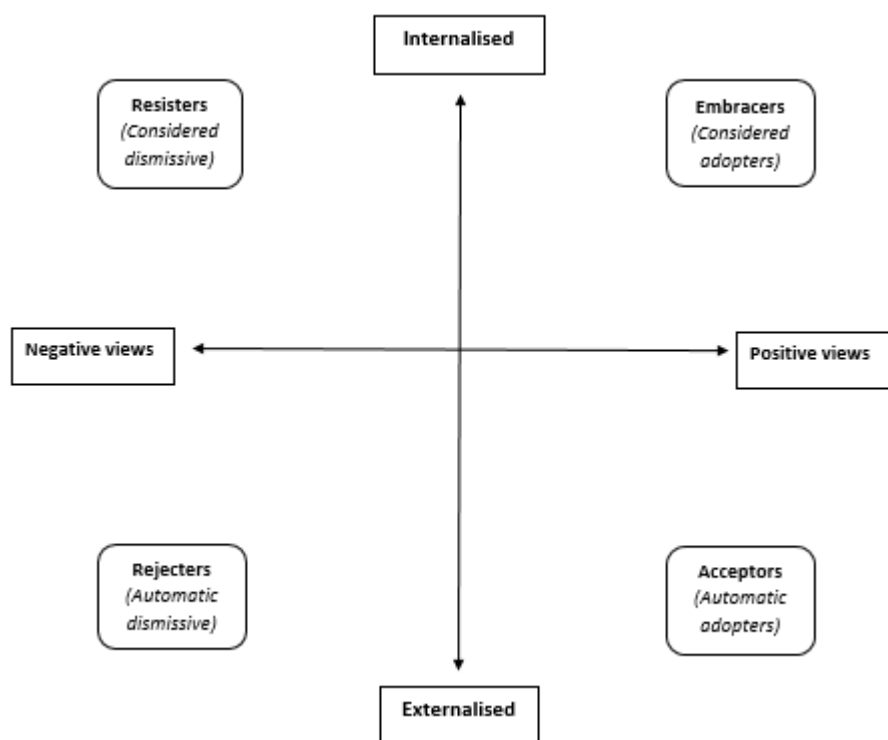
Nevertheless, there are a number of caveats to be borne in mind that preclude the adoption of their framework as it stands. In the first instance, it originated from their own data generation and analysis so that there is a close fit and bespoke dimension which cannot be transferred intact to a different setting. Secondly, their 'institutional

authority' is here more narrowly translated as '*Interact*' and, where they were concerned with the theoretical impact upon their student-teachers' eventual practice, the fact that *Interact* imbricates both theoretical and practical elements (2.9) necessitated some modifications, as will be explained later (4.3.2)*.* Finally, McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017, p.58) stress the 'tentative' and *ad-hoc* nature of their proposed framework, which seems not to have been empirically tested elsewhere in the literature. Our respective small samples of 23 student teachers each should also invite caution as to its pertinence on a larger scale. Neither they, nor I, claim to use this framework for purposes other than the analytical exploration of potential categories of respondents and of the mechanisms at play behind these categorisations. In providing the above detailed account of the ways in which the framework will be modified and utilised within my study, I sought to follow Borg's (2012, p.26) suggestion for 'greater practical illustration…of how data are analysed, with a view to making these accounts instructional.'

In the present chapter, I delineated my methodological underpinnings (3.2) and the ways in which these guided my research design (3.3). A pilot study (3.4) informed the selection of participants (3.5) and of research instruments (3.6). I then outlined the measures undertaken to ensure quality criteria are met (3.7) and closed with an explanation of the data analysis approach adopted in this study (3.8). In line with a pragmatic approach, I made a case for eclecticism in my adoption of a conceptual framework for analytical purposes. The next chapter (4) presents findings relating to the student teachers whilst the following chapter (5) will attend to those generated through interviews with in-service teachers.

4 Presentation and analysis of findings pertaining to the student teachers

4.1 Introduction

This chapter and the next (Chapter 5) are dedicated to the presentation of the analysis pertaining respectively to the two participants' groups, so that this current chapter relates to student teachers and the next concerns in-service teachers. In this manner, not only do the two separate groups maintain their respective internal coherence but the presentation also follows the chronology of the analytical process (see Figure 1). This chapter begins by setting out some of the biographical information relevant to the analysis, provided by the PGCE students who completed the first questionnaire, and then proceeds to analyse the responses to all three questionnaires (4.2) completed during their PGCE course. Against this whole-cohort backdrop, I will later turn to the analysis of the ten one-to-one interviews (4.3) conducted with 10 PGCE students from the same cohort. For reasons outlined earlier (3.8.5), McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework will be deployed, in a modified version (4.3.2), as a heuristic to enable the identification of possible explanations for the diverse positionings of PGCE students' viewpoints vis-à-vis *Interact*. In both the following sections (4.2 and 4.3), 'sensitising concepts' (Blumer, 1954) arising from the literature review (Chapter 2) will be referred to, as and when pertinent.

4.2 Presentation and Analysis of PGCE students' Questionnaire Data

In this section, I begin by providing further information on the number of questionnaire returns and then on participants' biographical data that are pertinent to the ensuing analysis. Subsequently, the presentation will proceed to the analysis of all three questionnaires against each research question (RQ) in turn.

The table below presents the number of returns for each questionnaire against individual respondents. The returns for the first (21/23), second (23/25) and final questionnaires (21/24) boded well for the representativeness of the overall cohort and thus for the credibility of the data presented here (Tracy, 2010, see 3.7).

Table 5: Questionnaire completion.

Questionnaire returns (✔), Non-completion (X), Completion of all three questionnaires (**bold**), N/A: two students joined the course later.

R	Q1	Q2	Q3	R	Q1	Q2	Q3	R	Q1	Q2	Q3
1	✔	✔	✔	11	✔	✔	X	21	✔	X	✔
2	✔	✔	✔	**12**	✔	✔	✔	22	N/A	✔	X
3	✔	✔	✔	**13**	✔	✔	✔	23	X	✔	✔
4	✔	✔	✔	**14**	✔	✔	✔	24	X	✔	✔
5	✔	✔	✔	**15**	✔	✔	✔	25	N/A	✔	N/A
6	✔	✔	✔	16	✔	✔	✔				
7	✔	✔	✔	17	✔	✔	✔				
8	✔	✔	✔	18	✔	✔	✔				
9	✔	✔	✔	19	✔	X	X				
10	✔	✔	✔	20	✔	✔	✔				

R: respondent   Q: questionnaire   Q1,2,3: questionnaires 1,2,3.

Questionnaire 1, issued in September, included questions aimed at gathering more biographical information in relation to the number of native and non-native speakers of MFL. The intention was to be alert to issues of subject knowledge as well as cultural differences and expectations. As noted by Twiselton (2004), the formation of teacher identity is not simply an individual affair, it is predicated upon socio-cultural backgrounds; and the international make-up of the PGCE cohort under study may belie differing conceptions of teaching and of teachers' professional roles (Block, 2002; Czerniawski, 2011). Furthermore, information was sought with regard to respondents' prior professional experience as language teachers or foreign-language assistants, and of their familiarity with *Interact*. The table below presents the number of native speakers of different languages together with the languages the students aimed to teach.

Table 6: Number of native speakers and future teachers of MFL in questionnaire 1.

Native speakers of Spanish	10	Training to teach Spanish	16
Of English	8	Training to teach French	15
Of French	2	Training to teach German	6
Of German	1	Training to teach Italian	4
	21	(Some trainees offer two or more languages)	

As the table shows, there were 13 foreign nationals and 8 native speakers of English amongst the 21 PGCE students who completed the first questionnaire. The majority offer one main language and one subsidiary. Whilst there are only two native speakers of French, it is still the intended taught language for 15 out of 21 trainees. Issues of subject knowledge in first and second language may well impact upon respondents' confidence in implementing *Interact*. The four additional PGCE students who completed later questionnaires (Rs 22, 23, 24 and 25) were all native speakers of English. Further biographical information revealed by Questionnaire 1 is as follows: only 2 out of 21 mention they had no teaching experience or qualification prior to the PGCE course. The remaining 19 had worked as foreign-language assistants abroad or as private tutors to single or small groups of learners. Only one had been employed as a language teacher, meaning she had sole responsibility for planning, teaching and assessment for all her classes, and so it could be said that all but one respondents had never experienced the role of a language teacher in a secondary school to its full extent. Furthermore, for 17/21 respondents, native speakers or otherwise, a TL approach had not occupied an important place in their own MFL studies and four expressed their frustration or regret about this, for example: '*I intend to use TL as much as possible (preferably all the time) – for the following reasons – I studied French for ten years but my Italian is better: why? Because I had opportunities to speak and hear it more*' (R20). Finally, the first questionnaire revealed that 6 students had enrolled on this PGCE course precisely because of its advocacy of a TL approach. I now turn to the presentation of findings arising from the three questionnaires issued during the course of the PGCE academic year.

The questionnaire analysis that follows adopts a cross-sectional perspective, meaning that each research question (RQ) will be analysed horizontally across the three data points, as represented in the table below:

Table 7: Cross-sectional analysis of the three questionnaires against the three RQs.

	September questionnaires	January questionnaires	May questionnaires
RQ1			→
RQ2			→
RQ3			→

This allows for the development of a longitudinal perspective, highlighting continuity and changes of patterns in relation to the research foci across the three data points. For ease of reference, the RQs are reiterated here:

RQ1: What is the nature of participants' understanding of *Interact*?

RQ2: What issues have you found with regard to its implementation?

RQ3: What value does *Interact* hold for participants?

Of note, the fourth research focus pertaining to the role of *Interact* in the formation of the research-participants' professional identity had not featured in the design of the questionnaires but only emerged later, upon their analysis. As previously noted (3.6.1), the RQs were formulated slightly differently in each questionnaire in order to shine a light on particular elements and capitalise on respondents' evolving developmental journey following each school placement. For example, and in relation to RQ1, respondents were asked in September to identify the *benefits* of a TL approach for MFL learners whereas in January, they were invited to formulate their own *descriptions* of *Interact* on the basis of their first school-placement observations. RQ1 in May asked respondents what they thought the *purpose* of *Interact* was in terms of language learning. For the same reasons, RQ2 and RQ3 were each paraphrased differently in all three questionnaires, as will be shown in their respective sections.

4.2.1 RQ1: What is the nature of participants' understanding of *Interact*?

As will be argued below, the overall conceptual journey in regard to this research focus over the course of the three questionnaires was one of increasing sophistication and discernment. Where answers in September were fairly homogenous but rather nebulous in their representation of language-learning processes, portrayed by the code 'learning by osmosis'; in subsequent questionnaires, respondents demonstrated greater acumen together with a more nuanced understanding of the nature, benefits and purpose of *Interact*, and the role it played in language learning.

4.2.1.1 September: '*Interact, it's about immersing pupils in the 'world' of that language'* (R14)

In September, most respondents (16/21) highlighted the **affective dimension** of *Interact* (in bold to indicate categories), which comprises references to the emotional aspects of the language-learning endeavour. Answers were homogenous (16/21) in suggesting that the main benefit of *Interact* is to allay learners' fears and increase their confidence; indeed, the words 'confident' and 'confidence' appeared in nine different respondents' answers. The following quotation broadly reflects the views of the 16 respondents who mentioned the beneficial impact of *Interact* on learners' confidence: '…*they get familiar with the language, get used to pronunciation and intonation, they are able to use the language from the very beginning and they feel more confident when using it.'* Respondent 4 (R4).

The second category (9/21) was the establishment of a **target-language ethos**, which includes codes such as 'real-life communication' and 'legitimising the subject.' A TL ethos was seen as serving the purpose of normalising the use of the TL in the classroom and contributing to a level-playing field where all learners are immersed in '*the "world" of that language*' (R14). Furthermore, for four respondents, establishing a TL ethos embedded in learners' minds the fact that the foreign language was an authentic entity, '*a living language'* (R20) rather than simply an object of study*: "it shows that other languages are also as real and as alive as their mother tongue. It makes the learning process more natural and easier to comprehend'* (R11).

The second sentence in the above quotation discloses a view, shared in this first questionnaire by 11/21 respondents, according to which a TL ethos provides the immersive environment necessary for the acquisition of a foreign language. In this and other answers, a third category comprising **learning processes** revealed a common perception as to the 'natural' process of acquiring a (foreign) language, provided a conducive TL environment was established. This was echoed by R15: '*They learn to think in the TL not using translation from mother tongue, they can pick up language easier, learning process closer to acquisition than learning only*.' (R15). Expressions such as 'pick up' (R15 above and R7 below), coded as 'learning by osmosis', suggested a rather naïve belief in immersion as a guarantor of acquisition:

> *They pick up the language naturally, they can speak spontaneously, they get into the habit of speaking TL in the classroom and are therefore speaking more of the TL day to day. It is a more efficient, natural and effective way of learning the language.* (R7)

It seems that, prior to their first school-placement experience, student teachers adhered to a view of learning by osmosis, meaning that a foreign language is '*picked up*' in a '*natural and effective way*' simply by dint of being exposed to a TL environment. Furthermore, the *in-vivo* code '*it makes sense*' (R6) seems to encapsulate what most student teachers stated at this early stage in their course. For them, a TL approach 'makes sense' because it resonates with their beliefs according to which second-language acquisition should mirror mother-tongue acquisition:

> *Exposure to the language itself in the classroom context; getting used to the language; making students feel more comfortable when using the TL by speaking it … interacting in, manipulating the language, like we all do when we learned to speak our mother tongue.* (R9)

References to the naturalness of 'acquisition' as opposed to 'learning' (see R15 earlier) and to similarities between mother-tongue and foreign-language acquisition may reveal a fairly idealistic or nebulous conception of language-learning processes. The above extracts seem to indicate a view of the foreign language as being almost effortlessly acquired through sheer exposure to an immersive environment, thus justifying the adoption of a TL approach. This is furthermore a view that chimed with some students' reasons for enrolling on this PGCE course, as mentioned in 4.2.

4.2.1.2 January: *'It's not quite as simple as a TL approach anymore'* (R5)

Upon their return to university following the first block placement, 23 students completed the second questionnaire and the above three categories, **TL ethos**, **affective dimension,** and **learning processes** remained pertinent, as they were respectively mentioned by 20/23, 13/23 and 7/23 respondents but each category now gained in sophistication and greater internal variety. For example, and regarding the **TL ethos**, answers did not simply refer to the establishment of a TL policy. All 20 respondents in January seemed to agree that *Interact* explicitly sought to promote communicative or interactional competence - the two terms were used interchangeably – and eight added qualifiers such as 'meaningful, 'genuine', 'real communication' or 'real-life use of the TL.' R23 stressed that *'the key element of the Uni approach is that of 'real communication'. There is always a real purpose behind what is being done, i.e. role-plays are not fake or contrived.'*

Similarly, the **affective dimension** (13/23) garnered a wider palette of codes. Beyond the term 'confidence' that had permeated answers in September, there was now more variety and *Interact* was seen, in January questionnaires, as positively contributing to learners' interest, their curiosity towards, and investment in language learning. R8, for example, noted: '*Since I started to teach them in the TL, I have seen more interest from pupils and they are sometimes more involved. They also feel the 'curiosity' to learn how to say different things.*' For another four respondents, this heightened curiosity gave learners a personal sense of purpose in language learning: '*The TL enriched their classes. It was nice to see them understand and use it for their own purposes.*' (R6). And R15 observed that, owing to the introduction of a TL approach in her teaching, some of her learners enlisted the TL to their own communicative ends: '*Pupils pick up additional words especially when trying to express personal thoughts, wishes and feelings.*'

Although expressions such as 'pick up' (R15 above) still appear, **learning processes** also gained in precision. The rather vague notion of 'learning by osmosis' was being replaced by an acknowledgement that language learning is not as effortless and natural as was once thought. This said, the challenges involved in coping with a TL ethos were seen in a positive light, as the means by which learners '*deal with*

misunderstanding and struggling, which is what happens in real contexts' (R17). A TL ethos can then promote learners' resilience and analytical skills: *'through 100% TL use they have problem-solving skills – they know how to muddle through.'* (R24). It can also encourage them *'to have a go'* (R3) and persevere, as observed by R13: *'I would say that after the initial phase of 'I don't get it', Ps get into the routine of actually making the effort to try to understand. It gives them a sense of purpose*.' Overall, *Interact* in January questionnaires was seen as an ambitious and exacting approach, which made pupils *'have to work for the answers'* (R20) and where *'the pupils feel as though they are being 'pushed'. It made them feel intelligent*.' (R12). In this, respondents depart from Wingate's (2016, p.442) findings, based on her analysis of fifteen MFL KS3 lessons, which showed a prevalence for 'pseudo-communicative 'fun' activities … [suggestive of] a culture of low expectations which poses little intellectual and linguistic challenge to pupils.' The same predilection for entertainment was bemoaned by Block's (2002, p.24) foreign-national PGCE and NQT respondents (3.5.1) who had revealed strong reservations about the apparent 'emphasis on the use of games and "fun" activities' in MFL classrooms. In these January questionnaires, on the contrary, *Interact* was seen as promoting an intellectually demanding approach to MFL learning.

In January questionnaires then, following the first school-based block placement, the slightly vague notions mentioned in September, such as 'teaching in the TL' or 'confidence', made way for a richer description suggestive of an increasingly sophisticated understanding both of *Interact* and of language-learning processes. A sophistication mirrored in the extended quotation below (see also Appendix 4), in which R5 demonstrated his gradual realisation of the difference between a TL approach and *Interact* and alluded to the latter's dialogic and contingent nature:

> *[in September] I think I referred to the fact that pupils get used to the TL as a normal part of the lesson, and not some scientist's specimen in a jar. Things have got a bit more complex having done my first placement… It's not quite as simple as a "TL approach" [quotation marks in the original] anymore; it's how it's handled in the teacher-pupil dialogue – that's where I think the learning can happen. Tricky.* (R5)

In other words, R5 above no longer saw *Interact* as a matter of increasing TL exposure – or even creating communicative opportunities - so much as skilfully managing the TL

interaction to nurture its dialogic potential. There are echoes here with the 'conversational vigilance' (van Lier, 1996, p.177) we saw in section 2.7.2, which is necessary to the development of interactional competence (Walsh, 2011), and R5 captured its inherent pedagogical challenge in one word: 'tricky'. It must be said, however, that R5 was the only respondent demonstrating such an astute perception of *Interact* at that stage in the course. Unfortunately, he was unavailable for interview.

Of note, although respondents demonstrated greater awareness of the complexity of language learning in the January questionnaires, they also borrowed the language of their university input. For example, some mentioned: '[*Interact*] *challenges pupils by making them struggle for meaning*' (R6) and the not quite syntactically clear: '*The aim of being able to transfer the procedural knowledge before the declarative*' (R11). Stylistically speaking, at least, these and other responses (e.g. 'implicit grammar teaching' or 'procedural pathway') stayed close to the original expressions used in seminars and course documents. The earlier emphasis on a language-learning approach that 'makes sense' in that it chimes with pre-course perceptions of SLA processes was largely absent in January questionnaires, leading to the suggestion that this initial impression in September was based on an intellectual rather than experiential understanding of these processes (Eraut, 1994, see 2.10.1). It seems that their first school placement removed some student-teachers' certainties as to the effortless nature of language acquisition. Furthermore, close adherence to the wording of university seminars may reflect these respondents' inability, as yet, to reformulate for themselves their incipient understanding of learning processes based on their own reflections of placement experience. Nonetheless, the greater array of codes indicates a growing realisation in the group, albeit at an intuitive level, of the internal complexity of *Interact* and of language-learning processes.

4.2.1.3   May: '*TL communication with 'eye-contact*'' (R5)

In the final May questionnaire, completed near to the end of their second 16 week-long block school placement, respondents demonstrated even greater discernment vis-à-vis the communicative intent of *Interact.* Its **TL ethos** remained the most cited feature (19/21) but there was a noticeable precision in some respondents' answers,

which drew attention to the fact that they now discriminated between, for example, communicative and interactional competences. Although university seminars had not drawn attention to Walsh's (2011) distinction between the two (2.8), six respondents no longer used communication and interaction interchangeably, as had been the case in January, and some like R17 below explained in detail what they meant when using the expression 'communicative competence':

The Uni approach focuses on communicative competence, which is defined as the way in which people interact to get to understand each other in a co-constructive language building. The best communicator will be therefore not the most fluent or accurate but the one who is responding to what the interlocutor is asking / needing. (R17)

The above expressions, such as 'interact', 'co-constructive' and the need for responsiveness allude to a better appreciation of the dialogic nature of the *Interact* classroom. Further responses referred to the *'time and space'* (R23) that *Interact* ought to provide to allow learners to '*use the language for their own individual purposes*' and partake in '*conversations*' (R23) whilst others pointedly focused on the fact that, as van Lier (1996) had argued (2.7.1.2), a communicative classroom context could be contrived whereas *Interact* aimed to provide genuine interactional opportunities. According to R5: '*This doesn't imply a re-creation of the kinds of contexts they'll meet outside the classroom: it means creating interactional situations*' (R5). In this, he echoed Harris *et al*.'s (2001, p.2) earlier criticism (2.7.1.2) of the artificiality involved in turning the MFL classroom into the 'railway station or the dinner table' and demonstrated his understanding of the MFL classroom as constituting a legitimate focus for interaction (van Lier, 1996; Richards, 2006; Ushioda, 2011). Indeed, R5 took the time to write at length about the difference and it is worth reproducing his extended quotation below firstly because, from outlier in January, his position in May became more representative of the cohort's view on *Interact* but also because his astute and idiosyncratic use of imagery (e.g. 'eye-contact') neatly captured the essence of *Interact:*

I hear a lot of colleagues using the phrase 'CLT' synonymously with the approach advocated by [Uni]. It's not, I don't think. What's true is that there's a clear philosophy driving the course teaching, and it's a communicative

philosophy, but my impression is that it's a responsive philosophy. As in the teaching profession, the approach has probably evolved with time. It advocates TL communication with 'eye-contact', so to speak, facilitating real-life communication, with emotion and argument at its centre, since that is the purpose of language in the contexts our pupils are likely to need it (dialogue). (R5)

The discussion (Chapter 6) will return to this quotation and examine it in more detail with reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 but, at this stage, it serves to illustrate a clearer understanding of the complex nature of language learning and of *Interact's* role in this. It also demonstrates an understanding of the demands *Interact* makes of language teachers in requiring their conversational vigilance (van Lier, 1996, see 2.7.2), their responsiveness and their commitment to creating an interactional ethos (Walsh, 2011) as noted in Chapter 2. These demands will be examined further in answers to RQ2 (4.2.2).

With regard to the **affective dimension** and to student-teachers' perceptions of **learning processes**, the same trends obtained in May: responses suggested greater variety and discernment in the ways that they considered not only what *Interact* was - and whether it aligned or not with CLT (see R5 above) - but also what it sought to do, why and how. In line with January answers, respondents in May viewed language learning as an arduous process but one that continued to be helped rather than hindered by a TL approach in that the latter promotes learners' confidence (8/21) and resilience (6/21). Additionally, however, there were more references in this final questionnaire to the fact that a TL ethos confronted learners with the need to '*figure out rules for themselves*' (R3), '*cobble together new language'* (R24) and '*use the language independently'* (R21) as well as six explicit references to the role that '*spontaneity*' can play in sustaining learners' motivation and providing them with a sense of enjoyment and achievement. Furthermore, some 'identity work' can be surmised from R15, who favourably contrasted *Interact's* purpose as being '*finding one's own voice in the foreign language*' against '*learning impersonal bits of language*.' This resonates with Legenhausen's (1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14) argument in favour of letting learners 'speak as themselves' (2.7.1.1). One needs to bear in mind, however, that the focus on 'purpose' in the phrasing of RQ1 in the May

questionnaire may have steered responses towards describing *Interact's* intentions rather than reflect the reality of respondents' classroom observations and practices; this reality comes to the fore when analysing answers to RQ2 (4.2.2).

On a final note before turning to an examination of RQ2 answers, it had been suggested that, in January, some trainees had borrowed the words of university input to describe learning processes, for instance 'struggling to arrive at meaning' or 'procedural before declarative', and the hypothesis was that some had not yet reformulated their intuitive understanding in their own words. In the final questionnaire, the paucity of borrowings from literature or university seminars was notable and words such as 'declarative' or 'procedural' had disappeared. Instead, as R5 demonstrated above, respondents seemed to go to great lengths to explain exactly what they meant and, to echo R15 above, succeeded in finding their own voices.

In summary of answers to RQ1 (*What is the nature of participants' understanding of Interact?*), an initial belief in the notion of 'learning by osmosis' paved the way for PGCE students' adherence to *Interact* on grounds that '*it makes sense.*' Subsequent school placements put paid to this naiveté and made way for a more astute discernment about the actual arduous nature of language learning and of *Interact's* valuable contribution to it. Responses captured the benefits of a TL approach not only on learners' overall confidence and resourcefulness but also on their curiosity and creative linguistic appropriation. The '*tricky*' implication then lies in establishing a genuine interactional ethos rather than a contrived communicative context and therefore in learning to teach with '*eye-contact'* (R5).

4.2.2   RQ2: What issues have you found with regard to its implementation?

In our previous discussion on the theory-practice divide (2.10.1), Eraut (1994, p.33) was referred to have claimed that 'it is experience, even in the form of first-time application of a new idea, that confers meaning to the idea.' In the present section, I aim to examine the interplay between application and idea, that is, between student-teachers' implementation of *Interact* and the meaning they derived from this experience. RQ2 therefore attempts to probe student-teachers' practical experience

and pave the way for further exploration, under RQ3, of its impact on their stance vis-à-vis *Interact*.

The PGCE students' intellectual journey exemplified in 4.2.1 above, and which points to a more fine-grained conceptual understanding of language learning and of *Interact's* potential contribution to it, is mirrored below in the experiential journey travelled. From tentative to more assured self-efficacy, the arc traces student-teachers' growth in self-confidence and their greater appreciation of the nature of their roles as MFL teachers. It therefore illustrates the importance of practical experience in making sense of *Interact* (Eraut, 1994) but also in making sense of what it means to be a teacher (Korthagen, 2010). This more situated yet expanded understanding of the professional obligations of (MFL) teachers presents student teachers with a dilemma regarding their aspirations to becoming an *Interact* practitioner. I will argue below, however, that this dilemma may be profitable in terms of enabling student teachers to develop a sense of agency and of professional identity.

As mentioned earlier (3.6.1), RQ2, as with the other research questions, was phrased differently in all three questionnaires to reflect student-teachers' school-based experience. In September, for example, the point of view was speculative since they had yet to implement *Interact* in school. They were instead to envisage scenarios that might impede the application of *Interact*, whereas in January and May they were invited to relay issues they had encountered. These issues had a telling impact on ensuing arcs. Whilst answers to RQ1 had remained fairly homogenous even as they gained in precision over the course of the three questionnaires, the differing school placements experienced by each student gave rise to a greater variety of individual trajectories. It is as if school experience acted as a prism, scattering initial singular pathways. The analytical challenge then lay in attempting to discern trends in the resulting 'scattergram' whilst remaining true to the unique experiences and voices of individual respondents. This also explains why the analytical treatment of RQ2 answers which follows is longer than preceding or subsequent sections.

4.2.2.1 September: 'At first I was afraid'

Whilst other subheadings are couched in respondents' own words, this one is borrowed from Gloria Gaynor's 1978 song 'I will survive'. Emboldened by Braun and Clarke's (2013, p.259) suggestion that theme names be evocative on the basis of an assumed shared culture with the reader, I chose this line as representative of the overall tenor of the September answers to RQ2. The merit of a speculative RQ2 in September was in revealing respondents' reservations about *Interact.* Indeed, in disclosing that they might resort to English to explain points of grammar or complex instructions, most respondents (17/21) admitted to harbouring doubts about their ability to render meaning clear whilst remaining in the TL, especially in their limited second or third foreign language(s). Thus, **self-efficacy**, or the belief one has in one's capacity to execute a course of action (Bandura, 1997), appeared fragile in the many instances of tentative and at times apologetic language, and tended to be framed in relation to respondents' inadequate subject knowledge or as yet untested technical skills in making themselves comprehensible. Furthermore, for R16, there was a trace of anxiety at being judged negatively in this respect. She explained: '*I am aware that at a PGCE level, this is not what is expected but till I have fully acquired this teaching approach, I'm afraid I may rely on English sometimes.*' Here was a conflation, also seen in others' responses, between PGCE accreditation and the application of *Interact,* a conflation which may reveal a belief that securing PGCE with QTS status was conditional upon implementing *Interact.*

4.2.2.2 January: '*in hope of not rocking the boat'* (R24)

Self-efficacy remained fragile in January but underwent a slight change in emphasis. It was accompanied by related concerns over respondents' lack of status and of ownership of classes, as they took over established teachers' groups in their first school placement but firmly remained 'trainees' in the eyes of all concerned. This led some respondents to lament their limited room for manoeuvre. Arguably, however, this perceived curtailment over their fledgling **agency** may have had beneficial consequences for their professional development but, before expounding on this further, I first explore the evolution of self-efficacy below.

In January, fewer respondents disclosed concerns about their ability to make themselves comprehensible in the TL. Rather, they foregrounded the time-consuming processes involved in implementing a TL approach in terms of scripting what one is going to say. For 7/21 respondents, this need not be problematic: '*It just takes a bigger effort and planning and tons of patience*' (R17) and is a matter of commitment and belief: '[*Interact*] *implies more workload but if you are passionate about teaching, there's no problem*' (R18). However, a further five expressed their concerns in a more negative light: '*It is exhausting! And requires huge amounts of planning time to get it right*' (R16), echoed by R4: '*In my opinion, teaching in the TL can be very tiring… it definitely takes a long time.*' This led R24 to ask herself whether she would be willing to commit to it: '*It's tiring. You always have to be 'on'. You can't have a down lesson. You give everything. Is it sustainable?*' She added in the same sentence: '*On the other hand, pupils know how to cope when they don't understand*' and thus laid bare her dilemma towards adopting an approach that promoted learners' resourcefulness yet demanded self-sacrifices in terms of time and energy. The acute realisation of the physical and mental resources required by *Interact* led some respondents to question their self-efficacy but not in terms of their technical skills anymore so much as their willingness to commit to such an approach.

The above issues with **self-efficacy** were further compounded by the ambiguous status of PGCE trainees. Not fully qualified nor legally employed yet with a duty of care and teaching responsibilities towards their pupils, trainees found themselves betwixt and between. As R24 put it: '*It's just that, when they aren't your classes and they know you're a trainee, it can be hard to implement things.*' Whether they were placed in MFL departments that advocated or decried *Interact,* taking over established teachers' classes meant engaging in the diplomatic work needed to please different clienteles, including pupils, class teachers, subject mentors as well as their allocated university visiting tutors. Self-efficacy then became a matter of judiciously selecting one's priorities, a thorny problem when '*You feel stuck between the Uni and the school and what you think!*' (R24).

As noted in the introduction to this section (4.2.2), schools differed in their stances on *Interact* and this had a telling impact on trainees' experience. The five trainees who

found themselves in hospitable hands enjoyed a seamless transition between university and first school placement, leading some to put 'not applicable' in answer to RQ2, thus suggesting there had been no issue with the implementation of *Interact*. R7 added the following explanation: '*In my first placement I adhered to all of these* [referring to features of Interact] *as that was what the placement school demanded*' (R7). This congruence (Darling-Hammond, 2006; see 2.10.2) between university input and school experience was, however, problematic for R24, who felt lulled into a false sense of competence:

> *At this point, I know I often simply imitate good practice. I worry I'll be moulded by a second placement that doesn't use the TL in hope of not rocking the boat. On the other hand, I can't imagine myself as a teacher who doesn't teach in TL.* (R24)

She demonstrated in the above extract an awareness that '*simply imitating good practice*' (here equated with *Interact)* may not necessarily lead to her becoming a competent MFL teacher. Indeed, if robbed of support in her second placement, she feared she might not be able to realise her 'imagined' self (Barkhuizen, 2016) as a TL teacher. Both R7 and R24 evinced, here and in other answers, a realisation that their *Interact*-inspired teaching skills may not so easily transfer across to less amenable school contexts. Furthermore, they perceived that simply imitating good practice may suppress their inchoate pedagogical philosophy. In other words, they were not asked to take a stance nor required to discover for themselves what this pedagogical philosophy might be. Those schools that were supportive of *Interact* may then unwittingly have failed to open trainees' horizons to other ways of teaching MFL. In so doing, they could have deprived trainees of the opportunity to question their beliefs and take positions. In effect, for these two trainees, the debate over the legitimacy of *Interact* – if there had ever been one - had been resolved for them.

Conversely, the benefit of less hospitable environments, in the form of strong resistance to a TL ethos for example, lay in presenting the above debate for trainees' consideration. For the six respondents to whom this applied, the debate and its resolution followed different routes. R3 took the challenge in her stride: '*I think it's difficult to change a student's mindset if they have been taught using a mixture of TL*

and English … This isn't really a constraint though, it's more of an obstacle.' Similarly, R16 responded flexibly to contextual cues that let her persevere with one class and abandon *Interact* with another:

> *Yr8 class less than receptive to the issue in the first instance: 'too hard'. Built up TL use with them over time – this worked really well but I had to be consistent with them or they skipped back. Yr11 simply not interested – teacher wouldn't have supported the use – would have turned them off completely.* (R16)

In the above selection of strategies by R3 and R16, one may detect burgeoning signs of **agency** defined as the capacity to mobilise one's energy and attention in pursuit of a course of action (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2017). Yet, confronting resistance to a TL ethos proved too strong a dilemma for some, who felt the full weight of judgement:

> *Also, as a trainee, being observed and evaluated by teachers that do not adhere to the use of the TL in class for communication put some extra pressure on my shoulders because I know that they see my pupils' 'struggle at meaning' as a major negative point, and they will include it in my evaluation of my teaching, where I wish they'd focus on other aspects.* (R13)

Despite her declared wish to implement *Interact,* R13 indicated above and elsewhere that the decision rested ultimately with the MFL department and not with her, in clear abnegation of personal agency.

4.2.2.3   May: '*I don't have time'* (R2)

To contextualise responses to the third questionnaire, it is useful to know that the longer second placement, from February to June, entailed a change of school as well as an increase in student-teachers' timetables and responsibilities. Whereas the first placement timetable focused on beginners' classes, in their second school experience student teachers also inherited older classes (14 to 16 year olds), later in the school year, some of which would have become accustomed, as D'Arcy noted (2006), to a more traditional approach to teaching MFL, which relies on English as the main means of communication and closely adheres to the set curriculum. This presented a larger number of respondents with the choice of whether to implement *Interact* if and when confronted with classes unfamiliar with a TL approach. Indeed, this was the case for

13/21 who reported strong negative first impressions - '*they despise… languages*' (R21) - due to resentment by learners at being made to study a foreign language for their GCSE examination or disengagement by those classes who have been allowed to opt out of further MFL study. Heightened awareness of examination pressures and of the accountability agenda (c.f. 2.10.3), of time constraints and of the need to cover the MFL curriculum permeated the final questionnaire answers with concomitant consequences on respondents' perception of the role of MFL teachers.

Whilst there were still three cases of potentially 'coercive' practices: '*I have to do everything the* [*Interact*] *way*' (R1), which as we saw earlier (4.4.2.2) could suppress students' professional development, most trainees (18/21) reported being given and actually exercising a choice as to whether to implement *Interact*. Accompanying this freedom was a noticeable change in tone, from hesitant expressions in previous questionnaires ('*I must admit, I fear, I'm afraid, I will try my best*') to more assertive language ('*I think, I feel, I see that, I believe*'), appearing to indicate greater agency on their part. **Agency**, however, can be exercised in different ways and for different ends, as argued below.

For 10/21 student teachers, a lack of existing TL policy was no impediment to establishing their own, albeit with younger year groups, as R2 explained: '*Yr7Fr: they were not used to be taught in the TL. As time went on, I introduced routines and explanations in 'simple French'. Now they are more used to it and also interact in French*' (R2). And R8 persisted despite initial adverse reactions: '*some of these classes were not used to French and just put some strange faces to me. I think they are now more used to the TL*' (R8). The reasons for respondents' willingness to persevere with *Interact* in some situations are explored further under RQ3 but this willingness may be indicative of increased agency on their part. This said, 12/21 respondents also assertively stated that they had to 'cut their losses'. Explaining points of grammar (4/12), curriculum coverage (2/12) and examination pressures (6/12) were now used to justify a conscious choice to revert to English:

> *This group [Year 10] has a very low level of TL. They need to prepare the GCSE final exams for June and I need to teach them all the necessary content. I "don't have time" [quotation marks in the original] to use the TL.* (R2)

The above-mentioned examination pressures appeared to have exerted a strong influence on student-teachers' perceived room for manoeuvre. On the one hand, it seems they had gained in self-confidence regarding their teaching competence and their ability to implement *Interact* if they so wished. Indeed, the previously noted conflation between PGCE qualification and *Interact* (4.2.2.1) had disappeared, as had references to being evaluated for their general teaching skills. Thus 'passing' the PGCE course was no longer an issue in the final questionnaire, completed at a point in time when respondents knew the outcome. On the other hand, however, they had become acutely aware of their role in ensuring that their classes perform well in national examinations. Their image of what a MFL teacher is and does had thus expanded beyond the realm of *Interact,* as they demonstrated a growing realisation of their wider professional responsibilities. It had concurrently also seemed to reduce to a vision of teaching as complying with the accountability agenda (Ball, 2003; see 2.10.3). For all the benefits of *Interact*, highlighted under RQ1, on learners' ability to manipulate the language spontaneously and to invest in their MFL studies, if it was perceived to be a distraction or even an impediment to securing examination success, then respondents felt justified or pressured into abandoning *Interact*. The agentic trajectory of most respondents was thus difficult to discern in the final questionnaire, where the decision to jettison *Interact* may in itself be deemed strategic on their part. Nonetheless, as will be discussed in the next section, some trainees claimed to simply be biding their time and emphatically nailed their colours to the *Interact*'s mast: '*I really believe that taking over somebody's groups does not help. I really think that with my own groups I'll be able to establish a TL policy*' (R14). This was a view shared by 13/21 respondents in the final questionnaire, whose positive stance towards *Interact* and its justification are elucidated in the next section.

To summarise answers to RQ2 (*What issues have you found with regard to the implementation of Interact?*), initial self-efficacy issues to do with the pedagogical skills required in making themselves comprehensible in the TL were replaced in January with a realisation of the time-consuming nature of planning for TL use. This raised questions as to the sustainability of the approach and of respondents' commitment to it. As their confidence in their technical skills developed, so did their

appreciation for the wider remit of the MFL teacher's professional responsibilities and accountability towards a range of stakeholders. Those trainees confronted with a school culture that departed from *Interact* were presented with the opportunity to question their positions towards it. As a result, a commitment to *Interact* was no longer framed as a technical or self-efficacy issue so much as an axiological one. It is respondents' values and stances vis-à-vis *Interact* that RQ3 sought to explore and to which I now turn.

4.2.3   RQ3: What value does *Interact* hold for participants?

In line with preceding research questions, RQ3 was phrased differently in all three questionnaires. As we saw earlier (3.6.1), in January and May questionnaires, RQ3 was further subdivided into questions inviting respondents to both relate their views on *Interact* and give an indication as to their intended application. The purpose was to distinguish between mere opinion and potential appropriation, where the latter would see them adopt and/or adapt *Interact* in their future career as a sign of their identification with it (Stillman and Anderson, 2015). An additional set of questions in the final questionnaire asked respondents to relate whether their views on *Interact* had changed over the course of the academic year and, if so, in what ways and why. Departing from the structure of the above sections, it is answers to this additional set of questions that I relay first, as they provide a synthesis of respondents' final stances on *Interact.* I then analyse respondents' justifications for their expressed (lack of) changes in their estimation of *Interact*, as stated in the final questionnaire, but will illustrate my analysis with examples taken from this and earlier questionnaires. These examples will highlight again the value of experiencing observationally and experimentally (Dewey, 1997) an 'idea' (Eraut, 1994) in order to make sense of it. We shall see below that observing the positive impact of *Interact* on language learners remains its most memorable legacy but that continued lack of self-efficacy and of perceived professional autonomy rendered its intended application too challenging a prospect for some.

As a point of departure then, in the final questionnaire, unchanging favourable disposition towards *Interact* was clear in the answers of 9/21 respondents whilst 4/21

claimed that their position had changed in favour of *Interact* and 7/21 stated the opposite. There was one 'unassigned' as the answer was unclear and none declared continuing to harbour doubts. I now relay their explanations as to these divergent pathways and begin with the 'road to Damascus' travelled by the four initially unconvinced respondents. They point to various reasons for their 'conversion': *'At first, I was firmly opposed to it. Then, with time, I have realised that it actually works, and I am happy with it'* (R10). Similarly, R8 needed time to be personally convinced: *'Yes. I was unsure of the TL at the beginning. Now very much see the value…in other words, it can be done!'* For R12, it was a matter of resilience: *'Absolutely. I was unsure about the effectiveness of it but stuck with it for a while as I felt I had to. Now I am a 'convert' and will continue to teach in this way.'* Whereas R24 needed to see it to believe it: *'At the start I thought TL use was impossible but at X* [School placement] *I saw that it was* [possible]!' The above examples of 'conversion' (R12), although few in numbers, illustrate an expanded definition of 'experience' reminiscent of a Gestalt (Korthagen, 2010; see 2.10.2) which enlists sensory perceptions: *'very much see'* (R16), '*I saw'* (R24) and emotive connotations: *'firmly opposed / happy'* (R10) as a pathway to understanding :'*I have realised'* (R10).

Indeed, expressions pointing to '**it actually works**' (R10 above) permeated the second and third questionnaires and might explain the reasons why nine respondents maintained their trust in *Interact.* These reasons highlighted the value of observational and practical experience (Eraut, 1994; Dewey, 1997; Korthagen, 2010) and, as hinted by the use of '*actually*' (R10) above, some answers conveyed a sense of pleasant surprise: *'they* [learners] *can do a lot more than I realised'* (R24). There was even enjoyment as trainees shared their professional pride in observing that *'they enjoyed being able to say things such as tricheur* [cheat] *about their friends'* (R23). This enjoyment was sometimes couched in effusive terms: *'students enjoy using the TL to expressive effect… they are excited to come to their German class!'* (R7) and the excitement had in turn a rewarding impact on trainees themselves: '*I love the use of pair work and feedback after pair work and the children love it too, and it creates some fantastic spontaneous interaction'* (R20). The affective dimension noted earlier in relation to learners' experience (4.2.1.1) found an echo in student teachers',

reinforcing the importance of the emotional dimension in teaching (Biber and Windsor, 1967; Zembylas, 2005). In the final questionnaire, a noticeable impression emerges that speaks of professional pride, a sense of making a positive contribution to the educational prospects of MFL learners and, in the words of R8, of '*giving pupils an opportunity that I never had.*' Related to the above, another reason behind continued trust in *Interact* was born of 'trial and triumph' whereby trainees reported experimenting with particular features to test their effects, such as team competition or pair work. For all nine respondents who continued to be favourably disposed towards *Interact*, 'routines' played a key role in securing linguistic and attitudinal purchase: '*I will definitely use routines as they make pupils able to use a set of language very quickly. It makes them feel independent and proud and confident'* (R15). Lastly, amongst the same nine*,* there were signs of impatience at being in post and having one's own classes: '*I am still a proponent of TL and will use this much more next year when I am not directed in my teaching by someone else'* (R7). In this, R7 and others revealed signs of projected **agency**, confirmed by the assured tone (*I will definitely, I really believe…*) and proprietary language (*I'll teach my way*) that let them envisage a time when they could finally exercise some measure of professional autonomy.

Conversely, the seven who travelled *away* from Damascus and thus disclosed they may not use *Interact* in future were at pains to point out that they still held the approach in positive regard but some declared a need to be pragmatic and evaluate for themselves its appropriateness for all learners and for all areas of MFL teaching. For four of them, the assessment regime was to blame but, for R6, the fault seemed to lie at *Interact's* door for not aligning with current school culture: '*I think there are limitations to the Interact approach due to the pressures teachers are under to meet targets and to ensure grades'* (R6) whereas R2 stressed that her personal beliefs were at odds with this target-setting regime: '*The most important thing (for schools, but not for me) is to achieve the targets they are expected to. I'm speaking about Yr 10… they "must" pass the assessments. So I don't have that "freedom" to use the TL'* (R2). The accountability agenda outlined in 2.10.3 may then influence admittedly a small number (4) of respondents towards adopting an ambivalent stance towards *Interact.*

Lastly, lack of **self-efficacy** remained an issue for four respondents. R14 revealed '*in my first placement, I saw that a TL policy is possible but it was because those students were more or less used to it. Now, within my second placement, I feel useless in implementing the TL because of my lack of confidence and because of the students. The fact that they are not 'my' groups is a massive impediment.*' Although again pointing to a lack of professional status and autonomy, already discussed (4.2.2.2), as factors influencing her intentions vis-à-vis *Interact* - '*they are not "my" group*' - R14 was nonetheless candid about her own confidence issues. The same obtained for R18 who professed to believe in a TL policy but answered in the negative when asked whether she would adopt it once in post, due to her perceived lack of independence and courage: '*I think* [*a TL policy*] *is not only possible but a great opportunity. For that purpose, I think I need to be more independent than I was at X school and have the courage of changing a teaching style in place.*' Even amongst those seven respondents who declared they might not or would not implement *Interact* in future, the general impression was one that still held the approach in high esteem but felt the need to be more realistic, courageous or self-confident if they were to envisage applying it in practice.

In conclusion to the overall findings arising from PGCE students' questionnaires, the trajectory mapped out above, which charts the evolution of a cohort of student-teachers' reflections through the course of one academic year, falls broadly in line with the reported journey of PGCE and similar student-teacher cohorts in the literature on teacher education (Maynard and Furlong, 1993; Lee and Schallert, 2016). From initial trust in the authority of university-based message (Knight, 2015; McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017) this journey saw trainees as generally moving towards a more situated and nuanced appreciation of the complexity of learning and teaching. We noted in the above questionnaire findings the value of experience in making sense of an 'idea' (Eraut, 1994, p.33) and likened school-based experience to a prism that shattered initial assumptions and scattered individual trajectories. The ensuing loss of innocence required PGCE trainees to reflect on the kind of MFL teachers they wished to become. The place and role of *Interact* within the above trajectories differed for each individual. As we saw (4.2.2.2), if the application of *Interact* was unproblematic,

then it ran the risk of becoming a pedagogical proxy, thereby depriving student teachers of the opportunity to formulate their own educational philosophy. Those for whom the merits of *Interact* were self-evident (*'it makes sense', 'it works'*), but who needed to diplomatically bide their time, held *Interact* as a beacon that would guide their way once they were finally in charge of their own classes. And yet others who regarded *Interact* as an interesting proposition, but not one they would identify with nor contemplate using, did so for a number of personal reasons (self-efficacy, adhering to a different view of education). In essence, the three research foci brought to the fore this student-teacher cohort's conceptual (RQ1), experiential (RQ2) and axiological (RQ3) journey over the course of their one-year-long teacher-education programme. Against these broad-brush trajectories reflecting patterns found in the overall cohort of PGCE MFL students (n = 21-23), a focus on individual profiles afforded by one-to-one interviews will permit a more in-depth analysis of the personal stories behind those patterns. The next section (4.3) therefore presents the analysis of the interviews with ten PGCE students, for a more idiographic and emic perspective (3.2.3) on the role that *Interact* played in the formation of their professional identities. As explained earlier (3.8.), I draw upon McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework as a heuristic to probe into the possible reasons behind individuals' differing stances.

4.3   Presentation and Analysis of PGCE students' Interview Data

4.3.1   The PGCE students interviewed

I begin this section with a short presentation (Table 8) of the ten PGCE interviewees and with a reiteration of the rationale for their selection. This is followed by a more detailed explanation of McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework and of the ways in which I adapted it for the purpose of my research (4.3.2). I then proceed to the analysis of the findings arising from interview data pertaining to the PGCE students.

In section 3.5.1, I set out the rationale for selecting ten students among the sixteen who had given permission to be interviewed. As will be recalled, this was based on a number of factors, such as their diverse biographies (nationalities, prior professional experiences), the quality of their written reflections in the questionnaires, the

diversity of their school-placement experiences and their differing stances on *Interact* as revealed by questionnaire data. In addition, I only selected respondents for whom a TL approach had not featured in their own MFL studies or in their reasons for enrolling on this PGCE course; I thus excluded those participants who could be considered further along the 'insider' end of the spectrum (Hellawell, 2006). This would provide a better insight as to the way *Interact* is perceived by 'true' outsiders, initially unfamiliar with the approach. The table below presents the ten PGCE interviewees and their respective biographical data.

Table 8: Pseudonyms for PGCE interviewees and biographical data.

During their final block placement but before questionnaire 3 (March / April)	
Mathilda R21	British national, limited prior experience as private MFL tutor
Lucy R16	British national, full-time teacher for four years, teaching Spanish abroad
Emma R3	British national, limited prior experience as private MFL tutor
After their final block placement and after their 3rd and final questionnaire (June / July)	
Ceri R7	British national, TEFL qualification and experience
Joanne R23	British national, FLA in France
Tim R10	French national, FLA in England
Maria R8	Spanish national, FLA in England
Rhiannon R24	British national, limited prior teaching experience
Gisela R17	Spanish national, some experience as a primary school volunteer in Spain
Sylvia R4	Spanish national, limited experience of teaching

R: Interviewees' respective questionnaire respondent number. FLA: Foreign Language Assistant

4.3.2 The revised analytical framework

I now turn to a further explanation of McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework *per se,* following on from 3.8.5, and to the modifications I judged necessary before clarifying the reasons for the distribution of the ten PGCE interviewees on the

quadrants. On the horizontal axis are the two poles opposing negative and positive views towards *Interact* whereas the vertical axis is a continuum representing the critical distance with which student teachers perceive *Interact.* As noted in 3.8.5, however, McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) original framework meant to represent their respondents' stances towards the theoretical input provided by their university-based teacher-training course. For this reason, their vertical axis, representing an 'internal / external' continuum (2017, p.53), aimed to simultaneously represent two notions. Firstly, it acted as a *criticality* axis so that trainees in their data who demonstrated their reflective abilities were situated at the *internalised* top end, having appropriated theoretical concepts as thinking tools and, conversely, those demonstrating superficial understandings were located at the *externalised* bottom end. Secondly, their vertical axis also functioned as a *utility* continuum, denoting the perceived usefulness of theory in trainees' eyes. This meant that an *internalised* view of theory went hand in hand with its *appropriation* in practice, and an *externalised* one with a *distancing* of theory from one's own practice. As a result, those trainees in the bottom right quadrant, for example, held theory in positive but distanc*ed* regard, meaning that theory, however informative and beneficial, was still 'positioned as something external to them... Educational theory...was described positively but imposed by teacher educators' (McGarr, O'Grady and Guifoyle, 2017, p.55) and belonged to academia.

Applied unchanged to my own data, the original framework presented the following issues. As mentioned above, whilst McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) were concerned with the place of theory in their trainees' reported practice, my focus is on the place of *Interact* in mine and, as argued in 2.9, *Interact* is both a theoretical and a practical proposition. As such, there exists the possibility that some of my research participants would be both uncritical in their reasoning, i.e. display *externalised* views in the original framework, yet wish to identify with and appropriate *Interact* in practice and thus be deemed to express *internalised* views. I therefore needed to disentangle the two notions of criticality and utility, and opted to narrow the focus of the vertical axis so that it referred only to a critical *versus* superficial consideration. Therefore, trainees at the top end would hold *considered* perspectives and those at the lower

end would reveal *uncritical* or categorical views. Figure 4 allocates the ten PGCE interviewees to their respective quadrants or axes.

Figure 4: PGCE interviewees' location on the framework.
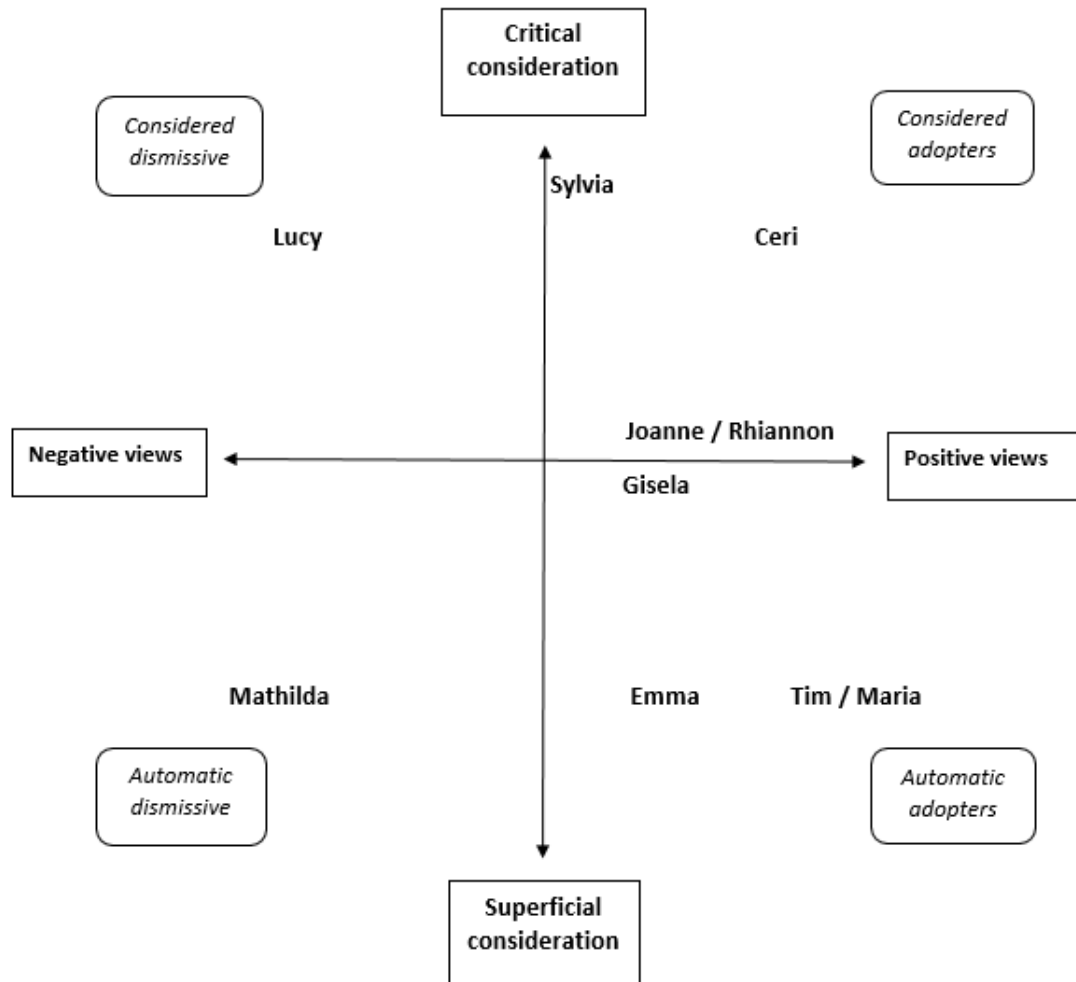
On the basis of each interview, I now clarify the rationale for positioning the student teachers in their particular location on the above modified framework. The sequence below follows firstly those representing opposite stances before attending to those who congregate close to the vertical axis. I begin with Lucy, the only considered dismissive or 'resister' in McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework.

4.3.3 *'I get it but I don't do it'* (Lucy)

Lucy was able to call on her prior MFL teaching experience abroad to relate her understanding of *Interact* in ways that were reflective and articulate. For her, the

approach made sense based on her adherence to the immersive principle: *'On that basis, the way I see it, is that babies have to be exposed. If you don't expose them, they don't learn, you know, the theory's there.'* Although a TL approach had not featured in her own MFL studies nor in her professional practice, she found it a worthy proposition and could see its benefits in terms of learners' confidence. Yet, when asked where she positioned herself in relation to *Interact,* she was candid in her rejection: *'I would have said that I'm not Interact. I can completely see the point. I get it but I don't do it.'* She was then able to enumerate her reasons why and viewed the question from a contrastive perspective of 'real' versus 'ideal'. *Interact* was for her a *'nice idea,'* which *'absolutely works,'* but only if the right conditions were present whereas she did not operate *'in an ideal world'* and thus had to contend with the reality of the classroom. This reality included examination pressures and she perceived her role as enabling learners to pass their GCSEs: *''Because that's what we're doing. We're getting through an exam. We're not actually creating linguists'* and, regardless of her personal views, her role was to ensure those standards were met and stakeholders satisfied. Furthermore, she felt that a TL approach could preclude the forging of valuable relationships between her and her students and was also concerned about *Interact's* demands on her time and energy: *'I'd never sleep!'* However, she admitted being amused at the realisation that she had surreptitiously been *'indoctrinated'* when, left to improvise for an impromptu cover lesson, and upon being asked to simply follow the textbook - a strategy she had hitherto employed in her prior role as a MFL teacher abroad - she felt she had left that previous professional self behind.

> *And so I stood in front of this class with the textbook and I thought 'oh my god, I don't know what to do. I don't know who I am. I can't flash anything. I've nothing to flash. What am I doing?' So there's obviously at some level there's been an indoctrination [laughter] of that approach because the textbook was completely out of it. It didn't work for me **at all** [said with emphasis]. I didn't know what to do with it or how to use it or anything. I mean it's stating the obvious but you know it did feel really alien.* (Lucy)

Despite unprompted claims to being unwittingly indoctrinated, Lucy maintained her stance of considered, reflective and reasoned 'resister' throughout the interview.

4.3.4 *'It's just not me'* (Mathilda)

The key difference between a 'resister' above and a 'rejecter', in McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017, p.54) study, lay in the 'superficial critiques [which] tended to draw upon personal feelings rather than considered arguments.' These personal feelings and intuitive reactions are the reasons why Mathilda is placed in the bottom left quadrant of Figure 4. Throughout the interview, a key trope repeated which pointed to her discomfort: *'I'm quite a shy person so I think doing things like mimes and putting yourself out there for ridicule in front of a class can be quite difficult.'* Indeed, she rather hammered this point home, reiterating on numerous occasions that *'it's just not me, I'm not comfortable with it.'* She also found it difficult to articulate what *Interact* is or purports to do, listing its superficial features instead by way of explanation: *'Like, the mumbling and the miming? Team competition?'* Yet, in her supportive first placement, she felt she had succeeded in teaching in an *Interact* manner and admitted that it had *'worked really well'* with an amenable Year 7 class. However, she found the first placement too short to secure the technical competence and confidence to continue unsupported. This meant that, in a second placement which left her to her own devices, she was stranded with nothing *'to fall back upon'* and so followed in established teachers' footsteps. When probed about what would constitute, in her eyes, good quality MFL teaching, she struggled to formulate an answer that went beyond meeting prescribed learning objectives. Essentially, she conceived her role as conforming to the situated practices around her rather than formulating her own pedagogical vision. In the end, the dismissing of *Interact* had left Mathilda with no pedagogical alternative but to imitate the practice of others around her.

4.3.5 *'I love it'* (Tim)

At the same bottom end of the criticality axis but with a positive view of *Interact* are Maria and Tim, and to an extent Emma. All three demonstrated the same rather superficial analysis and listing of features when asked to define *Interact.* Aided and abetted by two supportive placements, Maria did not encounter any dissonant voices that would shake her belief in the approach. Her enthusiastic descriptions of

successful lessons attest to those visible features outlined in Chapter 2 (2.4) and, when asked which of these she could see herself adopting in her new post, she readily answered *'all of them!'* Unlike Maria, Tim initially held reservations but found himself in a second placement that seemed to leave him with no choice:

> *I wasn't convinced at all anyway to start with and I thought I don't want to be doing it that way…and then I got to that school where the pupils were just amazing. They just had amazing levels so then I thought 'I'm going to try it' and then my subject mentor insisted on me trying it anyway. She said to me 'you've got to do it. End of.' So I said 'OK, let's make it work'.* (Tim)

Tim and others' 'Road to Damascus' episodes (4.2.3) appear to be prompted firstly by his observations of the 'amazing' results of *Interact,* coded as 'seeing is believing', and secondly by a perceived coercion by his school mentor to adopt *Interact.* Coupled with a sentiment that Tim did not know how else to teach, *Interact* had become for him the only model to aspire to and which he hoped to apply in his new post: *'at the same time, as much as I didn't like it, it was the only way that I've been shown so I could just try it… and yeah I loved it and I love it now.'* The reason for his position on this quadrant is that, unlike Rhiannon or Ceri, as we shall see later, the apparent coercion into becoming an *Interact* teacher did not invite him to reflect on his personal pedagogical philosophy. His declaration that he now *'gets it'* but that he may have to *'switch it off'* with some classes depending on their behaviour indicates that *Interact* had remained for him a coherent set of procedures but one that had not effected deep nor permanent changes in his professional identity. This is reinforced by his anxiety that he may *'drift away'* from it after a few years in post and that opportunities to attend *Interact*-inspired professional development events would help him *'stick to it.'* At the end of their PGCE course, Tim and Maria envisaged themselves as aspiring *Interact* teachers, hoping to successfully implement it in their careers rather than conceiving of their roles as articulating their own vision for the kind of MFL teachers they could become. Emma expressed this same aspiration but in more wishful-thinking tones. Although positively inclined towards *Interact*, Emma admitted to having *'lost her way'* in a second placement that had left her to decide. She wistfully wondered *'what happened?... I don't know why I lost it.'* Had she been placed in a MFL department that continued to support this approach, she would have become *'a better teacher'* who

would *'definitely have been using the TL all the time.'* She therefore hankered after that model, feeling it had made her a more vibrant and energetic teacher in the first placement, but it had not left an imprint strong enough to enable her to replicate it on her own. Her less assured tone and her numerous references to curriculum and examination pressures justify her positioning towards a more neutral stance. Nonetheless, all three trainees revealed a conceptualisation of *Interact* as a 'compact' set of procedures that they could aspire to apply or recapture as a whole; absent from their discourse was the notion of *Interact* principles that could nourish their pedagogical reflections and serve their own vision.

4.3.6 *'It's a culture thing'* (Ceri)

To complete the tableau, the top right-hand quadrant is the meeting point between both a favourable impression and a critical outlook on *Interact,* demonstrated here by Ceri's stance. As with Maria and Tim, Ceri experienced two placements that supported and/or implemented *Interact.* Yet these schools interpreted the approach differently and Ceri was attuned to those nuances. Her critical appraisal is evident in her deep reflections about the nature of TL teaching:

> *a lot of teachers just say 'oh I do use Target Language' but I want to say 'yeah but I'm not talking about 'est-que je peux aller aux toilettes?' I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about them **really** using it [emphasis in original]. Not just saying 'do you know how to say that in French?' when they ask for a pen. I think to get to that stage it really has to be a culture thing and something that you're all doing in class.* (Ceri)

Where other interviewees, such as Tim earlier, referred to *Interact* as a strategy that you can *'switch on or off'*, for Ceri, it is a *'culture thing'* that permeates all proceedings and therefore cannot be *'slotted in'*:

> *It can't just slot in, can it? You can't just... Which is why I again got frustrated with the other teachers who seemed to think that I could do it all their way and I could just slot in a couple of routines… I thought I can't do that. I can't do a register routine like it's a reading activity that we'll do one day and then maybe we'll come back to it in a month's time.* (Ceri)

Thus, unlike interviewees displaying a superficial viewpoint, Ceri felt strongly that *Interact* was not an *'add-on.'* To place *Interact* on the same level as *'a reading activity'*

to be used on an irregular basis was, for her, to misinterpret the nature of *Interact* since it ought instead to imbue one's overall approach. What she would permit herself to do would be to '*play with it.*' Indeed, she felt the need to personalise it. She further showed a profound aversion to any form of rigid adherence, stating that in her first placement, whilst learners' use of the TL was to be commended, all teachers followed the same template, and delivery then became formulaic:

> *The TL was amazing, what they'd achieved was amazing **but** [emphasis in the original] every single lesson starts in an identical way. I know they're pushing the routines but it is something they say **every single lesson** [emphasis in the original]. It's like, there's a template and you could learn it and so I could reproduce X's [the class teacher] lesson exactly, as they had the formula for it.* (Ceri)

In her second placement which trusted MFL staff to interpret *Interact* as they saw fit, Ceri enjoyed the freedom to be more creative and hoped to continue doing so in her new post. Her tone throughout the interview was assured without being categorical. She demonstrated a personal vision for what she would want to achieve: '*I don't want to have the same formulaic thing every lesson and …I think when I remove that I won't have such good Target Language as them but I don't want to teach the same lesson every day for 20 hours a week …I want it to be more varied than that.*' In this respect, unlike Maria, Tim or Emma, Ceri seemed to believe that it was for her to forge her own professional identity and, whilst her positive regard for *Interact* was evident, it was refined by a critical appraisal of its principles - its culture - and tempered by an aversion to any kind of formulaic application.

4.3.7   *'I'll do it my way'* (Sylvia)

This same aversion was shared by Sylvia who also displayed the criticality necessary to discriminate between an approach and a method. On this basis, Sylvia is positioned towards the top of the criticality axis and, in view of her positive but guarded opinion about *Interact,* she is placed just to the right of the neutral centreline. In the same way as Ceri, Sylvia saw 'through' the method and espoused a principled view of the TL. For example, Sylvia was at pains to point out that she did not equate 'interaction' with 'interactivity', the latter being associated in her view with the 'fun and games' of MFL

lessons, which did not guarantee that learners would genuinely use the TL for communicative purposes:

> *It doesn't really matter if you use Task Magic, or whatever it's called, to play because at the end the outcome is the same so actually there is no interaction; there are only interactive activities but not interaction, not target language, and this is the way here.* (Sylvia)

Sylvia's initial strong reservation towards *Interact* was mitigated by a first placement where the approach was well embedded and where she could see for herself its benefits on learners' positive attitudes towards MFL. This enabled her to reconsider her misgivings and, in her second placement, to proceed to embed *Interact* with her Year 7 class. She stressed her desire to do so in ways that were respectful and responsive, showing a deep empathy towards her learners. Sylvia candidly admitted that her initial adverse reaction towards *Interact* happened during a day's visit to a 'showcase' school where the PGCE MFL cohort were invited to observe teachers implement *Interact* with their classes. There, she noticed that despite teaching different languages and year groups, these teachers followed the same *'recipe'* and adopted a '*frenzied*' pace, leaving pupils with '*nowhere to hide.'* In her examples of what constitutes good practice, it is clear she would adopt a more bespoke and inclusive approach, respectful of learners' 'transportable identities' (2.7.1.1). Therefore, when faced with her Year 7 class's initial reluctance, she persevered with her version of a tactful TL approach and saw them reap the benefits of her gentle touch: '*their attitude towards the language has changed a lot, positively.'* Yet she believed that, in so doing, she was not really following *Interact* but ploughing her own TL furrow. In expounding upon her pedagogical principles, it became clear that Sylvia adhered to the notion of an approach rather than a method but not necessarily to the idea that *Interact* itself could be an approach. She therefore defended her own vision, stressing that *Interact* did not have a monopoly on TL teaching and claiming she would do '*things her own way'* in as articulate and reflective a manner as Ceri's. Her less favourable impression of *Interact,* though, places her in the neutral zone. This said, in this 48-minute-long interview, Sylvia seemed to change positions, which is to be expected if we consider interviews in the light of earlier definitions (3.6.2) as a site for knowledge construction rather than exchange. This invites caution as to the final

distribution of individual interviewees on the quadrants and further highlights the 'problem of interpretation' (3.2.3.1) and, in our case, of allocating a definite position. For instance, whilst at the beginning of the interview, Sylvia used *Interact* as a counterpoint to her own emerging pedagogical philosophy, citing its perceived dogmatic '*recipe*' as an aspect she was vehemently opposed to, it became clear that her personal principles favoured a TL approach that was authentic, dialogic and pupil-attuned, and that these chimed with a view of *Interact* in ways she had not initially suspected.

4.3.8 *'I'll figure [it] out'* (Rhiannon)

Finally, the remaining three interviewees - Joanne, Rhiannon and Gisela - all shared a positive view of *Interact* but one tempered by a sense of reality and the need for it to remain sustainable, hence their closeness to the centreline. Where Ceri earlier was 'all in' and moved by a strong desire to 'do what it takes', her peers were much more cautious about the demands *Interact* made and the need for them to establish an appropriate work-life balance. Joanne, Rhiannon and Gisela also adhered to a notion, coded as 'horses for courses', whereby *Interact* was best suited to certain circumstances and for certain classes. In this, they partially conceptualised *Interact* as a method to be applied or dis-applied wholesale yet, at other points in their respective interviews, they were also deeply reflective about its underpinning principles and unwilling to follow a rigid template, hence their centred positionings in Figure 4. All three deplored the more coercive practices they had witnessed or experienced, which created a straitjacket and denied them the freedom to think for themselves. Rhiannon in particular associated this with a perceived expectation by university tutors that trainees should apply *Interact*. She admitted '*dreading*' university tutors' formal observation visits, noting that this prompted '*panic*':

> *Oh quick, I've got someone coming in from Uni and I've got to make sure all my routines are in place. I'm going to have to make sure that all my activities fulfil all their requirements. And you don't have time to sit down and plan like 'well, what do **I** [said with emphasis] think it should be like?' And I know that I'll have to figure it out myself when I've started teaching. I'll figure out my own way of doing things but sometimes yeah you do feel stuck. You don't know what you think.* (Rhiannon)

The '*dread*' prompted by impending university-tutor visits saw Rhiannon run a mental audit to verify that her planned lessons would satisfy *Interact* 'requirements,' thus possibly creating a view of *Interact* as a 'stick to beat oneself with' and robbing her of the opportunity to think for herself. It seems that this perceived pressure to teach in an *Interact* manner prevented Rhiannon from utilising her placement experience as a springboard to elaborate her own pedagogical approach: '*you don't know what you think.*' Yet her admission above that she needed to '*figure out my own way of doing things*' also indicated that *Interact* had not been conflated with her own pedagogical position in the way that it had been for Tim, Maria and to an extent Emma. In that respect, *Interact* was not a proxy for Rhiannon's future MFL pedagogy. This was a view shared by Joanne and Gisela, for whom an MFL pedagogical philosophy was theirs to develop.

As mentioned earlier, all three were positively persuaded by the merits of *Interact* on learners' confidence and their ability to '*cobble together some sort of sentence*' (Rhiannon) or '*deal with unpredictable questions*' (Gisela). Their closeness to the neutral centre point is further justified by their more sophisticated conceptualisation of *Interact* than that of trainees displaying a more unreflective view. Joanne, Rhiannon and Gisela were all able to relay those aspects of *Interact* that they were personally keen to continue embedding in their future careers in ways that moved beyond the listing of particular features. For Joanne, it was the '*drip-feed*' principle allowing learners to meet new language repeatedly through routines before being made to study it explicitly. Rhiannon and Gisela would continue to create situations that invited 'banter' as they noticed its positive impact on learners' engagement and on '*the language that they come up with*' (Rhiannon) in such situations. The slight difference in stances between Rhiannon and Joanne on the one hand, and Gisela on the other, places them respectively above and below the critical waterline. This is because, for Gisela, *Interact* was yet another tool in her pedagogical arsenal to deploy as and when she saw fit. This suggested that *Interact* was operating at an epistemic level (Barnett, 2012) that added to Gisela's professional repertoire whereas both Joanne and Rhiannon noticed, and perhaps even welcomed, their slow transformation from novice teachers towards *Interact* would-be practitioners. This arguably demonstrated

that 'knowing has implications for becoming' (Barnett, 2009, p.432; see 2.10.2). Indeed, Rhiannon reiterated in the interview that she could not imagine herself not teaching in the TL. She further expressed her sense of personal satisfaction and professional pride in establishing a TL approach with some of her classes by which, she pointed out, '*I mean they're also using the TL, not just me.*'

In summary, the interviews disclosed personal stories that were hitherto merely hinted at in the whole-cohort questionnaires. They enabled student teachers to voice their candid reactions and internal dilemmas vis-à-vis their university proposition. The application of McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework thus illuminated differing conceptualisations of *Interact,* suggestive of 'method' and 'approach'. It also permitted a more granular analysis, allowing for a distinction between considered dismissive or 'resister' (Lucy), considered adopter or 'embracer' (Ceri), automatic adopters or 'acceptors' (Tim, Maria, Emma), and finally automatic dismissive or 'rejecter' (Mathilda)*.* The following dispositions could be discerned: at the bottom end of the framework, the uncritical adopters or dismissive, in equating *Interact* with a method, ran the risk of mistaking the 'letter' for the 'spirit' and – for adopters - of believing that the successful implementation of *Interact* with all its features was a guarantee of effective MFL teaching. This led them to fear '*losing their faith'* (Tim), to feel guilty when they have indeed '*lost their way'* (Emma) or to flounder when left with nothing '*to fall back upon'* (Mathilda). Considered dismissive or adopters, on the other hand, shared a critical appreciation of the principles underpinning *Interact* but differed in their espousal and, ultimately, in their vision of what it means to be an MFL teacher. Where Lucy adhered to the examination-driven agenda, Ceri wished to establish a *'TL culture.'* Unlike their counterpart on the top left-hand side of the framework (Lucy), those in the top right (Ceri, Sylvia, Joanne, Rhiannon and Gisela) all believed that it behoves them to identify and develop their own pedagogical philosophy.

4.4 Concluding thoughts

In this chapter, I have presented an analysis of two data sets pertaining to the student teachers. Firstly, whole-cohort questionnaires provided the longitudinal backdrop that

charted student-teachers' conceptual, experiential and axiological travels over the course of their PGCE programme, a backdrop against which the following trends could be mapped out. *Interact* made initial sense in that it chimed with student teachers' pre-course assumptions regarding the benefits of TL immersion for language acquisition. Subsequent school placements, however, put paid to a naïve view of 'learning by osmosis' but validated the positive contribution that *Interact* can make to MFL learning. Whilst most eventually came to perceive *Interact* as an intellectually demanding, curiosity-inducing pedagogical approach hinging on the successful exploitation of interactional affordances – '*communication with eye-contact*' (R5) – the realisation of its equally high expectations from teachers alarmed some respondents, unsure about their self-efficacy, resolve or commitment. It remained, however, a conceptually cogent proposition despite the ensuing scattering of individual trajectories as a result of differing placement experiences. These placements lulled some into a false sense of professional competence, confirming their faith in *Interact*, and left others to navigate competing educational counter-currents. The merit of the latter resided in confronting trainees with alternative if not antagonistic views on *Interact*, thereby unsettling assumptive foundations and prompting a questioning attitude towards both *Interact* and what it means to be a teacher.

Secondly, interviews then shone a light on the stories behind individual trajectories and on the reasons underlying their eventual positions towards *Interact*. The application of an adapted framework (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017) enabled the distinction between subsequent adoption or rejection of *Interact* to be framed against its critical or superficial consideration. Those student teachers evincing a rather uncritical perspective were bereft of the need to formulate their own pedagogy either because *Interact* had become '*the only way they knew how to teach*' (Tim) or conversely because it had left them with '*nothing to fall back upon*' (Mathilda). Those of a more critical persuasion were able to articulate their reasons for their travels to or from Damascus. Since they were able to discern the approach behind the method, they were presented with an opportunity to mould and '*play with*' *Interact* (Ceri) or discard the recipe so that they could teach '*their own way*' (Sylvia); and they felt it

incumbent upon them to devise their own pedagogical philosophy. The question remains as to where the established teachers among my research participants are situated on this road to Damascus or whether indeed *Interact* still plays a part in their professional identity. The following chapter is therefore devoted to the presentation of findings from the interviews with fourteen in-service teachers and, as noted in section 3.8.5, the same framework, but with further modifications, will be applied to the data set.

5 Presentation and analysis of findings pertaining to the in-service teachers

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present findings arising from individual interviews with fourteen in-service teachers. The participants were first introduced in section 3.5.2 together with the rationale for their selection but table (3) is reproduced overleaf for ease of reference. McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework adopted in the previous chapter will again serve as a lens with which to analyse those findings but with further modifications (5.2). Preliminary observations (5.3) indicate that there were no unequivocal 'rejecters' of *Interact* in the data set. This may be attributed to the sampling strategy and is not taken to reflect the broader views in the field. Applying the revised framework to the teachers' interviews permitted the identification of similar cases as those highlighted in the previous chapter, in the form of automatic adopters, here called 'assenters' (5.4), as well as borderline (5.5), and considered adopters or 'consenters' (5.6). Adopting a framework, however, necessarily entails allocating research participants to different categories, thereby potentially masking similarities and exacerbating disparities in their respective views on *Interact.* It also 'pins down' respondents into position, masking their preceding and onward travels. Yet a substantial portion of the teachers' interview data related to those travels. Therefore, the final section in this chapter (5.7) departs from the framework in order to honour their journey and, in so doing, analyse the values that they still hold towards *Interact* and the role that it played in the formation of their professional identities.

The recruitment strategy (3.5.2) outlined difficulties in securing the wider participation of previous cohorts, hence the broadening of the sample to include subject mentors. Table 3 below presents the fourteen teachers interviewed, twelve of whom were alumni of the university where *Interact* has long been advocated and two, Beth and Simon, who were initially 'outsiders' (Hellawell, 2006)*,* having completed their teacher education elsewhere. They encountered *Interact* later in their career upon becoming a subject mentor for our trainees. Although this was certainly not a requirement for the role, both Beth and Simon eventually became strong advocates

of *Interact*. There is a prevalence of newly qualified and beginning teachers (1 to 3 years in post) in the data set, amongst whom Ceri and Rhiannon, who had been interviewed whilst on the PGCE course (4.3.1), kindly agreed to take part in this research again. As was made clear in the biographical information they provided, the ten beginning and early-career teachers (from 1 to 3 years' experience) shared a common recent entry into the profession yet differed in their prior expectations and professional backgrounds, with Hannah for example being a more mature career-changer; these factors may explain their diverse positions on Figure 5.

Table 3: Pseudonyms, career experience and links to *Interact*.

Pseudonyms	Career experience in years	Former student	Subject Mentor
Rhiannon	1	✓	
Ceri	1	✓	
Hannah	2	✓	
Rob	2	✓	
Sylvianne*	2	✓	
Joséphine*	2	✓	
Julie*	3	✓	
Marion*	3	✓	
Margot*	3	✓	
Cécile*	3	✓	✓
Neil	8	✓	✓
Camilla	14	✓	✓
Simon	14		✓
Beth	27		✓
Total participants	14		

An asterisk indicates a French national but all interviews were conducted in English.

5.2 Further revisions to the analytical framework

For reasons outlined in section 3.8.5, I adopted McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) framework in this thesis and use it again in this chapter to present findings from the fourteen interviews with in-service teachers. However, beyond the already-mentioned minor modifications (4.3.2), I altered its nomenclature further. In the first instance, the horizontal line was changed from positive / negative views to adoption / rejection of *Interact.* This was to reflect whether teachers in post did in fact report having adopted or rejected *Interact*. A further, more decorative change concerned the rather long-winded original nomenclature. McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) had interchangeably used a combination of 'automatic adopter / dismissive' and 'considered adopter / dismissive' alongside the following synonymous expressions: resister, rejecter, embracer and acceptor. Whilst I too opted for single terms, I replaced the latter respectively with dissenter, absenter, consenter and assenter for the following reasons. Although aware that the terms 'consenters' and 'assenters' are considered synonyms (Merriam-Webster, 2021a) in that both point to a considered agreement, I prefer them to McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) choice of 'embracers' and 'acceptors'. 'Embracer' in their framework was associated with a critically considered adoption yet 'embrace', according to the online Merriam-Webster dictionary (2021b), signifies 'a ready or happy acceptance' rather than a considered one. I therefore chose 'consenters' for its connotation of an informed decision being agreed-upon. I also found their 'acceptor' to be too generic to truly convey an uncritical outlook and I had initially opted for 'subscriber' before selecting 'assenter' for stylistic reasons. The latter is to be understood in this thesis in the narrower sense of uncritical adoption. Finally, I elected 'absenter' in lieu of the more frequent 'absentee' purely for rhyming purposes.

5.3 Preliminary observations

Before examining each quadrant and borderline cases in turn, the following observations can be made in relation to Figure 5. Firstly, there were no absenter or dissenter in the data set, indicating that, with the exception of Neil, all thirteen teachers declared having adopted *Interact,* although to different degrees. This said,

this might be due to the sampling strategy and suggest that those willing to participate in this research did so on the grounds of their positive dispositions towards *Interact.* The framework allows for future dissenters and absenters that may reveal themselves in further data-gathering exercises. Secondly, the ten early-career teachers were fairly evenly distributed on the right-hand side, resulting in three 'consenters', three 'borderline' and four 'assenters'. This suggests that recent entry into the profession need not be associated with any particular outlook on *Interact.* Rhiannon and Ceri, who had featured in the previous data set, have only slightly changed positions although the case of the now borderline Rhiannon will be elucidated in section 5.5. Lastly, further research would be necessary to determine the reasons why all the experienced teachers, bar Neil, congregate in the consenters' quadrant. The latter does not necessarily constitute the end destination of a developmental trajectory since some beginning teachers started their career in that quadrant. A sample of four experienced teachers, however, is too limited in this respect to uncover explanatory patterns.

This next section (5.4) surveys the 'assenters' among the data set; that is, those seven teachers who were deemed to hold fairly uncritical views on *Interact.* It will be followed by an examination of the two borderline cases (Rhiannon and Cécile, 5.5) and of the four 'consenters' (5.6) whose perspectives are considered to be more sophisticated. This chapter will conclude with a chronological overview (5.7) of the journey travelled by all the in-service teachers interviewed.

Figure 5: In-service teachers' location on the framework.
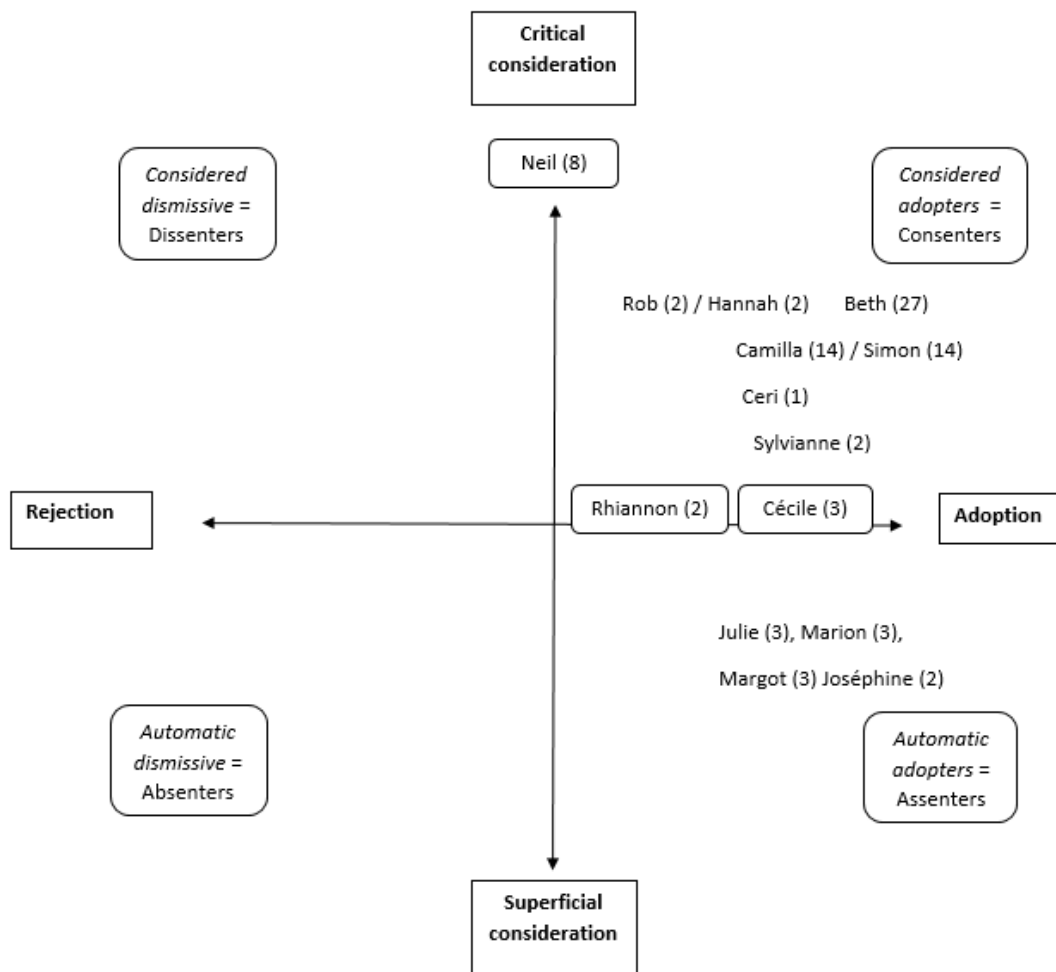
Next to the pseudonyms on figure 5 above are the number of years in a teaching post.

5.4   Assenters

According to the modified framework (Figure 5), assenters constitute those teachers who hold positive but fairly uncritical views of *Interact* and report having adopted it in their practice. In fact, beyond mere 'adoption', it will be argued below that in-service teachers in this quadrant tend towards 'appropriation' (Stillman and Anderson, 2015) meaning that they identify with, and see themselves inherently as *Interact* practitioners. The central argument supported by teachers in this quadrant, and which will be illustrated with relevant extracts below, is summarised as follows: *Interact* is a common-sense MFL teaching proposition in that it immerses learners in a TL milieu. It further 'works' by creating an intensely engaging atmosphere through the use of

theatricality and of 'fun' and interactive activities, which sustains learners' motivation and secures their early purchase of communicative competence. I now expand upon this central argument with the intention of distilling the essential characteristics of this quadrant compared to the next, and I review the cases of Julie, Marion, Margot and Joséphine who all happened to be native speakers of French, in post for the past two to three years.

5.4.1 *'It's motivating'* (Marion)

Regardless of their respective quadrants, all interviewees mentioned that *Interact* 'works', meaning in particular that an immersive TL milieu benefited learners' listening and speaking skills and their overall mindset. Together with respondents in other quadrants then, Julie and Joséphine, for example, observed learners 'steal' expressions said by them *en passant* in order to re-use them for their own communicative ends. They also cited learners' better recall of phrases and their ability to notice and *'figure out'* patterns, and transfer them across contexts. This was made more vivid when contrasting their beginners' classes at Key Stage 3, with whom they could successfully implement *Interact*, with their older and more reticent learners. Julie found that her younger pupils were less dependent on word-for-word translations and were more resourceful as a result: '*now I see the students I had in Year 7 and they are now in Year 8 and they are far more confident… compared to the Year 10: they can't make sentences, they can't think 'oh that's a verb and I need to conjugate it' but the Year 7, they can do that, even in speaking or even in writing.*' Beyond the above common understanding of 'it works' across the data set, however, interviewees in this 'assenter' quadrant shared a propensity to conceptualise 'it works' as code for 'motivating'. Margot highlighted the engaging atmosphere of a typical *Interact* lesson in rather vague but effusive terms: '*Year 7 no doubt that it works. They are still very keen and they do want to learn a lot. They enjoy games; they enjoy speaking the language; they're not embarrassed.*' And for Marion, this motivating atmosphere may usefully combat learners' assumptions about their low linguistic capabilities and pave the way for a more proactive attitude:

> *I know it worked. It can work. I **saw** [said with emphasis] it from Uni and from different schools. Just bring the kids to have the listening and to make sure they*

want to try and motivate them and because they have fun and sometimes they say stuff in the target language and they think 'oh I can say that! So maybe I can try.' (Marion)

Thus, an engaging atmosphere was associated better learning conditions, which positively contributed to learners' improved confidence and sustained investment.

5.4.2 *'It's lively'* (Julie)

Indeed, the 'fun' element above, and other 'lively' activities, permeated all descriptions of *Interact* lessons but were particularly emphasised in this quadrant. They were usually, and favourably, contrasted with the studious or quiet atmosphere of more traditional lessons: *'it's lively…but not in a bad way. It's not like, the children are on task and for me I think it's really lively. That's the word. It's not lessons where they do only writing and heads down'* (Julie). The liveliness of *Interact* lessons was therefore seen as a means to 'sugar the pill' and render MFL learning a more pleasant and feasible endeavour. In a similar vein, Joséphine saw her employment of routines, songs, team competition and other *'fun activities'* as a means of concealing the didactic element from learners: *'so in all ways trying to make it a bit fun and different so they don't realise that they learn.'* For Margot, *'interactivity'* was a key feature of *Interact* and where Sylvia (4.3.7) had usefully distinguished *interaction* from *interactivity* in order to stress that she did not equate interactivity - which she likened to entertainment - with learning, Margot seemed to conflate the two. The remainder of her interview made it clear that she saw an 'interactive' lesson as a positive attribute of *Interact* and synonymous with learning.

5.4.3 *'It's like being an actor'* (Margot)

The inherent 'interactivity' of *Interact* calls upon teachers' theatricality in the sense of exaggerated performance. In the opening minutes of the interview, Margot read aloud her prepared description of *Interact*, which emphasised the notions of *Interact* teachers as actors and entertainers:

*Well, it is a very distinctive way of teaching MFL…. It's no longer a teacher who wants the students to achieve, erm, to achieve such and such a grade but it's like being an actor or an actress in order to **entertain** [said with emphasis] the*

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*students to make them **enjoy** [with emphasis] the subject first of all and I will always remember the motto of the university which was that teachers have to make students thirsty. We have to make the students **want** [with emphasis] to learn basically.* (Margot)

For Margot, teachers should be willing to be '*an actor or an actress'* in order to enliven their subject and '*entertain'* the learners. In this, she opposed two visions of educators where one is bent on ensuring students obtain '*such and such a grade'* whilst the other wants to motivate his/her learners to '*enjoy*' the subject and want to learn it. *Interact* was thus favourably juxtaposed against a more studious and perhaps results-driven ethos. Later on in the interview, Margot enthused about her *Interact* lessons, highlighting the benefit of theatricality on her relationships with her classes: '*I just love the fact that I can actually yeah mime and scream and make students repeat and they love it. When you make a fool of yourself, students love it and I do think it creates some kind of a relationship with them.'* Margot attributed her stronger relationship with her classes to the fact that she could discard the serious teacher persona and embody instead a more energetic and playful one. As we shall later (5.6), this runs counter to visions of teachers' roles and personas in other quadrants. The notion of theatricality was prominent in all four assenters' interviews. As with Margot, Julie approvingly recounted one of the most useful lessons from the PGCE course as being its theatricality: '*Teaching teachers not to be afraid of doing silly things in front of their class. Even when I observe my colleagues, they sing in front of their classes; they do mimes or they use their voices in a way that makes it funny.'* And Joséphine too associated theatricality with effective teaching, and appeared below a little judgemental towards her colleagues in attributing their diffidence towards a total TL approach to their dislike of theatricality:

I think that some of them don't want to look stupid so they won't do certain games or using different voices just because they think that the kids will see them as being, I don't know, not like the usual teachers… I think it's the way she [a colleague who 'only' teaches 50-50 in the TL] believes works for the class, even if I do think that it doesn't work but … (Joséphine)

In this last line, Joséphine seems to conflate theatricality with a total TL approach so that discarding the TL entails teaching '*like the usual teachers.'* She further revealed

she could not envisage that a less theatrical teaching persona could 'work' for the learners. Not only would discarding a total TL stance deprive learners of valuable input but it would also be at odds with the way *Interact* should be performed in her eyes; the latter requiring that one should be 'all in'. In other words, Joséphine implies above that a 50-50 approach would compromise the integrity of the approach and that her colleague's rather 'quiet' persona cannot hope to match the energy and vibrancy of Joséphine's, to the detriment of her learners.

5.4.4 *'You spoke in English. You're not allowed to do that'* (Julie)

Just as theatricality was seen as an integral aspect of *Interact* in this quadrant*,* so was a 'total TL' policy, as intimated by Joséphine above. In both Julie and Joséphine's interviews, and to an extent in Margot's too, there was an assumption that a 'true' *Interact* lesson should be conducted entirely in the TL. Margot caught herself short of stating that this was a prescription: '*we have, well it's not we have to, it's highly recommended that we use the target language throughout the whole of the lesson, not only the teachers but the students as well'* but Julie and Joséphine showed no such reservations. Julie confessed to being a 'horrible' mentor to PGCE trainees who took over her classes but not necessarily her total TL approach:

> *When we have PGCE students, if they take my classes I make sure, I'm a bit of a horrible person to do that but I keep saying 'No! You spoke in English, you're not allowed to do that' or when we have to set the target it's always 'work on the target language'. I don't like when a student takes my classes not in the target language so I'm really all the time 'you could have said that in French' or 'you could have done better here'. So I'm a bit horrible sometimes [laughs].*
> (Julie)

The humour above only but tempered Julie's self-confessed dogmatic attitude: '*you're not allowed to do that.*' Joséphine too prided herself in her total TL policy and her initial lack of subject knowledge in her third language was no impediment. She '*simply made a list of every single phrase [she] used in French and then translated that into German and then learnt it.'* Her 'matter-of-fact' tone sounded, at times, a little categorical, as did her approach to overcoming learners' initial resistance. When probed about the possible difficulties in inheriting groups unused to the TL, Joséphine

disclosed she shared a class with a part-time colleague who taught mostly in English. Echoing Julie's '*horrible*' persona, Joséphine's response below also demonstrated a rather uncompromising stance:

The kids were like 'Miss it's not fair. Why are we having to speak only French in your lesson and tomorrow we'll be with another teacher and we'll be able to talk English?' and I was like 'yeah but it's my classroom, it's with me, you do what I ask you to do.' (Joséphine)

This seemingly inflexible TL standpoint went hand in hand with proprietary expressions, '*it's my classroom*', suggestive of appropriation of a total TL policy as the *sine qua non* of an *Interact* lesson. Further instances of appropriation follow.

5.4.5 *'It's my way of teaching'* (Marion)

Joséphine's resolute attitude above mirrored Marion's tenacity to win over initially reluctant classes: '*I never give up!*' Indeed, Marion immediately added, humorously, '*I tried* [to give up]' and explained that she could not imagine herself not teaching this way. She pointed here to another shared characteristic between all teachers in this quadrant, and which is not so in evidence in others, that of identifying with *Interact* and appropriating it, as indicated by her use of 'my way': '*it's my way of teaching and I'm not going to try to change that because I know it's working so I try to stick to it.*' Marion's ultimate conviction that *Interact* 'works' is sufficient ammunition to persevere with it. In her closing comments, Joséphine was eager to add that she was: '*really grateful that I was able to do the PGCE here and now I know that I could never go back to France and teach in France. I know that I wouldn't be happy. I wouldn't be happy at all not being able to teach the way we teach here.*' These spontaneous declarations of appropriation suggest that *Interact* had become a constitutive element of Marion and Joséphine's teacher identity, which they could not or would not easily discard. Yet it did not have to be this way, since they disclosed in their interviews that their expectations upon enrolling on the PGCE course were to learn to teach in the way they themselves had been taught, and for all the native speakers of French and Spanish in the data set, encountering *Interact* was a '*culture shock*' to borrow Sylvianne's words. I will elaborate further upon this culture shock in section 5.7.1 but

will here address it with reference to the key differences between assenters and consenters.

5.4.6 *'I don't see myself not doing it'* (Joséphine)

In common with all alumni across the teachers' data set, the four interviewees in this quadrant relayed their dramatic 'road to Damascus' (4.2.3) episodes in emotionally-charged terms. As will be elaborated upon later (5.7.1), in the opening weeks of the PGCE course, trainees on campus were immersed in *Interact ab-initio* Italian lessons so that they could experience for themselves what the approach 'felt like' (see 2.10.2) from a beginner's perspective. Most interviewees recounted this as a culture shock provoked by the disjuncture between their prior assumptions about teaching and learning to teach on the one hand, and *Interact* on the other, especially if they had not encountered the approach prior to the PGCE course. In most interviews, this culture shock was couched in emotive language, with alumni recalling how *Interact* initially appeared '*crazy*' (Margot), or '*silly*' (Joséphine). In all instances, this culture shock resulted in some pedagogical introspection before its eventual resolution. A key difference between other quadrants and assenters, however, lies in the latter's eventual appropriation and embodiment of *Interact.* Simply put, in this quadrant, the journey was one-directional, from trainees to *Interact;* the final envisaged destination being that of an *Interact* practitioner. For Joséphine, the process was surreptitious and the transformation complete: '*I was like I'm not going to do actions in front of everybody – it's a bit silly – and I think I was just shocked because I've not been taught that way but, I don't know, it just came naturally and now I don't see myself not doing it.'* Similarly, Margot recalled the experience in positive yet unquestioning terms, the element of 'fun' winning the argument: '*I was expecting to teach the same way I was taught in France, the old-fashioned way, and then we started having these crazy lessons… and it was just fun, a lot of fun… So yeah I did think it was crazy but extremely good*.' The same uncritical stance characterised Julie's transformation, whose faith in the approach was strengthened during her first PGCE placement:

> *The first placement, so it was all in the target language… and the students were very confident speaking and asking questions and never complaining about anything really. They were just 'yes, we speak in target language, why is it such*

a big deal for you?' So, for me, when I spent a few months in this school and I saw how it worked, it was… I was not even asking any questions about whether I wanted to do that or not. It was 'Yes! It works!' so I'm going to try it like that when I am a teacher. (Julie)

A well-established TL ethos was taken as the norm by pupils, and thus by Julie, who eventually did not *'even ask any questions.'* As a result, all four interviewees in this quadrant alluded to *Interact* having been appropriated (Stillman and Anderson, 2015). It thus seemed to have become their 'signature pedagogy' (Shulman, 2005b), their distinctive badge of honour, and this was reinforced by the professional accolades it earned them. They disclosed that they owed their posts to the fact that they were known as *Interact* practitioners and that external visitors were impressed by their pedagogical prowess. Some like Margot and Julie were even tasked with acting as Trojan Horses by their respective Heads of Department who wished MFL colleagues to emulate *Interact*. When I asked Marion what her strategy was, her assured answer was *'to come and watch me; let me show you, like, they need to come and see you teach.'* It seems teaching in an *Interact* manner had earned all four interviewees gratifying professional rewards and gifted them an enduring sense of pride.

In summary, all four interviewees in this quadrant equated *Interact* with effective MFL teaching and tended to adopt a fairly uncritical, if not at times categorical faith in the validity of *Interact*. The latter was portrayed as a paragon of MFL pedagogy, stemming from strong beliefs in its legitimacy as a proposition that 'works' and 'makes sense'. The interviewees' seamless transition, both during the PGCE course in terms of supportive placements and into their present posts, served to justify their adherence to *Interact* and contributed to an unquestioning stance. Difficulties in implementing *Interact* were therefore not imputed to the method itself but to external factors, such as examination preparation, curriculum coverage and resistant older classes unused to *Interact*. If internal factors were blamed, then they were couched in terms of their own lack of experience and normalised as the expected trials of the novitiate since the four interviewees were mostly in their second or third year into their careers. At no point in the interviews did those respondents express doubts about *Interact per se,* suggesting instead its appropriation as their pedagogical method of choice. Furthermore, their interviews made it clear that they were willing and enjoyably

transformed into *Interact* practitioners during the course of their PGCE to the point where they saw themselves as identifying with, and embodying *Interact,* and that this new theatrical persona was deemed a welcome attribute in their respective professional contexts.

5.5 Borderline cases

Whilst both Cécile and Rhiannon were proponents of *Interact*, hence their positioning to the right of the adoption continuum, the rationale for placing them on the centreline is based on their displaying views belonging both to lower and upper quadrants. Their 'assenting' views can be surmised from their willing transformation into *Interact* practitioners and from their adoption of the latter as their signature pedagogy. Yet they were both able to see past the method and through to the underpinning principles in ways that are suggestive of the upper consenter quadrant. In the case of Cécile, however, her borderline location is not simply a factor of the seemingly simultaneous above-and-below perspectives but also the result of actually inhabiting the centreline, as will be illustrated in the following section. In what follows, I will firstly attend to aspects that would place both Cécile and Rhiannon in the lower, assenter quadrant and then turn to the rationale for their simultaneous upper, consenter positioning before finally examining Cécile's liminal location on the centreline.

5.5.1 Assenting aspects

The assenter elements in their respective interviews relate firstly to their preparedness to embody *Interact* and to let it become their signature pedagogy. Although this transformative journey took different routes, based on their differing starting points, it ended with their common willing embodiment and eventual appropriation of *Interact.* Cécile being rather timid, her initial anxiety towards this '*scary*' approach was nevertheless mediated by her willingness to be pushed out of her comfort zone and become a different person. She found the process '*liberating*':

> *it was liberating, really… I think to be a good teacher you do have to not care too much about what people think because you're there miming, doing silly voices… I think that was a real change for me. At Uni I used to hate like doing*

*presentations, I used to **hate** it [said with emphasis] and I used to get really flustered and now … but I think it did bring that out. I think all of us were the same, even people who were shy. I think there were a lot of very shy people on the course and they came out of their shell too I think.* (Cécile)

In common with the assenter quadrant, Cécile above eventually welcomed her ultimate metamorphosis into a more confident and even flamboyant teacher. An initially self-conscious trainee *'came out of their shell'* and, upon being *'liberated'*, found herself authorised to enact a persona she had never suspected she could. Whilst Rhiannon's subsequent embodiment of *Interact* was a less soul-searching affair, she nonetheless arrived at the same destination whereby *Interact* was now inextricably *'embedded'* in her own pedagogy. We saw in section 4.3.8 that Rhiannon had declared, a year earlier, not knowing how else to teach but had also professed she could not imagine herself not teaching in the TL. She reiterated the same argument now in post: *'I just think that that's so embedded now in the way that I teach, even though I'm only a year into it, that I can't see myself really teaching a different way.'* This said, neither Rhiannon nor Cécile displayed the rather evangelical tones of earlier assenters.

They indicated, nonetheless, a strong identification with *Interact* and, in line with assenters, their eventual appropriation of *Interact* later procured professional success and personal gratification. Both credited *Interact* with securing their current teaching posts and Cécile confided that *'it does impress people at interview.'* When comparing her experience with university friends who undertook teacher training elsewhere, Rhiannon commented that her accomplishment drew surprise and praise: *'they couldn't believe that you could get a Year 7 to say those things so I think you do feel quite like…like you're achieving something through teaching this way.'* As had Joséphine earlier, Cécile in her closing remarks restated her pride and gratitude for having been trained *'that way'* and referred to *Interact* as having now become part of her professional 'DNA':

> *It's in their genes – like L. and C's genes [colleagues at school] really, it's all about Interact. I am quite proud when I talk to people about teaching, when I explain what I do, a lot of people say 'oh mine are not doing anything like that' and you're quite proud, aren't you, compared to other teachers.* (Cécile)

When asked whether she would imagine still teaching '*that way*' in ten years' time, Cécile candidly admitted to not knowing but continued: '*I'd rather not teach than not teach like this. I don't think that I'll ever be the teacher who sits there and kind of goes mmh. I'd rather not be a teacher than be kind of like – not a bad teacher but like…*' thus revealing that '*teaching like this*' had become a constitutive part of her teacher identity. If bereft of *Interact,* then she would run the risk of almost becoming '*a bad teacher.*' Furthermore, there were instances when Cécile tended to blame herself rather than *Interact* when external factors or dips in forms caused her use of the TL to suffer: '*I also think that I'm not yet as good at it as I could be so I'm kind of blaming it on myself…..whenever there's a holiday I'll come back and I'll be like that "right, let's do some more!".*' Neither did Rhiannon seem to harbour reservations about *Interact* itself; constraints instead were apportioned to curriculum coverage and examination preparation.

In their respective descriptions of a typical lesson, both Cécile and Rhiannon, in common with all assenters, showed a predilection for the 'fun' factor, to the point where Cécile acknowledged that her teaching appeared to external observers as showmanship:

> *Every time I'm observed people say 'oh I feel tired just watching you.' They say 'you're going to kill yourself' and you know, 'you don't teach like that every lesson do you? It's just because you're being observed' and you're actually no, that's what we do, isn't it, that's what we do and they're like 'oh you're not going to be able to do that all the time' and I think, I find it quite upsetting because I'd rather not teach than not teach like this.* (Cécile)

Cécile above confessed to being upset by colleagues or visitors' misperceptions of her teaching or by their well-intentioned concerns about the toll it might take. In this, they betrayed a belief that her enduring *Interact* embodiment may eventually be detrimental to Cécile's well-being. However, for her, this was to misunderstand the approach and to doubt her professional integrity: '*that's what we do.*' The performance aspect was not, for her, put on for the occasion but rather a core element of her *Interact* pedagogy. The importance Cécile and Rhiannon placed on the 'fun' factor echoed Margot's earlier contradistinction between teacher-as-entertainer and teacher-as-data manager:

Even the parents tell them, French, at first, it's 'what the point? It's hard, what'sthe point?' I think we kind of, when they walk into our classrooms it's kind of, the point is: 'I'm going to be in a team; there's going to be games; we're going to have a laugh; we're going to call someone something and…' It's a whole little world, isn't it? It's not kind of 'oh I want to pass my GCSE; I want to get a job in languages.' I think it's giving it a reason to be in school and I think that's really it. (Cécile)

Interact above was therefore seen as redeeming the subject in learners and possibly parents' eyes through the lure of '*games*'. To '*have a laugh*' rendered its study less '*hard*' and more motivational. And the creation of a '*whole little world*' justified the subject by appealing to the 'here and now' of the classroom rather than by invoking an improbable future. In Cécile's view, rather than a purely academic or certification affair, *Interact* ensured that the subject constituted a rewarding pursuit in and of itself. Rhiannon similarly cited the 'here and now' of the classroom and the appeal of games and routines as strategies to increase learners' investment. She found that *Interact* '*makes my lessons better,*' by which she meant that her learners '*automatically want to be more involved and they'll say afterwards that they enjoyed the lesson … because they want to say that their partner was rubbish or that their partner was really good, so that's one reason why I do it.*' The above emphasis on 'fun and games' and on associated theatricality, together with admissions that they would not envisage teaching any other way, pointed to Cécile and Rhiannon's proud and unquestioning espousal of *Interact* as their signature pedagogy, and thus to their firm positioning in the assenter quadrant. However, as signalled in the introduction to this section, both also displayed perspectives that indicated a more sophisticated understanding of *Interact* and of learning in general.

5.5.2 Consenting aspects

Whereas *Interact*'s key appeal for assenters was its capacity to 'entertain the classes' so that, to borrow Joséphine's words again, '*they don't realise that they learn';* for both Rhiannon and Cécile, its fundamental purpose was to promote in their learners an independent and resourceful mindset. Contrary to assenters, they did not evince a rather naïve view of learning as happening without students' knowledge. Nor did they believe that spontaneity would be the guaranteed outcome of total TL use. For Cécile,

this could only be secured after patient and resolute application of *Interact* and, in the extract below, she detailed her long-term strategy:

I think, the first few lessons, it's a little bit artificial, isn't it? It's kind of – when they speak in English you're stopping them and you're having to give them so much new language… but then you do get to that stage where suddenly they've got that; they'll put their hand up and they'll say 'Comment dit-on and all that en Anglais?' and suddenly you can kind of stand back and let them – they're doing it; you're not. Because at first, you are doing it; you're preparing the whole thing and you're in charge and you've to make the whole thing happen and after a bit, you know, they kind of make it – that's how I understand it works. They're doing it without me making them really. (Cécile)

In the above and at other points in her interview, Cécile demonstrated an awareness of the need for a clear vision in order to establish a TL culture in practice. Underpinning the 'suddenness' above was a clarity of intention, suggestive of a masterplan at play, the purpose of which was to arrive at a point when *'they're doing it, you're not.'* This was qualitatively different from assenters' delighted surprise at their learners' incidental spontaneity, which seemed to be the product of happenstance rather than design. Further testament to this masterplan can be found in the extract below, where Cécile lamented the 'untrained eyes' that prevented external observers from *'realis[ing] what's happening'*:

sometimes, when people observe you, like when you have performance management, because it's all in target language on the slides and we're talking in target language all the time, they don't realise what's happening; they don't realise that that person's just doing really complex sentences in French and things like that… (Cécile)

Observers' lack of subject knowledge precluded them from truly 'reading' the lesson and therefore from noticing those moments when learners depart from the script and *'start putting things together'*:

I just wish they could see that. Could see them having conversations in French and making things up on the board. I wish they could see… I mean it's bottom set so I'm not saying they're perfect but actually I think that's the best bit… when they start putting things together. (Cécile)

Above and elsewhere, Cécile alluded to the careful crafting of a TL culture for the express purpose of eliciting pupils' creative appropriation of the language, as demonstrated in their '*conversations*' and their '*making things up.*' Indeed, it was the contingent and creative aspects of *Interact* that attracted her to the approach in the first instance. She cited classroom banter and the ensuing improvisational skills of some of her classes as part of the appeal. She first saw its linguistic potential when observing *Interact* in showcase lessons during her PGCE course: *'And when you see it in action and you realise "oh my God I can put all these words in and make them say this!".'* The attraction therefore lay in the creative ways she could personalise rather than replicate *Interact*. In that sense, unlike assenters, the final desired destination was not necessarily construed as a faithful reproduction of *Interact* so much as a personalised version.

Whilst this creative potential was not mentioned by Rhiannon, she nonetheless intimated that applying *Interact* was a personal choice. A choice born out of her conviction in the soundness of the approach so that, regardless of future professional contexts, she would adhere to *Interact*: *'now I think if I went somewhere else **now** [said with emphasis] I would still teach in that style because I can see the benefits of doing that and I **feel** [with emphasis] like my lessons are better when I do it.'* Whereas assenters seemed to give the impression that the question of whether or not to adhere to *Interact* was irrelevant, Rhiannon instead concluded the interview with a reiteration that: '*I would put myself more as an advocate than just someone who does it because that's the only thing they know how to do.'* In their common understanding of the complexity of the approach, of its intent and its pedagogical requirements – its masterplan – and in their shared aversion to the idea of replicating rather than personalising a given 'recipe' (4.3.7), Rhiannon and Cécile both demonstrated elements of critical consideration that ought to secure their positioning in the consenting quadrant. However, and for different reasons, I would place them on the borderline. For Rhiannon, this is due to her simultaneous occupation of upper and lower quadrants as examined above but, with regard to Cécile, there was an added sense of 'betwixt and between', for reasons explored below.

Cécile's 'borderline' position was a factor of her candid self-questioning, which pointed to internal dilemmas that might reveal an inability, as yet, to relinquish newly acquired certainties and thus abjure her faith in *Interact.* At different times in the interview, she openly pondered whether her own allegiance may be to the detriment both of her learners' and of her own professional competence. In the extract below, for instance, the classroom teacher in her knew that she needed to rein in her class's enthusiasm yet, as an *Interact* practitioner, she was also aware that those same learners were using the TL spontaneously and with communicative intent:

> *Is it a victory or is it failure when, for instance I've got a really naughty naughty year 8 and sometimes we'll get to the stage where, get to the register and you've got the whole class going 'tricheur! tricheur!' [cheat! cheat!]and you can't stop them and you're thinking, well they're all now saying 'cheat' and speaking amazing French and at the same time I've lost complete control of my class and I think it's a lovely thing because with routines you are giving them the power, aren't you? You're giving them the power of calling each other names; giving opinions on everything and how it went but then sometimes, some classes will take that power and just run away with it and I struggle with a few classes.* (Cécile)

Her opening question above - *'is it a victory or is it failure'* - reflects her indecision and inability to judge where to draw the line between classroom control and TL spontaneity, between a sense of professional competence and her allegiance to *Interact*. She returned to that theme later on in the interview, when wondering whether she ought to persist in the face of strong resistance:

> *the kids hated the team competition – they **hated** [said with emphasis] it and you think 'well I understand that, ok, but it's good and I just want to'… and the kids are like 'we don't want this team competition; we don't care about it, about your stupid points' and it's almost like, do you keep going because you know it's going to work or do you just, you know, it just won't work?* (Cécile)

The internal dilemmas are laid bare in the above *'do you keep going?'* and other queries; and it is notable that they are phrased as questions rather than as the categorical statements that had characterised teachers' interviews in the assenting quadrant. I did not interpret her final question above as a genuine request for advice; I had never been Cécile's personal tutor and her many queries in the interview were,

to my mind, part of her personal style. I concede her questions may have been an artefact of her sensitivity to my *Interact*'s assumed allegiance but I also believe that they reflected some genuine pedagogical soul-searching on her part. She seemed to oscillate above between conviction: '*you know it's going to work*' and a deep empathy towards the above Year 10 class who saw routines as a patronising and unnecessary distraction in their otherwise studious engagement with the subject. Unable to reconcile in her mind *authentic* with *didactic* engagement in the subject (2.7.1.1), Cécile was thus torn between her respect for her students' authentic behaviour as language *learners* (2.7.1.2) and her commitment to establishing a TL culture that would allow them to behave as language *users*. She admitted several times that she could not impose a pedagogical approach on any unwilling participants but betrayed nevertheless a strong belief in the soundness of *Interact* and blamed herself for not being evangelical enough. As we saw earlier, *Interact* being a constituent part of her professional identity, abandoning it would be tantamount to betraying deep-seated beliefs and a newly acquired and gratifying, vibrant teaching persona. Her borderline positioning was therefore reflective of her inability, so far, to resolve two conflicting professional identities, those of the evangelical *Interact* practitioner on the one hand, and of the competent, sensitive and respectful classroom teacher on the other. Having examined the above borderline cases, I now turn to the upper quadrant and examine the case of the consenters in the data set.

5.6   Consenters

In light of the modified framework (5.2), to occupy the upper right quadrant is to adopt *Interact* but to do so on the basis of one's critical consideration. In the following, I attend first to consenters' representations of *Interact* and to the reasons cited for its adoption. I therefore examine the qualitative differences between assenters and consenters' views on why they believe *Interact* 'works' and 'makes sense'. Those differences will again be in evidence in the exploration of *Interact*'s strategies and their underpinning principles. They will reveal consenters' understanding of the necessarily intricate nature of planning and of the conversational vigilance required to exploit interactional gambits. Furthermore, consenters' creative and agentic stance

towards *Interact* will underscore their considered, thoughtful adaption of *Interact* to serve their own communicative agenda.

5.6.1 TL ethos for interactional competence

With regard to consenters' representations of *Interact,* I aim essentially to demonstrate below that they adopted an enquiring stance vis-à-vis the nature of *Interact,* its communicative intent and associated procedures and that they evinced, as a result, a more sophisticated understanding in relation to the above than was the case of their peers in the assenter quadrant. In the first instance, whilst assenters had readily referred to the TL ethos as the most important feature of *Interact*, they had tended to do so in a self-explanatory manner. Consenters, on the other hand, accompanied their references to the TL ethos with explanations that emphasised the appropriation of the TL by learners for communicative purposes. In contrast, for example, to the rather effusive and somewhat vague descriptions of *Interact* by assenters (5.4), Simon offered a succinct definition: '*it's the difference between studying about a language or actually using a language. So the kids are using it for a real purpose all the time in lessons.*' In similarly precise language – and in an uninterrupted and unprepared extract below - Rob distilled the *'functional'* role of the TL and highlighted some of its associated strategies:

> *the key parts to it are use of Target Language by teacher and students and that's important because it's one thing to use it yourself but another thing to actually promote Target Language use in the class and everything that feeds into that so: having a structure of interaction language in lessons that's not superficial, that's actually functional in the class, so things like points routines, negotiation between students and teacher and, you know, questions that help students get things done, tasks done in the class.* (Rob)

Foremost in the above and others' similar descriptions was an understanding of the fundamental role of the TL as the normal means of classroom communication, and of the necessary masterplan to bring this about, that is: the '*structure of interaction language'* that '*feeds into that.'* Rob illustrated this *'functional'* role of the TL by recounting the following anecdote. When three unannounced and high-profile visitors, in the form of the school Head-teacher and two primary-school Head-

teachers, interrupted his lesson, Rob addressed them in English only to be immediately and humorously rebuked by his Year 7 class: *'straight away:* "*Monsieur a parlé en anglais*" *and* "*un point, une pénalité!*"*.'* For Rob, this demonstrated *'how deeply that culture had been successful, where students were actually committed to pulling anyone up on their use of English and have the bravery to do that in front of guests that they might otherwise just try and be on their best behaviour with.'* This, he declared, validated *Interact,* confirming for him its benefits for learners' linguistic progress and positive attitudes. The TL culture was therefore explicitly valued in consenters' interviews for its associated interactional gains, and whilst all interviewees in the data set justified their continued faith in *Interact* for the reason that 'it works', teachers in this quadrant were primarily convinced by its positive impact on learners' communicative skills. Hannah, for example, recalled the conversations she was able to have as a result of the TL culture she had established with her Year 7 class in her first year of teaching: *'That class, by the end, and you know… they were not necessarily the brightest some of them, but they could understand it if you spoke to them in German; if you asked them some simple questions. Not prepared. A conversation, you know.'* Equally, Rob noted the rapid linguistic gains of his beginners' classes, following his diligent application of TL routines: *'by that point probably very, very few Year 7 classes had already got their heads around past tense, imperatives and were speaking with a level of confidence that group were and I put that down to the Target-Language culture that they had'* (Rob). In his more detailed reference above to linguistic features, such as '*past tense, imperatives,'* Rob mirrored other consenters' attention to the ways in which these language structures provided the ammunition for their learners to engage conversationally with one another and with their teachers. I shall return to this aspect later in this section, when analysing consenters' references to the planning of routines.

5.6.2 TL ethos to authenticate the MFL classroom

Together with the above interactional benefits of a TL culture, procedures and techniques such as miming, repetition, pair work, which had frequently featured in assenters' transcripts, also appeared in consenters' descriptions of *Interact.* However, they were here associated more firmly with learning and ultimately, I would argue,

with authenticity. In the first instance, they were seen as integral and constitutive elements of the '*whole different world*' (Simon) that an *Interact*-imbued lesson should aim to create. For Beth, one could not disaggregate these elements, as they formed part of a whole: *it's not just the TL… you can't divorce and say Target Language **or** [said with emphasis] the pair work **or** something. To me it's the whole package.'* If one were to single out elements, she believed one would lose the integrity of the approach*: 'It's the whole package…that keeps the kids in because, when you introduce vocabulary, you do it with the actions, with the mimes.'* We had earlier (5.5) seen Cécile also allude to the benefits of creating '*a whole little world'* as a means by which to legitimise the subject in learners' eyes and enlist their investment. For Cécile, this safe and invitational ethos had the merit of buffering some of her otherwise '*failing*' students from the more pernicious effects of an examination-driven culture: '*OK they're not taking French GCSE's, OK they're failing in all their other subjects but you should see them in French!'* The '*whole little world'* was therefore in the service of authenticating the classroom as a genuine context and of validating language learning as a legitimate and rewarding enterprise in and of itself.

Similarly, Camilla dismissed the more instrumental motivation, arguing that certification in MFL or a career in languages was not on her learners' '*radar.'* She referred to what she tried to accomplish as a '*whole sort of atmosphere,'* which would authenticate the subject and encourage an outlook that departed from treating its study exclusively as a scholarly matter: '*I'd really like them to understand that our subject isn't really a subject, it is not something that's in a book. It's a real life thing and people do actually exist who speak like this all day long…when you come into our room, it's a little bit of France.'* Although the creation of a 'whole little world' was also present in assenters' interviews, especially with respect to a conflation between a total TL policy and its theatrical elements (Joséphine), consenters were firstly more explicit and articulate about its deliberate establishment and its overall interactional purpose. Secondly, their references to particular aspects, such as theatricality, 'lively' or 'fun', were more firmly associated with learning, as we shall see below.

5.6.3 Purposeful complexity

Rather than the attraction to the showmanship in evidence in assenters' interviews, it was Sylvianne's understanding of the learning benefits that enabled her to overcome her initial prejudice upon first encountering *Interact*: '*my first judgement was like "we are basically a clown." This is what I thought at first but obviously then I realised that "oh it does make sense actually." You need to repeat if you want them to remember something or, you know, you must mime sometimes before they can recall.*' For Sylvianne and others in this quadrant, *Interact's* theatricality 'makes sense' only if associated with pedagogical procedures such as '*repeat*' or '*mime*' above, aiming to render the TL memorable. Therefore, and in contrast with Margot's earlier defence (5.4.3) of 'teacher-as-entertainer', Sylvianne advanced that playfulness ought to serve an educational purpose: '*it's not just to have fun, otherwise you don't do it. It has to be for a good reason and not just for being entertaining.*' In this, consenters differed from assenters' viewpoints, the latter valuing theatricality mainly for its playful and motivational purposes. Indeed, Hannah insisted on the difference: '*the kids are getting excited because their other teachers don't do all this cool stuff so some of them even think wrongly that it's a doss. It's **not** [said with emphasis] a doss. They only think that because it's fun.*' She went on to explain that, in opposition to a 'doss' or, in other words, a relaxed affair, she viewed *Interact* lessons as inherently complex and intellectually '*demanding*' both for learners and teachers. For the latter, this was due to the careful 'drip-feeding' of routine structures that required long-term planning together with the necessary meshing of curriculum-related language. As a result, Hannah found her lessons '*jam-packed*' with multiple linguistic strands to be introduced, revisited, or elicited when deemed automatised. For the same reason, Simon explained that an *Interact* lesson was '*intense*' and required teachers to plan and exploit '*almost every available minute and second of the lesson.*' Beth demonstrated this, below, when describing her meticulous forward planning but also her attentiveness to linguistic features that might occur in her lessons:

> *We look at what language is needed in that routine and try to develop it. It's not allowed to just stop still and then there's always a sort of end plan, thinking about where the language is going… But we're also like 'what else did they try and say in that lesson? So let's see if we can put that in and then, where can we*

move that routine forward in the future?' So, it's constantly looking to push the language forward. (Beth)

Asked if planning was more time-consuming as a result of the above constant and contingent development of routine language, which is not allowed to *'just stop still,'* Beth emphatically replied *'oh yes! But it's worth it!'* and by that, she meant that the concomitant *'pushing* [of] *the language forward'* enabled pupils to gain in confidence and conversational competence.

5.6.4 Principled contingency

In the above, Beth demonstrated her attentiveness to spontaneous attempts by her classes to *'try and say [something] in that lesson'* and her interweaving of these conversational gambits within her planning: *'let's see if we can put that in.'* Similarly, Simon explained that he experimented with different routines but that ultimately:

> *everything that you do in class can have some target language potential for exploitation. I mean you can't obviously predict everything that's going to happen in a class but you've got a vague idea and you can use the target language as a way of exploiting those types of things as well.* (Simon)

In this, Simon revealed his own willingness to take a risk and follow conversational tangents, evincing a belief that all classroom events could potentially be put to communicative use. A proclivity for conversational vigilance (van Lier, 1996, see section 2.7.2) was also in evidence in Beth's approach above and in the following:

> *Sometimes, if the kids took the lesson in one direction, we took it in that direction but then it was thought about afterwards: what was used? Why did they use it? What grammatical point was that? Was it the future and therefore do we need to push that a little bit more?* (Beth)

In the above, Simon and Beth demonstrated a simultaneous attention both to the long-term development of linguistic strands and to the impromptu exploitation of tangential moments. Such meticulous attentiveness to the organic development of pupil language did not appear in assenters' interviews, which had instead conveyed an overall impression of happenstance. In their alertness to the linguistic potential of both the long-term and the contingent, consenters demonstrated an understanding of the planning process as a dense, complex, multi-dimensional endeavour. Alongside

the dense planning came the intensity of classroom proceedings, which made Rob notice that in those classes where he had successfully introduced a TL culture: '*there is a greater intensity of learning going on actually. There is more language being used and produced and learnt in a lesson compared to a class where you compromise and give instructions in English.*' In the end, whilst both assenters and consenters justified their commitment to *Interact* with reference to 'it works' and 'it makes sense', there remained qualitative differences between what these two codes meant. Assenters, on the one hand, tended to foreground *Interact*'s appeal, its theatricality, the lively, fun, entertaining atmosphere it created, which engaged and sustained learners' motivation and aimed to mask the effort needed in learning a foreign language. As we saw in section 5.4, 'It works' in this context was code for 'it attracts and sustains learners' attention', and 'it makes sense' was to be understood in relation to the rather opaque process of learning through immersion. Consenters, on the other hand, took 'it works' to mean that a TL culture benefitted learners' linguistic and attitudinal progress precisely because of its '*jam-packed*' (Hannah) density and its intensity (Rob), in the form of alertness to, and exploitation of '*every available minute and second of the lesson*' (Simon).

5.6.5 Struggling to arrive at meaning

Differences between the two quadrants pertained not only to teachers' respective conceptions of the nature and purpose of *Interact* and of its planning requirements. They also, and most tellingly, reflected teachers' varying abilities to discern *Interact's* underpinning principles. In short, assenters readily testified to their use of techniques and procedures examined in section 2.4 but consenters, in doing so, also discussed their associated principles. In effect, whilst 'routines', 'team competitions', 'miming and repeating', and other characteristics permeated the entire data set; less immediately visible principles, such as the notion of 'struggling to arrive at meaning' (2.4.4), only appeared in consenters' interviews. Sylvianne's *eureka* moment will serve to illustrate this point. She recalled only fully understanding how *Interact* differed from other MFL teaching approaches when observing a student teacher from a different institution teach one of her classes. In simple terms, Sylvianne characterised the trainee's approach as '*I deliver and you do whatever.*' By that, she meant that the

trainee '*delivered*' the curriculum and then led learners through a series of didactic activities in order for them to studiously apprehend and retain the curriculum. To Sylvianne's dismay, the trainee also tended to code-switch, lest her use of TL for classroom instructions proved alienating:

> *if she gives an instruction, she will translate it straightaway in English. I think first what she should do is say, 'OK what did I just say? What is it? Comment dit-on "savoir"?' Just make the kids* **guess** *[said with emphasis] the objectives and not straightaway give it to them!* (Sylvianne)

Sylvianne's ensuing frustration was palpable: '*take it* **from** *[with emphasis] the kids and not straightaway* **to** *the kids!*' A frustration, I contend, that is indicative of a view of learners as participants rather than merely recipients of their own learning (Allwright and Hanks, 2009, p.2; see 2.4.3). Rob, in turn, shared Sylvianne's criticism of '*I deliver and you do whatever*' and claimed that an enduring *Interact* principle for him has been:

> *never giving answers to them but setting up a structure whereby they're going to work out what language they need and use all of the right target language to get that rather than just a process where you'll say 'well this is how you say dog in French' or whatever it is.* (Rob)

In other words, Rob's strategy of '*never giving answers*' was an invitation for his learners to '*work [it] out*' and, in my view, partakes of the same vision of learners and of learning as Sylvianne's above. Rob continued: '*also I think certain ways of handing language over to kids… everything that's to do withholding information, withholding language for kids so that they have the chance to speculate and work things out, that's been quite enduring for me.*' For both Rob and Sylvianne then, it seems that the principle of ensuring that learners 'struggle' or, in other words, are made to guess, predict or speculate so that they retain better, has proved a lasting feature in their pedagogy. Hannah cited the same principle when asked which *Interact* element has persisted in her teaching. She exemplified it below in relation to how she would introduce a grammatical point:

> *I never introduced a grammar point by telling them 'this is how you do this.' We'd always work out what it was and things like this but that to me it's just common sense frankly. Of course, you're going to remember it more if you have*

to work it out in the first place! So those kinds of things …those features carried through. (Hannah)

Again, an aversion to '*giving [pupils] answers*' (Rob) or to '*telling them'* (Hannah) about grammar seems to me to suggest a perception of learning as a necessary and salutary intellectual effort, to the point where this effort ought to be engineered by '*withholding information'* (Rob). Interestingly, Beth also used grammar to illustrate how a TL approach ensured better comprehension and retention in her learners:

I do it in the TL because they listen better. They stay more tuned in. If you go into English, you start to explain. If you do it in the TL, you demonstrate. It's kept simple. And if you're demonstrating then they're doing it and therefore they understand it because it's getting them to work it out. (Beth)

Once more, the challenge inherent in '*tuning in'* to the TL encourages learners to focus, and teachers to eschew the need to '*explain*' and instead '*demonstrate*' (Beth). Essentially, the principle of 'struggling to arrive at meaning' has been retained in its various guises for its alignment with consenters' views on language learning. It is noticeable that principles such as this one were largely absent from assenters' descriptions of *Interact.* Whereas assenters had called upon *Interact* to 'sugar the pill' and turn language learning into an effortless endeavour, consenters opted to make it intellectually '*demanding*' (Hannah) for learners by asking them to '*guess*' (Sylvianne), '*speculate*' (Rob) and *work it out'* (Beth). Echoing Sylvianne's earlier criticism of '*I deliver and you do whatever,*' Beth described her approach as '*less of me and more of them'* by which she meant that her learners were '*doing more, they're working things out more for themselves.'* In summary, *Interact* in consenters' eyes required intricate, multi-layered planning together with an alertness to the communicative potential of conversational tangents. This accorded with their own conceptions of the complex and contingent nature of (language) learning. However, such intricacy proved a double-edged sword for some teachers in this quadrant, as illustrated below.

5.6.6 (Un)trained eyes can't see it

The multi-dimensional planning might not be immediately visible to the external observer, which carried with it the risk of *Interact* being misconstrued. Invited to expand upon his initial definition of *Interact* as being communicative '*for real*', Simon

contrasted it with his own teacher training elsewhere and seemed embarrassed to report: *'this probably sounds like really quite cutting but when you analyse what it was, it was three stage questioning with flash cards, you know: 'this is a sandwich.' 'Can you say sandwich?' or whatever and 'is it a sandwich or is it a cake?' Oh dearie me!'* For him, *Interact* involved many more '*levels*' that rendered the approach more intricate but, by the same token, more opaque for unfamiliar observers. When formally observed, Simon recounted his disappointment at the inspector's admission to a lack of subject knowledge, which made him ill-equipped to judge the quality of the teaching and learning:

> *the class were doing some absolutely amazing things…like coming out with some fantastic sentences and to my disappointment, at the end of the observation, the Inspector came over and said 'I don't speak a word of French but I could see that the kids were getting on with what they should do' and I thought 'Oh my goodness me! Had you had any idea what they were saying, you would have been absolutely amazed with what they were coming out with.' And you know it's like a middle ability group and they were coming out with some really long extended sentences that they'd managed to put together themselves through constant routines that had been built up and he was just like 'Ugh?'* (Simon)

In Simon's case above, it was the lack of subject knowledge that prevented external observers from noticing pupils' self-initiated and extended TL production. We had earlier seen (5.5.2) a similar scenario in relation to Cécile who had bemoaned external observers' inability to notice her learners being creative with the TL. In Ceri's case below, however, it was her MFL colleagues' lack of familiarity with *Interact* which precluded their ability to read her intentions. During a lesson observation by the head of the MFL department in view of an impending inspection, she was asked:

> *How do I know that they're making progress if they're just repeating?' I explained that it was very carefully considered and that we were building up so I think we were doing "parce que je suis cool" and every time I'd say "tu es vraiment cool, assez cool ou très cool?" and so I said: today we added intensifiers but that wasn't significant; they couldn't **see** [said with emphasis] the progress happening so it was a big no no to the register routine straightaway.* (Ceri)

Ceri's careful drip-feeding of intensifiers and her *'building up'* of new vocabulary remained unseen, or perhaps unconvincing, in a lesson that departed from observers' own template for effective MFL teaching. Later in the interview, Ceri again lamented the fact that her colleagues were *'just not seeing the layers,'* which led them to erroneously portray *Interact* as a simplistic pedagogical proposition based on *'mimes and repetition.'* Beth, a longstanding mentor, argued for her part that even *Interact* insiders could misunderstand the approach. Beth discovered *Interact* later in her career upon becoming a subject mentor for our student teachers and observing their *Interact* lessons. For her, the *'rigour'* in the method was not immediately apparent and it was only when she and her established colleagues 'experienced' *Interact*, in both the realisation and the playful experimentation senses of the term, that its rigour was revealed:

> *we started playing around with the register routine ourselves and started seeing how well it worked, how much the pupils enjoyed it, how much **we** enjoyed it [said with emphasis], what we could do with it in terms of the language and I think not everybody, including trained teachers and trainees, understands actually what the purpose of the register routine is or that the register routine has to evolve. And once you realise **why** [with emphasis] routines work, then you understand the philosophy behind it and how rigorous it actually is and this is something I always argue about with other people: it's very, very rigorous!* (Beth)

Firstly, for Beth, a *'routine has to evolve'* in order to – as she stated later – *'track'* but also support learners' linguistic progression. Therein lies the *'rigour'* of *Interact* and *'the philosophy behind it.'* Secondly, Beth above warns of the risk of misinterpreting *Interact* upon first encounter, so that even *'trained teachers and trainees'* may be oblivious to the underpinning purpose of routines. A risk amplified, I would argue, by a potentially alienating TL ethos for external observers, as was the case for Simon and Cécile earlier, and a proclivity for intensity and showmanship generally. It follows that *Interact*'s theatricality may unintentionally serve to 'pull the wool' over (un)trained eyes and blind them to its actual *'rigour'*, its internal intricacy and underpinning rationale. As suggested earlier, the complex planning with its attention to multiple linguistic strands, together with the notion of 'struggling to arrive at meaning', were not explicitly mentioned by assenters. They did refer to teaching grammar inductively,

having first 'drip-fed' grammatical points through routines, but their depictions tended to foreground the ease with which learners '*absorbed*' (Julie) the language rather than were made to 'work it out'.

5.6.7 Personalising *Interact*

As Beth reflected in her earlier quotation (5.6.6), it was the creative potential of routines – '*what we could do with it in terms of the language*' – which eventually convinced her and her colleagues to forego their former pedagogical approach in favour of *Interact.* In this, they pointed to a further difference between the two quadrants, which relates ultimately to the distinctive ways in which they envisaged their respective roles vis-à-vis *Interact.* Beth and her MFL colleagues mentioned '*playing around'* with routines and, in an earlier section (5.5.2), we had seen Cécile's attraction to the linguistic creativity of *Interact.* Simon too relayed his enjoyment in '*coming up with new routines.'* In this, consenters betrayed a view of *Interact* as being the raw material with which to experiment and to '*start playing around'* (Beth). Hannah, for example, only selected those routines which she believed had learning potential and then modified them. She thus adapted '*the starter routine, you know, where you set the tone: "in this classroom we speak in the target language" but that's just degenerated or grew, depending on which way you look at it, into we had a chat at the start of the lesson and you would incorporate stuff but it wasn't with the PowerPoint and the smiley face.'* I took the above to be an indication that she was willing to personalise a given template, and in so doing, discard the letter – here, the PowerPoint and smiley face – but not its spirit.

Similarly, Camilla had designed a new and, for her, more productive starter routine based on a stimulus in the form of a photo or a news item: '*Sometimes I'll put a headline up …there might just be a picture of a tsunami on the screen and we'd be building up the structures and so yeah discussing items…Then I write the routine language generated out of the photos'* (Camilla). This *'headline'* routine constituted an example of a new procedure for an existing principle, that of creating opportunities for learners to '*generate*' language and of '*building up the structures.'* Thus, consenters like Camilla above chose to exercise their artistic licence to interpret,

modify or even invent routines as they saw fit. Whilst all consenters shared with assenters their eventual adoption of *Interact,* consenters on the whole chose to apply their creative stamps on *Interact* and saw themselves as interpreters rather than (re)enacters of *Interact.* Even upon her first encounter with the approach on the PGCE course, Sylvianne had already decided that she would be selective rather than imitative:

> *It was very strange for me but then I started to think 'well you don't have to do exactly what she's doing; you have to feel comfortable' so me, I was very comfortable with the songs because I do think it's a good way to remember the words. I still do lots of songs and it's something that **is** [said with emphasis] my personality and it suits **me** [said with emphasis].* (Sylvianne)

In the above, Sylvianne displayed a more independent stance vis-à-vis her training than her assenting peers since she did not envisage merely replicating *Interact* but personalising it so that it suited her. She also justified her selection of strategies on learning grounds: '*it's a good way to remember the words.*' Assenters' proprietary attitudes, in comparison, conveyed a conception of their roles as faithful replicators; and they derived justifiable pride in disclosing the professional accolades it had earned them, confiding that *Interact* seemed to impress observers. Incidentally, this professional pride and power to impress were absent from consenters' interviews, nor did their *Interact* credentials necessarily garner external observers' plaudits, as we saw earlier. Yet consenters continued to believe in *Interact,* based on their own understanding of its benefits - 'it works' - and its rationale - 'it makes sense'- but also its creative potential. Here then lay a key difference, as mentioned earlier, between the two groups, with assenters eager to personify and consenters to personalise *Interact.*

To synthesise the various strands examined in this section so far, consenters differed from their assenting peers in relation to the former's ability to discern, in Beth's words, '*the philosophy behind it.*' That is, consenters were alert to the conversational intent of *Interact,* to its necessarily intricate '*layers*' (Ceri) and underpinning principles. In other words, they were able to see the spirit beyond the letter and conceived of *Interact* as a distinctive approach rather than a prescriptive method. Its creative

malleability appealed to them, giving them the opportunity to '*play around*' (Beth), since they were comfortable with the notion of contingency to exploit digressions for their linguistic promise. Furthermore, consenters' perceived prerogatives to interpret and mould *Interact* to suit their personality disinclined them from simply striving to replicate or embrace it wholesale. The next section, instead of being dedicated solely to the last remaining borderline case (Neil), will provide an overview of the journey travelled by all teachers in the data set. This said, Neil will feature more prominently in this last section, on the basis of his professional experience and as an informative counter-case to those positioned in assenting and consenting quadrants.

5.7 Participants' personal journey: key messages for teacher education

As mentioned in the introduction to this section (5.1), the revised framework (5.2) served as a lens to analyse the differing perspectives of research participants regarding the nature of their representations of *Interact* (RQ1)*,* their practical application in the field (RQ2) and their orientations towards it (RQ3). In this respect, the framework enabled the analysis to be trained on the three research foci. However, as noted earlier (5.1), a framework necessarily pins participants into positions and thus precludes an overview of their professional developments. To discern the place and role of *Interact* in the formation of their professional identity (RQ4), the analytical stance needed to be attuned to the developmental journey that research participants reported undergoing. This then required departing from the framework and analysing interview data to tease out those key elements that punctuated this journey. In fact, a substantial portion of the interview data related to teachers' individual pathways and recounted their personal tales of trials and triumphs, of doubts and epiphanies on the road to and from *Interact.* It is those tales that the analysis now focuses on and, whilst it is based on the entire data set, the following section (5.7.1) will concentrate on the more experienced teachers among them, whose temporal and psychological distance from *Interact* may afford a greater vantage point. Some aspects already mentioned in previous sections will reappear here but examined this time from a developmental angle. The following also introduces Neil's case and justifies his borderline position. In the first instance then, I retrace the steps travelled, plotting the

major milestones encountered by most alumni whilst bearing in mind the two 'outsiders' – Beth and Simon – who met the approach later in their careers. Secondly, I shift the focus more firmly onto the legacy of *Interact* in the eyes of the research participants. Legacy is here to be understood as the mark left by *Interact* on teachers' professional identity. In other words, this second section (5.7.2) will examine the reported impact and imprint of *Interact* on the teachers concerned in order to inform the discussion (Chapter 6) and ultimately the future direction, if not existence, of *Interact*.

5.7.1 Major milestones

5.7.1.1 *'Culture shock'* (Sylvianne)

The impact of *Interact* upon first meeting*,* in the form of university-based *Interact ab-initio* Italian lessons taught by a PGCE tutor in the first few weeks of the course, was mentioned by twelve alumni. The power of this impact is attested in the language used to describe *Interact*, from '*silly*' (Joséphine) or '*crazy*' (Margot) (see 5.4.6), to '*scary*' (Cécile). It proved an alienating experience for some: *'it's not me, I won't be able to do it'* (Joséphine) and was derided by others: '*this is a joke'* (Sylvianne). The *in-vivo* code '*culture shock'* (Sylvianne) sought to capture this strongly emotive reaction towards *Interact* that confounded trainees' initial expectations regarding the content and format of a teacher-training course. As we saw in previous sections, alumni's eventual conversion was the result of their realisation that 'it works' and 'makes sense'. Although Simon met the approach as an outsider, having undergone teacher education elsewhere, the format of his first encounter would trigger as emotive and powerful a reaction as that witnessed in trainees above. On the last day of his PGCE course, his tutor played him and fellow trainees a video of an *Interact* lesson taught by an NQT. Simon recalled being '*bowled over and blown away'* by it:

> *This teacher is like doing it all in target language; the kids were speaking to the teacher and to each other in the target language. We didn't have a clue that you could teach like that! You know, you'd spent an entire academic year getting to that point of thinking 'yeah I'm ready for September' and then like, [laughter] 'oh this is what it could've been like.' (Simon)*

Essentially, for Simon, the video provided an invitational vision of what could be, a *'this is what we can do'* (Simon) which at the time had the unfortunate but thankfully temporary effect of making him feel short-changed by his own PGCE course. He continued to teach as he had been trained but admitted that the video had *'made a lasting impression'* so that fourteen years later *'it still resonates.'* The impact of this culture shock upon the formation of teachers' professional identities will be discussed further in Chapter 6; of note here, however, are the strong affective component together with the disruptive element, which resonate with Korthagen's (2010) contention that teaching is fundamentally a Gestalt (2.10.2).

5.7.1.2   *'Make a fool of yourself'* (Margot)

It seems that, for these twelve alumni, the above culture shock was successfully mediated so that they remained intrigued but receptive. Hannah recalled that she *'trusted the teaching on the course'* and was willing to *'do as I was being instructed.'* Sylvianne, though, had to combat her own initial misgivings and tell herself to *'stop being judgemental and try those things.'* As will be recalled from section 5.4.6, assenters among them reported enjoying their gradual transformation into *Interact* teachers, willing to *'make a fool of yourself'* (Margot), to the extent that Cécile had felt '*liberated*', free to shed her shyer self and permitted to embody a more theatrical persona in the classroom. She recalled observers' perplexity at her *'miming, doing silly voices'* and their embarrassment on her behalf: *'they say "oh, I couldn't do that in front of the class, it's embarrassing" but I think that, to be a good teacher, you do not have to care too much about what people think.'* She thus successfully overcame her inhibitions. In this, Cécile echoed Julie and Margot's joyful impersonation of an *Interact* practitioner, whom they equated with being *'larger than life'* (Margot), having gratefully undergone the metamorphosis from demure trainees to more vibrant, energetic and lively teachers. As we saw (5.4.6) the metamorphosis was deemed complete when *Interact* had become part of their '*genes*' (Cécile) so much so that they would rather not teach than '*not teach like this'* (Joséphine).

5.7.1.3 *'You buy the whole package'* (Hannah)

The success of this transformative process hinged, according to Simon, on the *'toolkit'* that *Interact* provided in the form of a template for routines and other strategies (2.4) so that even *'timid trainees'* could enact it to good effect. Indeed for Neil, *'once you buy into the TL thing, it's easier to be black or white,'* so that the more categorical, the easier it was to maintain a total TL stance and thus avoid compromising the integrity of *Interact* (Joséphine). Hannah concurred: *'there's almost an all or nothing. You have to take it all on board. If you take some elements, it doesn't quite work. You have to take the routine…you have to take the 'crappi' element and therefore you buy the whole package.'* Interestingly, Beth had earlier (5.6.2) used the same expression to argue that *Interact* could not be disaggregated into single elements but constituted a whole: *'To me it's the whole package that keeps the kids in.'* It was this *'whole package'* (Beth) or *'toolkit'* (Simon) which endowed even shy trainees, like Cécile, with a sense of professional competence and the confidence to go forth, armed with a trusted and coherent set of classroom procedures.

5.7.1.4 *'Experiencing'* the message (Beth)

Beth, initially an outsider (5.1), revealed her initial untrained eyes when observing *Interact* trainees teach her classes. She derided their practice as *'sort of play time almost. Sing songs, nice routines but it wasn't real work.'* Asked what had eventually convinced her of the merits of the approach, she noted the value of experience over mere observation: *'it was only by experiencing it* [that] *we realised the purpose of it and how rigorous it actually is.'* And by 'experience', she meant almost a multi-sensory process of designing and developing routines with her trainees and colleagues: *'it's only if you're doing it; if you're feeling it; if you're seeing it.'* Simon, a fellow 'outsider', agreed that one needed a profound and prolonged engagement with *Interact* in order to fully understand its internal mechanisms: *'it wasn't until we had the students coming in that I realised, **really** [said with emphasis] being face to face with it on a regular basis, what could be done.'* For the alumni, this multi-sensory experience of *Interact* was the result of the congruence between medium and message (2.10.2). Although the interview protocol did not expressly probe teachers' views on the design of the PGCE course, there were still many references pointing to this congruence, both

in relation to the *ab-initio* Italian lessons and to the course structure. Experiencing Italian lessons from a beginner's point of view and noticing her rapid gains in communicative competence convinced Margot of the benefits of this approach in comparison with the more cerebral and didactic study that had characterised her MFL learning. Likewise, Julie appreciated the fact that '*we were made to see it, to actually live it… we were practising what our students will do after and it was really good to know "oh that's how they feel!".'* And Sylvianne too recalled the moment when she realised: '*You made us feel [said with emphasis] what our future students would feel basically… and this is when I realised "oh right, they are doing the same thing to us. They are training us the way that they want us to teach basically!".'* In their use of the word 'feel', both Julie and Sylvianne above stressed the value of enlisting the affective and sensory dimensions in what could otherwise have been a purely intellectual affair. Betraying perhaps her native French expectations of university-based teacher education, Sylvianne admitted to being rather discombobulated at not being '*lectured*' but instead involved in seminars, group discussions and workshops, so much so that she did not know how to 'sit on [her] chair'*: 'I didn't feel like a student. I thought I was learning; I knew [said with emphasis] I was learning but I didn't know how to sit on my chair.'* Beyond the noted congruence, Sylvianne here hinted at the potentially disruptive nature of the PGCE course, in the sense that it ran counter to her prior assumptions not only about teacher education but also about learning as being exclusively a rational endeavour. Yet, this simultaneously congruent and disruptive pedagogy convinced her that she was indeed learning and that there was value in a less didactic but more involved approach. Sylvianne and her peers in the above therefore pointed to the merit of congruence between message and medium, made all the more powerful for its Gestalt qualities.

5.7.1.5 *'You got caught up in it'* (Neil)

The overall effect of the above congruent experience was further reinforced by a sense of security and togetherness. Cécile, for example, was '*pushed to do things [she] was uncomfortable with but it felt quite safe… no one was judging each other*.' Neil too appreciated '*the support that's there, a phone call away or a visit the following day to pick up the pieces.'* He further likened the ambience on the PGCE course to that of a

school class, which re-created with trainees what teachers ought to establish with their younger charges: '*because the approach was so engaging, you just went with it… It was like being in a school class in that sense, yeah, it's very definitely a sense of everybody in it together.*' As a consequence, he added, '*you got caught up in it*':

> *It was so well received and so well delivered, it has to be said, that you kind of got caught up in it…There was very much a sense of everybody being along for the ride almost… So that you do become caught up in it and I don't mean that in a bad way; I think that's a very positive thing.* (Neil)

Although Neil concluded above that it was a positive experience for him, he did recall that some of his peers became rather too 'caught up in it', to the extent that they '*bought into it completely but couldn't see beyond that and it became a little bit of imitation; they couldn't see* **why** *[said with emphasis] things were happening or* **why** *you were doing certain things.*' Neil implied by this that their complete espousal may have blinded them to the underpinning rationale and that they had thus remained at the level of faithful '*imitation*' rather than gained a deeper understanding. This complete 'buy-in' also resulted, in Hannah's opinion, in an unhelpful attitude among some of her former PGCE peers once on placement: '*the way things were set up, it meant that some people took that as the gospel… It made them feel that the department they were in was no good, which was a vastly inappropriate reaction. These are experienced teachers. You're new.*' Nonetheless, even Hannah confessed to leaving the course with aspirations of becoming an *Interact* practitioner, having forged in her mind a tantalising vision of the kind of teacher she could be: '*I started my NQT year absolutely brimming with enthusiasm. I worked incredibly hard trying to do everything….I was sort of running the show: "and now we're doing the drilling and now you're doing pair work but only for three minutes because it's back to me" and all these crazy activities.*' Yet, this new persona soon left her '*exhausted*' and disillusioned, and, as will be shown below, the confrontation with the reality of the classroom was, for Hannah and some of her peers, a painful but ultimately salutary opportunity to shed their hitherto idealised professional selves for a more realistic one.

5.7.1.6 *'It can't be done!'* (Hannah)

As transformative as the PGCE course had been in first creating an image of the kind of teachers they could be and then equipping trainees to enact this new *Interact*-inspired pedagogical self, the problematic implementation of *Interact* in practice, for some, resulted in inner tensions between those images and the reality of the classroom. Those inner tensions had surfaced in Cecile's interview, as we saw her struggle to interpret her practice as *'a victory or a failure'* (5.5.2)*.* The same tension led Rob to question whether he could *'marry up'* his aspiring *Interact* pedagogy with his broader professional requirements. Soon to be the Head of his current MFL department, Rob felt the full weight of his impending management role and rued its encroachment on his own allegiance to *Interact*. He acknowledged that, whenever he had persevered and successfully established a TL culture, then *'the end product is wonderful and the students recognise that'* but he was also at a juncture in his career when his recent appointment had heightened his awareness of the accountability agenda:

> *I would be delighted to promote a successful Target Language approach but the priority is success and I think you are always open to very, very justified accusations if you value an approach over outcomes for students so you've got to be focussed always on achieving results. And that doesn't have to be to the detriment of Target Language at all but I wouldn't know exactly how to make sure the two things constantly work together to achieve success.* (Rob)

Rob admitted above that he had yet to conceive of ways of reconciling *Interact* with school-wide pressures but added later, in tones that arguably sounded defeatist even to him, that this may be *'a cop-out'* and that renouncing *Interact* with his GCSE classes was: *'the easy route… the path of least resistance.'* Whilst Rob maintained his belief in the validity of *Interact,* and in fact later expressed his longing to see it come to fruition, having already successfully implemented a TL culture with all his beginners' classes, nonetheless he had bowed to the pressure of *'teaching to the test.'* He further confessed to being unwilling to impose his *Interact* convictions on his more established colleagues. His internal dilemma may, however, simply reflect his recent entry into the profession. In a similar vein, Hannah's enthusiastic embracing of *Interact* in her first year in post ultimately resulted in a crisis of confidence:

*I remember the disappointment at the realisation. That was a **huge disappointment**! [said with emphasis]…I was making cards, making PowerPoints. It's great but, you know, you can't do them when you've got 10 classes – it is too burdensome. It is too much work for one human to be able to go and make up a song! It can't be done!* (Hannah)

Her disillusionment - '*it can't be done'* - was commensurate with her initial zeal as an aspiring *Interact*-practitioner. Yet, below and at other moments in the interview, Hannah was particular about laying the blame at her own naïve, idealised self rather than at a rigid interpretation of *Interact.* She declared: '*I didn't suffer from sort of thinking – unless I deliver my lessons precisely like this then I'm a failure - but I did still feel that I can't be anything like the teacher that I want to be. And again that's not necessarily because this method is not good, but the reality of the classroom, I mean…*' (Hannah). Even if Hannah had never adhered to the 'letter' of *Interact* and thus to a belief that '*unless I deliver my lessons precisely like this then I'm a failure,*' she had nonetheless imagined herself becoming an *Interact*-inspired teacher but '*the reality of the classroom'* had decided otherwise. We saw earlier (5.6.7), however, that she eventually abandoned her initial idealised identity for a more discerning and agentic one. She therefore did not include herself in the category of those who had forsaken *Interact,* readily acknowledging, as with all the interviewed teachers except Neil, that it still informed her daily practice and, at a later point in the interview, she too conceded that, with more professional experience, she might develop strategies to '*marry up the methodology'* with the reality. In view of the fact that those disclosing their internal dilemmas between their desired *Interact* practice on the one hand, and the reality of the classroom on the other, were also new entrants to the profession, it pays to turn to the more established teachers in the data set.

5.7.1.7 '*This is still what we believe in*' (Beth)

I therefore enquired whether, and how, those who had continued to teach in an *Interact*-inspired manner had sought to resolve the dilemmas presented by Rob earlier in '*marrying up*' the demands of *Interact* with those of academic success. Camilla, Beth and Simon all admitted to resorting to English when explaining examination strategies and for administrative purposes but were still adamantly convinced that *Interact* was

not simply an ideal but also a practical proposition, which took time and determination to establish but would ultimately pay dividends. I asked Simon why, knowing that GCSE results were comparable between the *Interact* and non-*Interact* groups in his MFL department, did he then feel the need to adopt *Interact* in practice and only appoint *Interact* practitioners in future. To this, he replied: '*I just thought it was so much better. It's a completely different world. It's on another level. I truly think that the only outstanding lessons I've seen, you know, as Subject Leader, are those that have been taught using Interact.*' Similarly, I queried Beth's solution to Rob's dilemma above and she acknowledged '*getting battered by the GCSE exam*' and on occasions '*teaching badly*' as a result but she maintained: '*we feel, as a department, very passionately that this still is what we believe in and we'll keep going.*' And this belated but fervent belief had '*totally and utterly changed [her] approach*' to the better, added Beth. We will see below that Neil remained 'the odd one out' in the data set, hence his borderline positioning (figure 5) and that, unlike his fellow experienced teachers who had reconciled school-wide pressures with their *Interact* beliefs, Neil had departed from them, or had he?

5.7.1.8 *'The make-up started to flake'* (Neil)

In earlier examples, recent entrants to the profession recounted the confrontation with the reality of the classroom, resulting in an internal struggle between their 'ideal' professional identities and their 'ought' selves (Dörnyei and Taguchi, 2009). In essence, the interviews captured them in the throes of their conflicted images of teaching at an early stage in post. With the benefit of hindsight afforded by his eight-year career as an MFL teacher, Neil reported also travelling the same route, from initial enthusiasm to disillusionment, to the point when, by his own admission, most of his lessons were now conducted in English. It seems, however, that his initial enactment of *Interact* borrowed more from the method than the approach, and in jettisoning the former, he had also abandoned the TL. He recalled: '*in the first two or three years…the target language was everything*' and his beginning practice was very successful in achieving '*buy-in*' from even the '*trickiest*' of classes. He credited this to his use of '*the competitive element and the routines…all that sort of stuff goes down really well.*' However, he confessed to growing tired of the theatrical persona and the more 'letter-

like' application of *Interact*: '*You can only do the register routine so many times before you don't care and that comes across… You have to be genuine…and I probably lost the ability to convince them that I believe in it.*' Gradually, he continued, '*the make-up start[ed] to flake*' and he could no longer '*put on a front and a performance.*' Having previously described *Interact* as a '*black and white*' affair, he found himself occupying the '*grey area*' and using more English as a result. He discovered, in the process, a more authentic way of being in the classroom, better able to engage in genuine interaction and thus nurture more fruitful relationships with his classes, as he explained below:

> *if it's purely about language learning, then [Interact] is difficult to fault but our job as teachers is not just about language learning…and with our students in particular, relationships are everything. If students are going to buy in to you as a teacher and to what you're trying to do with them, then they have to get to know you and there has to be a bit of depth to that relationship. And I found I could only really do that if I used more English… because a word or a phrase or a conversation… can make all the difference to them and if you step back from that conversation because you're in the mindset that says 'in this class, we only talk French', then you're a fool as a teacher.* (Neil)

Neil disclosed above shedding the mindset that had previously dictated his total TL use in order to engage with his learners in a more authentic manner. In effect, the method had become a straitjacket and, in casting it aside, he had by the same token discarded the TL. He argued, however, that some aspects of the approach had remained, as we shall see later, hence his positioning on the borderline rather than on the left-hand side of the framework (figure 5). To a degree, Hannah's earlier-mentioned disenchantment was also due to the realisation of the limitations of *Interact* if the latter is construed purely as a method; and she owed her gradual distancing from an originally idealised interpretation to the following epiphany: '*It's about you. The most important thing is you. Not what paraphernalia you've got. That's you that engages those pupils.*' In this, both Neil and Hannah demonstrated their emancipation from a restrictive view of *Interact* and both went on to acknowledge below the foundational significance it nonetheless still held for them. In what follows, I explore the putative legacy of *Interact,* and more particularly its reported imprint on

teachers' professional identities, the importance of which will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

5.7.2 *Interact* in the future: participants' personal and general observations

With the more experienced participants, namely Camilla, Beth, Simon and Neil, and including Hannah who was a more mature career-changer than her fellow beginning teachers, the interviews explored the legacy of *Interact* for them as well as its possible future in a changing MFL teaching landscape (2.10.3). In this regard, the interviews took on a more fluid, conversational quality whereby interviewees exercised their perceived rights to steer the discussion as they saw fit. This created the space for an informative 'inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a common theme' (Kvale, 2007, p.1) as noted in 3.6.2. I asked them whether the university should continue to advocate this approach or consider softening its stance, if not discard *Interact* altogether. All, including Neil, were unanimous in their responses indicating that *Interact* was still a valid proposition, and added that the university should strive to set the bar high and to *'show people an ideal; you want people to excel; you want to motivate the [PGCE] students'* (Hannah). For Camilla, *'that's what the university's about. It's about inspiring people. Showing them the ultimate best that you can be. This is what perfect, fantastic, inspirational teaching is.'* Hannah found the merit of her PGCE course to be the strength of its convictions, and believed it needed to send a powerful message, able to shake trainees' prior assumptions: *'You have the job of breaking down people's preconceptions about how languages should be taught so it has to be a strong line.'* She therefore argued that, to be convincing, university tutors needed to appear convinced and perhaps unyielding, even if at the expense of a softer, more pragmatic and palatable stance: *'If you don't send a strong message that this is what you've to do and they only do it half-heartedly then they don't get anything out of it at all.'* Hannah reported that her initial trust in the message was a measure of our commitment to it and, as a consequence, it had encouraged her and her peers to also take a leap of faith and try the approach for themselves. As noted in section 5.7.1.3, along with her peers, Hannah might not have experimented with *Interact,* were it not for her tutors' contagious belief in it: *'you buy the whole package, whether you believe*

in it or not, you need to try it, and only then can you find out whether or not that's something you will continue with later on.' Neil echoed her sentiment and used his experience as a senior leader in school to advise:

> *From the outset, it has to be fully formed…monolithic...it has to be if you want people to believe in what you're saying, that's what you present. You don't present part of the walls and a few bricks, you present the whole package... And you present it in a certain way: 'Yes, there are other ways but we're going with this one because we believe absolutely in it.'* (Neil)

The reason for Neil's resolute standpoint above, which is seemingly at odds with his earlier criticism of *Interact* as a straitjacket, was based on his understanding that a diluted version of a message only ever leads to its half-hearted application in practice. Despite his own straying away from the original '*package*', Neil insisted: '*you have to present it… almost without compromise because if you [do], then, well, it's a compromise and people… won't necessarily buy into it as fully, I don't think.'* Camilla concurred, acknowledging that, in reality, each trainee would then go on to adapt it to their personal circumstances and proclivities but a model was necessary as a '*starting point.'*

There are risks, however, in presenting '*a strong model*', as Hannah recalled witnessing some of her peers interpret it as '*gospel*'. Yet she equally felt that '*if you said to people: "it's not essential or there are other ways, this is an option, try it if you like" then you might find that nobody does it.'* Neil warned though that the 'buying' may be qualitatively different and lead to divergent outcomes on the basis of PGCE students' reflective capacities: '*you rely on having quality participants who can take what's on offer… and analyse it… and then work it in…a classroom… learn from that and adapt it for themselves.'* Just as an evangelical response would be inappropriate, in his opinion, so would too hasty a personalisation process that would only weaken the message; he concluded: '*for somebody to start doing the adapting before putting it out there is wrong.'* For this reason, the message needed to be powerful and uncompromising yet put through '*some sort of cognitive process'* (Neil) lest it led to imitative practice. Those risks notwithstanding, Hannah's concluding thoughts on her PGCE course were: '*I got a very good foundation; it gave me some kind of overarching*

structure and, if I'm still teaching in ten years' time, it's quite possible that I'd revisit those but at the beginning, you're juggling a lot of things.' Neil, likewise, was keen to conclude his interview on a positive note, having observed that its overall tenor may have mistakenly given the impression that he had forsaken his *Interact* roots. Upon admitting that *'with a hint of sadness, most of the time, I communicate in English for the full lesson'* and that his senior management role meant his MFL teaching *'had suffered,'* still he would envisage revisiting those roots at some point in the future. That is why *'the monolith is still important because it's given me the direction that's led me here. I would not advocate doing it any other way. It's shaped me. It set ideas in motion that are as relevant now as they were back then'* (Neil). Thus, Neil's centred position on the adoption/rejection axis is a reflection both of his current use of English in MFL lessons but also of his continued allegiance to key principles of *Interact.* In particular: *'the idea of struggling for meaning; that* [learners] *should have to spend time working things out for themselves and that this sense of confusion in the student is normal and indeed desirable…if learning is going to be deep.'* This led him to conclude: *'I think there are certain underpinning fundamentals which are still there.'* It seems then that, despite Neil's admission that he had forsaken a TL approach, some of the *'fundamentals'* had continued to inform his pedagogical practice and he had remained a supporter of the approach in principle.

5.7.3   Concluding thoughts

In this chapter, I have presented the findings relative to the in-service teachers. In common with the PGCE students (Chapter 4), respondents in this data set shared a belief that *Interact* both 'makes sense' and 'works'. However, as with the student teachers (4.3), behind these expressions lay different conceptualisations of *Interact.* In the first instance, the deployment of a revised framework (5.2) based on McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017) enabled these conceptualisations of *Interact* to be framed against a superficial / reflective angle so as to tease out their respective procedural or axiomatic orientations. This demonstrated that, among other profiles, assenters (5.4) broadly adhered to a view of *Interact* as pertaining to a method whilst consenters generally saw it as an approach (5.6). Borderline cases (5.5), especially

Cécile, alerted us to the liminal tension between these two views and its implication for ensuing allegiances to different professional identities.

To better analyse these tensions and their impact on the formation of teacher identity, it was necessary to depart from the framework and survey the teachers' data from a developmental angle. In so doing, the progressive milestones in their journey were plotted, pointing to the salutary effects of combining a disruptive 'culture shock' with a congruent message-medium 'whole package'. Among the key findings in the above analysis were firstly, the value of experiencing a message in ways that call upon participants' intellectual, sensory, affective and practical understandings (Dewey, 1997; Korthagen, 2010) in order to unsettle assumptive foundations and open space for curiosity and receptiveness. Secondly, from the vantage point of teachers' experience, an intriguing finding consisted in the counter-intuitive injunction to adopt an uncompromising '*strong line*' (Hannah) despite its potentially adverse effects. Although participants were initially '*caught up in it'* (Neil) and found it challenging to dissociate approach from method, nevertheless, the more experienced teachers in the data set still advocated strongly nailing our colours to the *Interact* mast.

6 Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The intention in this chapter is to re-contextualise the motivation and rationale for this research, first presented in Chapter 1, in order to discuss previous chapters' findings in relation to said rationale. I therefore begin by justifying the structure (6.1) adopted below, which relates to the twofold impetus for this research. This will set the scene for why I proceed to discuss *Interact* as a first-order (6.2) and then as a second-order (6.3) pedagogical proposition. I will then examine the role of *Interact* in the formation of the research participants' professional identity (6.4) and conclude by reviewing the implications of the above for teacher education (6.5).

In Chapter 1, I located the origins for this research in the personal disquiet stemming from two particular concerns. In the first instance, as a secondary-school *Interact*-'trained' MFL teacher, I had perceived *Interact* to be misconstrued and perhaps misrepresented in the field. I was personally intrigued by the different interpretations and value judgements I had encountered in my teaching and teacher-education career. Therefore, an initial focus for this research was to investigate the different representations of *Interact* 'out there'. The purpose was not to reach any kind of formal definition or even a broad-church consensus on the constituent characteristics of *Interact* but to discern the qualitative nature of teachers' understanding, determine what factors were at play behind them, and examine whether these interpretations in turn influenced practice, if at all. The above intent gave rise to the first research focus (RQ1), namely: 'What is the nature of the research participants' understanding of *Interact*?'

A second concern arose in light of a changing and increasingly challenging MFL teaching landscape (1.5), which prompted me to ponder whether *Interact* continued to be a feasible, current and valued first-order pedagogical proposition. Beyond the above matters of conceptualisation (RQ1) were pressing questions to do with its applicability in the field and its perceived fitness for purpose, in answer to what had become, for me, a professional imperative in my new capacity as a PGCE MFL course leader. Therefore, a second and third research foci were formulated to shine a light

on issues of implementation (RQ2) and of the value of *Interact* for MFL teaching and for teachers (RQ3). The last two terms – MFL teaching and teachers - are important.

In relation to the first: historically, *Interact* had intended to answer the call for a missing pedagogy (Macaro, 1997; see 1.2) and therefore offer the field of MFL teaching a first-order communicative pedagogy of a particular kind. And although my research did not set out to evaluate *Interact* as a first-order proposition, if the findings suggested that its contribution to MFL teaching was found to be lacking, then this would inform my continued promotion of *Interact*. Therefore, the point of departure for the discussion that follows is an examination of the putative contribution of *Interact* to MFL teach*ing* (6.2) according to my research participants.

With regard to the second term - namely MFL teach*ers* - and as a teacher educator, my query regarded the contribution of *Interact* to pre-service teachers' education. Put simply, beyond the impact of *Interact* on MFL learners, I was curious about the impact of *Interact* on MFL student teachers. What sense did they make of it; how did it inform their thinking; how did it shape their practice and in what ways did they feel it contributed to their professional development, if at all? These were the queries that gave rise to the above-mentioned research questions. The focus then encompassed a concern for the legacy of *Interact* and pondered in particular the role it played in the formation of research-participants' professional identity (RQ4). Ultimately, the answers provided would also shape the future direction, if not existence, of *Interact* as a second-order proposition (6.3).

In what follows therefore, I firstly attend to *Interact* as a first-order proposition and examine its contribution to MFL teaching in the eyes of my research participants (6.2). Taking *Interact* as a second-order proposition, I then discuss the ways it has been interpreted and implemented by the (student) teachers concerned and whether it has been considered of value (6.3). I further discuss the place of *Interact* in the formation of their professional identity (6.4). The above discussion then forms the basis for possible recommendations to the wider field of teacher education (6.5).

6.2 *Interact* as a first-order proposition

With regard to the value of *Interact* as a first-order proposition and its potential contribution to MFL teaching, the data are replete with testimonies of its positive impact. There was broad consensus across participants that *Interact* 'works', although, as established earlier (5.6), this took on different nuances for different respondents. Nevertheless, research participants agreed that a TL ethos had a telling and positive impact on learners' motivation, linguistic competence and attitudinal attributes, which I examine in turn below (6.2.1). Furthermore, the merit of *Interact* was found in its invitation to let learners 'speak as themselves' (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14) and utilise the TL for their own purposes (6.2.2.). In principle then, the above justifies the continued promotion of *Interact* in secondary schools (6.2.3). However, contextual constraints remain and are synthesised here (6.2.4) to set the scene for a later exploration of how those constraints intersect with *Interact* (6.3) according to the research participants' profiles. Essentially, the value that *Interact* holds for them is predicated on their own educational principles, as will be elaborated upon in the conclusion to this first section (6.2.5).

6.2.1 Impact of the Target Language Ethos

In the first instance, most respondents attested to the motivational impact of *Interact* on learners. It was found to enthuse their classes so that learners '*love it'* (Margot, 4.3.5), even '*the trickiest'* of them (Neil, 5.7.1.8). One of the contributing factors was the 'TL lifestyle' (Christie, 2011, p.311) whereby the TL is accepted by all as the normal means of classroom communication (2.7.1.1). This ensured a level playing field and established an inclusive '*whole little world'* (Cécile, 5.5.1), enabling even '*failing*' (Cécile) students to engage in the 'here and now and us' that buffered them from a more utilitarian and results-driven agenda (1.5). Similarly, Camilla sought to legitimise the subject in learners' eyes by creating a '*whole sort of atmosphere'* whereby '*when you come into our room, it's a little bit of France*' (5.6.2). In creating an MFL 'world', participants reported intending to authenticate the classroom context as a credible setting for TL exchange and in return noted learners' increased interest. The affective dimension highlighted in all three questionnaires (4.2) pointed to learners' improved

confidence and greater curiosity (4.2.1.2) towards the TL generated by this immersive world, so that respondents noticed *'more interest from pupils…they are sometimes more involved. They also feel the curiosity to learn how to say different things'* (R8, 4.2.1).

In terms of learners' linguistic competence, the TL environment provided the raw material with which to build their knowledge of the language. Whilst the initial naïve 'learning by osmosis' (4.2.1.1) view of second-language acquisition was quickly discarded, *Interact* 'worked' in that it was observed to *'make* [their] *lessons better'* (Rhiannon), by which respondents meant that the quality of the learning was improved so that *'there is more language being used and produced and learnt'* (Rob, 5.6.4). In particular, *Interact* secured an early toehold on communicative competence owing to the 'drip-feeding' of routines (2.4.1). This furnished learners with a rich repertoire of *'functional'* (Rob, 5.6.1) language and the ammunition with which to fulfil their expressive needs: *'because they want to say that their partner was rubbish or…really good'* (Rhiannon, 5.51). Furthermore, it made learners *'feel intelligent'* (R12, 4.2.1) owing to the fact that it raised expectations that they could and would cope with a TL environment.

Finally, with regard to their attitudinal attributes, an environment that validated learners' curiosity and linguistic appropriation was seen to have a positive effect on their resilience and resourcefulness. Research participants noticed that learners were able to *'stay tuned in'* (Beth), *'muddle through'* (R24), *'have a go'* (R3), *'figure out rules for themselves'* (R3) and *'cobble together new language'* (R24). The TL ethos was therefore regarded as an ambitious strategy, requiring learners' effort and attention but ultimately paying valuable linguistic and attitudinal dividends. It thus seemed to offer useful ammunition to counter the culture of 'low expectations' observed in other MFL classrooms (Wingate, 2016).

6.2.2 Learners can 'speak as themselves'

However, Mitchell (1989) had cautioned that TL input need not lead to TL intake (2.4.1) and therefore that an immersive TL ethos might be necessary but not sufficient a factor in learners' retention and uptake. The latter necessitates the additional 'push'

(Swain, 1985) prompted by a personal interest and investment in communicating in the TL (Littlewood, 1981; Stevick, 1996), as we saw in 2.7.1. To secure such an investment, learners would need to be invited to 'speak as themselves' (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14) and teachers likewise invited to welcome their learners' 'transportable identities' (Zimmerman, 1998) into the classroom (2.7.1). The teachers in the data set demonstrated the above in a number of ways. For example, Camilla designed a 'headline' routine that stimulated pupils' reactions as a topic for classroom discussion (5.6.7). Similarly, Hannah developed a starter routine which generated pupil-led classroom '*chat*' (5.6.7). Furthermore, we saw Beth and Simon (5.6.4) seize upon their respective classes' interactional tangents for communicative purposes. These and other examples in the data showed a willingness by teachers to enlist learners' interests, validate their personal contributions and further exploit the classroom context as the focus for interaction. This invitational atmosphere allowed learners to '*steal*' expressions (Joséphine, 5.4.1) said *en passant* by their teachers and co-opt them for their own communicative ends. As a result, learners were willing to utilise language structures embedded in classroom routines to concoct their own: '*they were coming out with some really long extended sentences that they'd managed to put together themselves through constant routines that had been built up'* (Simon, 5.6.6).

Learners were further observed using the language '*for their own purposes'* (R6), to '*express personal thoughts, wishes and feelings'* (R15), partaking in '*conversations*' (R23; Hannah) and thus enabled to '*find one's own voice in the foreign language'* (R15). In this, learners demonstrated their readiness to engage their 'whole personality' (Littlewood, 1981, p.93) in pursuit of the language learning task and therefore to have profitably conflated 'authentic and didactic tasks' (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181 quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14) instead of construing the language-learning enterprise as a purely scholarly and de-contextualised endeavour. Indeed, Simon had concisely compared his previous MFL pedagogy and *Interact* by declaring: '*it's the difference between studying about a language or actually using a language'* (5.6.1). In effect, learners were reported to have willingly suspended disbelief in subscribing to the TL

lifestyle, which led Rob to note '*how deeply that culture had been successful*' (5.6.1) with his beginners' class (Year 7).

6.2.3 *Interact*: a valid first-order proposition?

In light of the above, for my research participants, *Interact* appears to constitute a valid first-order pedagogical proposition which contributes positively to MFL learners' attitude towards the subject, if successfully established and willingly received. Some further mentioned how professionally rewarding they had found it, rejoicing in '*giving pupils an opportunity that [they] never had'* (R8, 4.2.3) and were further gratified to witness that it made their learners '*feel independent and proud and confident'* (R15, 4.2.3). To the question posed by the inspection report titled '*KS3: the wasted years?'* (Ofsted, 2015) which, as we saw (2.10.3), had judged MFL teaching to be uninspiring, it seems that *Interact*'s successful application could be said to provide worthwhile answers and the means by which to reignite teachers and learners' inspirations. Therefore, on those grounds alone, my continued advocacy of *Interact* on the PGCE programme might, in principle, be justified. However, we noted that the rosy picture painted above is subject to a number of contextual constraints, both nationally and locally, which impinged upon (student) teachers' perceived autonomy (2.10.3). Whilst the data demonstrated that *Interact* was the approved pedagogy of choice in some schools, this was not necessarily the case more broadly and even a '*passionate'* advocate such as Beth (5.7.1.7) conceded bowing to those contextual pressures.

6.2.4 Contextual constraints re-visited

As a reminder (1.5), the broad educational landscape that had seen *Interact* emerge in the 2000's had now transformed into a 'quasi-market' (Ball, 2003; Thomas, 2013). The ensuing competitive culture ushered in by school league tables in 1992 (Leckie and Goldstein, 2017) lent GCSE examinations their 'high-stakes' (Harlen, 2007) status and marshalled in the 'age of measurement' (Biesta, 2009). These GCSE examinations in MFL were, in the first instance, ill-equipped to measure and therefore valorise communicative competence (Grenfell, 2000; Mitchell, 2003), let alone interactional competence (Walsh, 2011). MFL had also acquired the reputation of being a challenging examination subject, less likely to earn high grades in comparison with

others (Mitchell and Myles, 2019) arguably due to the more 'severe grading' of MFL at GCSE (Tinsley and Board, 2017). Its decline in popularity was accentuated by its fall from grace as a formerly compulsory subject leading to a steep drop in the number of GCSE MFL candidates (Churchward, 2019). Its lack of appeal among secondary-school learners was not only attributed to its perception as a 'difficult' subject (Ofsted, 2015, p.5) but also to the observation that its 'teaching failed to challenge and engage pupils' (Ofsted, 2015, p.5).

Caught between the need to generate learners' enthusiasm in order to improve enrolment on the one hand, and difficult, severely graded, 'high-stakes' GCSE exams on the other, MFL teachers among the data set reported feeling the pressure. Rob, for example, readily admitted that in his current school, *'the priority is success'* (5.7.1.6), adding that he would not be able to justify valuing an approach over results. Beth too acknowledged feeling compelled into devoting some of her KS4 lessons to GCSE examination preparations (5.7.1.7). The sense of urgency created by the pressure to 'cover' a curriculum in limited time yet achieve target grades was aptly captured by Dadds' (2001, p.49) expression: 'the hurry along curriculum'. Although Dadds' observation related to English primary schools, D'Arcy (2006) noted that the same applied to secondary schools (1.5). Her study demonstrated that MFL Key Stage 4 classes tended to be dedicated to GCSE examination preparation, to the detriment of the quality of TL interaction. There were echoes of the above in the questionnaires, with R2 lamenting: '*They need to prepare the GCSE final exams for June and I need to teach them all the necessary content. I "don't have time" [quotation marks in the original] to use the TL*' (4.2.2.3). It seems that, at least for R2 above, if the TL was perceived to compete against examination preparation, then it was discarded. Lucy, for her part, although demonstrating an intellectual appreciation for *Interact* '*in an ideal world',* had justified her eventual dissenting position in relation to, for her, the self-evident truth that: '*We're getting through an exam. We're not actually creating linguists'* (4.3.3). Effectively, Lucy's practice echoed Buchanan's (2015, p.701) point (2.10.3) in that she was implementing 'decisions made by others' and bowing to 'dominant accountability measures.' In her case, Stone-Johnson's (2014) observation

(2.10.3) that more recent entrants into the profession appeared unperturbed by the accountability agenda seems to hold true.

6.2.5 Concluding thoughts

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, I did not set out to evaluate the impact of *Interact* on MFL teaching *per se*. This would have called for a different study. My intention was to determine participants' perceptions of *Interact*, and this included their views on whether it remained applicable and worthwhile as a practical suggestion or whether it had been rendered obsolete by changes in the educational landscape. In relation to *Interact* as a first-order pedagogical proposition, the above leads me to conclude that it was considered to make a positive contribution to MFL teaching in that it engaged and sustained learners' interests and personal investment in the subject. It further enabled them to build the confidence needed to use the TL for their own communicative ends. However, if perceived to be a distraction that might jeopardise GCSE results, then teachers displayed different responses according to a range of factors, among which featured their differing understandings of *Interact* and of their own educational roles. If participants leant towards a view of their role as a 'curriculum deliverer' (Twiselton, 2004), whether by choice or obligation, and they considered that examination results were better served by a different pedagogical approach, then they dispensed with *Interact.* Admittedly, the only clear cases in the data set that support the above relate to Lucy and Mathilda although the number of 'home truths' disclosed anecdotally (1.5) leads me to think their views may be widely shared by others.

This said, as will be recalled (5.7.1), despite the pressures outlined above, some of the more experienced teachers among the research participants persisted in believing that *Interact* did not compete with, nor compromise GCSE results but rather added to the MFL learning experience of their students. Simon, for example, even after noting that there were no differences in GCSE results between the *Interact* and non-*Interact* classes in his department, still found that the approach provided worthwhile qualitative gains in terms of learners' mindset (5.7.1.7). What then explains his and others' allegiance, to wit Beth's declaration that '*this is still what we believe in*'

(5.7.1.7), seems rooted in their beliefs regarding the purpose of MFL teaching and of education more generally, which led them to value *Interact* for its broader educative contribution to learners' attitudinal attributes.

In summary, there was broad agreement that *Interact* remained a valid and effective first-order proposition likely to generate learners' motivation and positive orientation towards the subject, contextual pressures permitting. However, research participants demonstrated that they came to value or disregard it on the basis, among other factors, of their perception of its utility, purpose and alignment with school culture and with their personal educational philosophies. To examine these further, the next section focuses on *Interact* as a teacher-education proposition (6.3). As such, I will discuss participants' interpretation (RQ1) and implementation (RQ2) of *Interact*, and the value it still holds for them (RQ3) and will relate these to their philosophies of education. To this end, the key question in what follows is: how do participants' views on education and on their roles within it affect their interpretation of *Interact* and, reflexively, how does *Interact* affect their views on language teaching and on themselves as MFL teachers? The discussion will then broaden to include the role of *Interact* in the formation of their professional identity (6.4) and thus address RQ4.

6.3   *Interact* as a second-order proposition

In previous chapters, I made the case that differing stances hinged on whether *Interact* was perceived as a method or as an approach (1.4) and that this 'spirit' versus 'letter' reading could be plotted against a framework drawn from McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle's (2017), resulting in assenters, consenters, dissenters, absenters and borderline cases. Below, in reiterating those profiles' respective characteristics, I aim to outline their connections with respondents' broader views on their educational roles and practices, and of the place of *Interact* within these. I begin with the two respondents (6.3.1) who ultimately rejected *Interact* and, whilst they may constitute 'outliers' in the present data set, their cases can firstly be informative as to the reasons for their rejection and secondly, they may be representative of a wider perspective, if the anecdotal 'home truths' (Chapter 1) are to be trusted. I then outline assenters and consenters' shared beliefs as well as their differences with regard to their views

on *Interact* (6.2.3) to determine these reveal in terms of their respective educational philosophies.

6.3.1 Dissenters and Absenters

Firstly, dissenters (Lucy) and absenters (Mathilda) alike experienced a conflict of interest between *Interact* and their own aspirations, leading to their ultimate rejection of *Interact*. It is worth noting that these two cases may not account for all the potential dissenters and absenters in the data set since the questionnaires had uncovered seven respondents who had travelled 'away from Damascus' (4.2.3). However, the latter had lamented their trainee status and lack of ownership of classes as explanations for their current dissention, unlike Lucy or Mathilda for whom rejection of *Interact* was justified on the grounds of its idealistic ambition, flavoured with 'wishful-thinking'. Both Lucy (4.3.3) and Mathilda (4.3.4) had disclosed their initial perplexity vis-à-vis *Interact*, having harboured different expectations about the content of their teacher-education programme. Sjølie (2014) had noted that these expectations constituted the internal yardstick against which trainees audited theoretical content to judge the relevance of their teacher-education programme. Whilst Lucy was open-minded enough to appreciate that *Interact* had its merits – it was '*a nice idea*' – she nonetheless found it too unrealistic and removed from the exigencies of the classroom. For her, *Interact* was a distraction; one that would demand too heavy a price when she essentially saw her role as ensuring that she met school targets. As we saw earlier (6.2), Lucy had no reservations in openly subscribing to the accountability agenda (Thomas, 2013).

Mathilda too conceded that *Interact* made intellectual sense and worked in practice, and readily admitted dutifully applying *Interact* in her first placement since, for her, that was the prescribed and only strategy she knew. However, it transpired that her grasp of *Interact* was possibly tenuous, based as it was on a rather imitative and unquestioning premise, and that it had not left an imprint powerful enough to displace earlier images of teaching. Mathilda had revealed finding the theatrical aspects of *Interact* rather intimidating*,* being of a shy disposition (4.3.4). Perhaps we see here 'defensive' as opposed to 'receptive learning' at play in the sense first used by Curran (1961), cited by Stevick (1974, p.379), whereby defensive learning treats content

matter as a product to be faithfully memorised and reproduced but one that leaves the learner unchanged whereas a receptive learner grows and transforms as a result of his or her learning. For Stevick (1974, p.379), the difference is a matter of 'student attitude / emotion, rather than of materials or procedures.' Mathilda had effectively kept her intellectual and emotional distances in not letting *Interact* percolate through to her deep-seated beliefs. In this, as we saw (2.10.1), Mathilda evinced the 'externalised' disposition that McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle (2017) had noticed in their student teachers, meaning that the content of the university message was regarded as a body of knowledge that had remained, intellectually and in practical terms, 'out there' (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017, p.55). Therefore, Mathilda neither embraced *Interact* nor deeply reflected upon it but rather attempted to replicate it in her first placement based on a superficial understanding of its rationale and a natural desire to do well by all. In a less amenable second placement, however, she had found herself unable and unwilling to impose *Interact*, sensing it would not be welcome by her colleagues or classes. Having '*nothing else to fall back upon,*' Mathilda had adopted the practices of the MFL department (4.3.4). She therefore disclosed feeling rather short-changed by the PGCE course, which had left her '*high and dry,*' having sent her on a course of action at odds with what she had expected 'normal' MFL teaching to be. Her role, as she saw it, was to conform to the situated, local practices and fulfil the brief set by others rather than formulate her own pedagogical vision. In this respect, she seemed to subscribe to the 'technical-rational understandings of teachers' work' (Mockler, 2011, p.518), meaning, as we saw earlier (2.10.3.3), that she abided by centrally-designed directives that prescribed her professional decision-making and evaluated her performance against externally-defined quality criteria. In effect, in Mathilda's eyes, the PGCE course had possibly failed in its primary mission by not providing her with even the 'epistemic delight' (Barnett, 2012, p.75) she was entitled to, a delight we shall explore later in this section. Fundamentally, even if *Interact* had initially appealed to the intellect (RQ1), both Lucy and Mathilda developed a negative disposition towards it (RQ3). Although their individual practical experiences differed (RQ2), both had in common the fact that *Interact* had left little trace on their personal assumptions about language learning

and teaching other than the belief that *Interact* was misaligned with their respective professional manifestos.

6.3.2 Assenters and Consenters

For assenters and consenters together, on the other hand, there appeared to be synergy between their personal values and their understanding of *Interact*. This enabled them to be more 'receptive' (Stevick, 1974) to *Interact* and thus willing to 'integrate' it, as Stevick would later put it (1994, p.104), integration being a measure of the reach of this synergy and the depth of its resonance with personal values. Although Stevick (1994, p.104) was writing in the context of foreign-language learning, the notion of an 'integrated' as opposed to a 'fragmented' idea applies to learning in general in so far as an idea becomes integrated if it appeals to the affect over and above the intellect. Assenters and consenters seemed to find *Interact* convincing from both a cognitive and affective point of view, to wit the emotional language they employed to describe their dispositions: '*I love it*' (Tim, 4.3.5), '*we feel…very passionately that this still is what we believe in*' (Beth, 5.7.1.7). They differed, however, in their respective interpretations and ensuing practices, and these differences, as we shall see, reveal deep-seated beliefs about the central purpose of education and of their own roles within it. Below, I attend first to assenters (6.3.2.1) and then consenters' (6.3.2.2) understanding and enactment of *Interact,* and examine what these say about their respective educational philosophies.

6.3.2.1 Assenters

Assenters saw in *Interact* a welcome '*toolkit*' (Simon, 5.7.1.3) whose constituent features they gladly enumerated and proudly enacted (5.4). As previously noted (2.5), they seemed to find in it 'the reassurance of a detailed set of sequential steps to follow in the classroom' (Richards and Rodgers, 2001, p.246). Its clear procedures and stages of implementation, outlined in 2.4, provided them with the secure footing to step into the professional arena with some measure of confidence. Its communicative principles had been imbricated or - in the words of Beth (5.6.2), Hannah (5.7.1.3) and Neil (5.7.2) who all independently used the same expression - these principles had been '*package[d]*' in such a way that they could be easily and rapidly transferred to the

classroom. Additionally, assenters did not see the need to conceptually disentangle procedures from principles in this 'two-for-one package'. These replicable and trusted techniques had been mapped out for them, only requiring assenters to skilfully apply them in practice, thereby intimating that *Interact* had become a pedagogical proxy, obviating the need to formulate their own pedagogy. As these techniques included team competitions and other playful activities for the purpose of inviting learners to interact with each other, assenters seemed to construe their roles as 'entertainers' (Margot, 5.4.3) who enjoyed the 'fun and games' elements decried elsewhere (Block, 2002; Wingate, 2016). They therefore based their pedagogy on the deployment of strategies such as team competition and games to alleviate for their pupils the arduous task of learning a foreign language. Furthermore, assenters seemed to embrace *Interact* for the permission it granted to enact a more vibrant, energetic and flamboyant persona (5.4.2). Whereas Mathilda earlier had arguably been 'defensive' (Stevick, 1974) in her learning of *Interact* procedures, assenters were willing to let them seep through so that it became part of their '*genes*' (Cécile, 5.5.1), with Cécile (5.5.1) finding the overall process '*liberating*' despite her equally shy temperament. Assenters thus placed their wholehearted faith in the method, appropriating it – '*it's my way of teaching*' (Marion, 5.4.5) – and aspired to transform into skilful *Interact* practitioners. As a result, they claimed not to be able to imagine themselves teaching differently as they would '*rather not teach than not teach like this*' (Cécile, 551).

Moreover, their mission statement was to transmit their passion for the subject in order to secure and sustain learners' interest in MFL. Permeating the assenters' data were references to instilling in learners a sense of efficacy and confidence in coping with a TL environment but in surreptitious ways, by enlisting playful activities so that learners realised their progress after the event. A pedagogy that emphasised liveliness, interactivity and theatricality was thought to better 'sugar the pill' and sustain learners' motivation (5.4.1). Contrasting *Interact* favourably against more cerebral approaches where '*they only do writing and heads down*' (Julie, 5.4.2), they found its merit in the fact that learners '*don't realise that they learn*' (Joséphine, 5.4.2). If assenters failed in this, the blame was theirs rather than the method's.

In effect, *Interact* had equipped them with a fail-safe methodology which ought to be successfully implemented, provided they had enough tenacity and resilience. Indeed, their resolute attitude at times betrayed traces of categorical thinking. Julie, for instance, admitted to being '*horrible*' to her trainees should they fail to maintain her total TL policy (5.4.4). For her part, Joséphine (5.4.3) disclosed she did not agree with her colleague's '*50-50*' TL stance, potentially revealing a rather judgemental outlook on what she saw as a compromise to the integrity of a total TL policy. This suggests that assenters perceived *Interact* as a ready-made template, a *'recipe'* (Sylvia) and that they perhaps evinced too evangelical a belief in its exclusive claim as the proper way to teach. Hannah had apparently witnessed her peers treating *Interact* '*as gospel'* (5.7.1.5) which might have seen them adopt a superior attitude when on placements in MFL departments that did not adhere to it*.* In taking *Interact* at face-value, assenters seemed rather oblivious to its underpinning principles, a point alluded to by Beth when she noted that even her *Interact* trainees were at times unable to see the *rigour* and the *'philosophy behind it'* (5.6.6). Untutored eyes (5.6.6) can then fall prey to the showmanship and 'choreography' of *Interact,* and remain unaware of its intricacy (5.6.4) and theoretical foundations (2.6). However, this showmanship, which '*does impress people*' (Cécile, 5.5.1), had earned assenters professional accolades. Consequently, the esteem they openly declared towards *Interact* was rooted in an appreciation of its methodological attributes (RQ1) and of its successful and welcome application (RQ2), which brought dividends to all concerned and further confirmed for assenters the merit in adopting it as their signature pedagogy (RQ3).

6.3.2.2   Consenters

Consenters, whilst agreeing with the overall benefits of *Interact* above, displayed an awareness as well as a flexible and pragmatic observance of *Interact's* principles, and thus leaned towards an interpretation of *Interact* as an approach (2.6). Indeed, they disclosed an aversion towards any formulaic '*recipe'* (Sylvia) or '*template*' (Ceri), preferring to apply their creative stamps and modify the approach to suit their and their pupils' personalities (5.6.7). Their willing identification with *Interact* was not one that would see them adopt it wholesale or faithfully replicate it but rather judiciously

choose those aspects befitting their contexts, their educational philosophies and their constructive views of learning.

This was firstly in evidence in their attempts at personalising (5.6.7) rather than impersonating *Interact*. They preferred to extricate its principles from its procedures and they selected among the latter those that suited them, or devised new ones in support of existing principles (5.6.7). Rather than readily enumerating, as assenters had done, the list of *Interact* techniques that characterised their pedagogical approach, consenters mentioned '*playing around*' (Beth) with routines (5.6.7), noticing their creative potential and exercising their agency in deliberately bending them to their chosen educational purposes.

Contrary to assenters' view of learning as best happening without learners' knowledge or effort, consenters saw learning as predicated precisely on the notion of 'struggling to arrive at meaning' advocated by Harris *et al.* (2001, p.22). Examples of this can be found in Rob's '*withholding information…so that [learners] have the chance to speculate and work things out*' (5.6.5) or in Sylvianne's injunction to '*make the kids guess*' (5.6.5). A constructive view of learning can also be surmised from Hannah's belief that '*you're going to remember more if you have to work it out'* (5.6.5). Indeed, Sylvianne's quip regarding her trainee's pedagogical strategy – '*I deliver and you do whatever'* – succinctly summarises her criticism of a transmissive approach. In their preference for a constructive approach, consenters betrayed a view of learners as participants in (Allwright and Hanks, 2009) rather than recipients of their own learning (2.4.3). For this reason, descriptions of their MFL lessons had a purposeful intent and a focus on learning and, where assenters had justified playful activities for their motivational benefits, consenters always associated them with their educative rationale.

Furthermore, consenters' accounts of their MFL lessons had a distinct relational and responsive flavour, involving '*communication with eye-contact'* (R5, 4.2.1.3); and this '*responsive philosophy'* (R5) was in service of nurturing the contingency of classroom interaction for its pedagogical promise. For instance, Beth had earlier (6.2) shown her 'conversational vigilance' in action (van Lier, 1996, p.177) in her willingness to follow classroom interaction detours to capitalise on their potential linguistic gains. In

validating conversational tangents, consenters sought to establish a TL '*culture*' (Ceri, 4.3.6) so that learners used the TL '*for real*' (Simon, 5.6.1). Such a culture would not simply emerge by dint of a total TL policy; it had to be crafted – '*you've to make the whole thing happen*' (Cécile, 5.5.2) – on the basis of a masterplan involving '*layers*' (Ceri, 5.6.6) of intersecting linguistic routines '*that had been built up*' (Simon, 5.6.6) over time. A masterplan that was nevertheless attentive to the organic nature of classroom interaction so that learners' spontaneous attempts at communicating were interwoven back into the fabric of future routines, as the latter were '*not allowed to just stop still*' (Beth, 5.6.4) but must evolve. This resulted in lessons that were '*jam-packed*' (Hannah, 5.6.3) and '*intense*' (Simon, 5.6.3), exploiting as they did '*almost every available minute and second of the lesson*' (Simon, 5.6.3).

What made consenters commit to such a demanding approach, in terms of their time, energy and attention both during and outside MFL lessons, was their belief in its positive impact on the quality of the language-learning experience. Instead of a 'teacher as entertainer' (Margot, 5.4.3) or as a 'curriculum deliverer' (Twiselton, 2004), they adhered to a vision of 'teacher as educator'. Consequently, they regarded it as their professional responsibility to ensure that learners not only acquired the interactional competence to manipulate the language so that they could 'say something they **wanted** to say' (Harris *et al*. 2001, p.2, emphasis in the original) but also developed profitable attitudinal attributes that would serve them well in and outside the MFL classroom. In that respect, they were attuned to the 'subjectification' (Biesta, 2015, p.8) dimension of their educative mission, meaning that over and above its 'qualification' and 'socialisation' purposes, consenters also paid attention to its concern towards the 'processes of being / becoming a human subject' (Biesta, 2015, p.8).

By the same token, this first-order interest in the 'edifying' (Barnett, 2009, p.432) influence of education on learners also applied to their own professional development. Consenters asserted their rights over the development of their professional identity and considered it their prerogative to interpret rather than dutifully apply *Interact*. Their idiosyncratic and creative personalisation of its principles (5.6.7) attests to this sense of ownership, as did Hannah's admission that

she did not suffer from the guilt-inducing sentiment that '*unless I deliver my lessons precisely like this then I'm a failure*' (5.7.1.6). Effectively, consenters' constructive view of (language) learning applied reflexively to their own professional formation, so that these constructive assumptions underpinned both their pedagogical practices and their own professional development. Consenters primarily considered *Interact* as a '*starting point*' (Camilla, 5.7.2) in their own professional journey rather than the destination, trusting that they would eventually '*figure out [their] own way of doing things*' (Rhiannon, 4.3.8). This ownership over the enterprise of becoming a teacher will be further expanded upon in the following section (6.4). To conclude, consenters shared an understanding of the principles that underpin *Interact* (RQ1) and of the procedural challenges these present (RQ2). Despite its demands, they found merit in the approach and came to appreciate its promotion of a more authentic and participative teacher-learner interaction which accorded with their own educational values (RQ3).

6.4   The role of *Interact* in the formation of professional identity

Having reviewed *Interact* as a first and second-order proposition, and discussed the ways in which different participants' profiles relate to it, my aim in the following is to examine the role of *Interact* in the formation of participants' professional identities. Those profiles remain pertinent, and we will see below that assenters and consenters embarked on their teacher education journey arguably sustained by different assumptions about teaching and about becoming a teacher. *Interact* then became the prism through which those assumptions were revealed. In essence, as will be elaborated upon here, where assenters seemed to evince a view of *Interact* as the desired end point of their professional journey, consenters saw *Interact* as a point of departure. There was therefore a qualitative difference to the (trans)formation undergone by assenters, consenters and borderline cases, which, as we saw (2.10.2), can be of an epistemological or ontological nature (Barnett, 2012).

6.4.1   An epistemological journey

As will be recalled (2.10.2), the epistemological journey is one that equips learners with new knowledge, expertise and skills. In being receptive rather than defensive

(Stevick, 1974) towards new information, assenters not only acquire a skillset in the same way that Mathilda or Lucy did, but allow new knowledge to seep through so that they are irremediably changed in the process. Assenters' assertions that they cannot *'see [themselves] not doing it'* (Julie, 5.4.6), that *Interact* had seeped through to their *'genes'* (Cécile, 5.5.1) and become *'so embedded now that…[they] can't see [themselves]…teaching a different way'* (Rhiannon, 5.5.1) and that, owing to the transformative nature of process, they had *'come out of their shell'* (Cécile, 5.5.1) are all testaments to their metamorphosis. Yet, I would argue that this is a journey towards 'epistemic delight' (Barnett, 2012, p.75) meaning 'a delight fostered as the student comes to live in a new cognitive universe and to enjoy the new capabilities that that process has opened up.' This epistemic journey arms assenters with new certainties and the confidence that, with sufficient experience, energy and determination, they can resolve potential dilemmas. Hence their resolute tenacity in the face of reluctant classes who resented the imposition of a TL ethos (5.4.5). However, for Cécile (5.5.2), torn between competing images of teaching, the question *'is it a victory or is it failure?'* takes on an existential dimension that would have left assenters perplexed. Her struggle to find the 'right' answer as to whether she should *'keep going because you know it's going to work or do you just, you know, it just won't work?'* (5.5.2) suggests she was aware of there being a question to be asked but also that she was looking for answers and was in need of certainties, hence her liminal position.

6.4.2 Ontological journey

Consenters, on the other hand, embarked on an ontological voyage, constituted by and bound for uncertainty, meaning that they were open to the notion of an unfathomable professional self. In other words, they were at ease with the prospect of always discovering yet never knowing. Their journey furnished them with the wherewithal to set forth and flourish 'amid uncertainty' (Barnett, 2012, p.74) since they were operating in an ever unknowable field. They thus appeared to address with equanimity the above-mentioned conflicting images of teaching on the basis of their understanding of the complex nature of learning and of becoming a teacher. This equanimity was not a given, and we saw Neil wrestle with existential ideals (5.7.1)

upon realising that *'the make-up [had] start[ed] to flake'* before resolving to be more authentic and abandon the *'front and [the] performance.'* In relinquishing old certainties, Neil was embracing the idea of discovering new ways of engaging with his learners and with his own professional identity. More generally, consenters' creative proclivities (5.6.7), responsive pedagogy (5.6.4) and openess to complexity (5.6.3) indicate an affinity with the notion of uncertainty not in evidence in other categories of respondents. Even if, at times, they did not know *'how to sit on [their] chair'* (Sylvianne, 5.7.1), their teacher-education programme had bequeathed them *'a very good foundation'* (Hannah, 5.7.2) and *'some kind of overarching structure'* (Hannah, 5.7.2), with which to construct their own pedagogy. Neil concluded that it had given him *'certain underpinning fundamentals,'* despite his eventual renouncement, that *'set ideas in motion'* and had *'given [him]…direction'* (5.7.2). For consenters, therefore, an awareness of the complexity and of the constructive nature of learning predisposed them to see past procedures and consider *Interact* as a cogent but versatile approach, the creative application of which would reap communicative and attitudinal rewards for their learners in fulfilment of their own educational mission statements. To summarise, while their teacher-education programme seems to have exerted a welcome transformative influence over both assenters and consenters' professional identities so that both profiles had been 'worked on' (Ellis, V., 2009, p.162), there was nevertheless a qualitative difference to the voyage undertaken and its destination.

In synthesis of the different issues examined so far in this discussion, the following broad-brush conclusions can be reached in relation to each research focus. In terms of the research participants' understanding of *Interact* (RQ1)*,* a distinct method / approach interpretation could be discerned, leading some to view it as a set of procedures to follow and others as a set of principles to be enacted as they saw fit. Regarding its application in the field (RQ2), contextual constraints together with participants' own educational philosophies steered them in different directions, influencing their pedagogical choices and practices. They therefore came to value (RQ3) and commit to *Interact*, or not, on the basis of their beliefs in its inherent merit and perceived contributions to MFL teaching and to their own professional development. The role and place of *Interact* in the formation of their professional

identity was thus framed against their assumptions about learning and teaching, about their own professional responsibilities and about the ways in which *Interact* was perceived to align or not with these assumptions (RQ4). The implications of the above for *Interact* as a teacher-education 'message', firstly for my own PGCE programme and then for the wider field of teacher education, forms the focus of the final section in this chapter (6.5).

6.5 Implications for teacher education

The above multiple interpretations of *Interact* resulted in different pathways, manifested by practitioners' eventual adoption, adaption, renouncement or rejection. Whilst it is in the nature of teacher education to be but a starting point in teachers' careers, nonetheless there are lessons to be gleaned from the preceding discussion that would inform my own professional development in the first instance and that might resonate with other teacher educators in similar positions. The lessons I learned in the course of this study are manifold and will lead to changes in my practice but not all of them will be discussed below since some fall beyond the remit of this thesis. For example, the conflation of *Interact* with PGCE qualification may have led to unhelpful strategic compliance (Borg, 2006) in some trainees, as did reported instances of coercive mentoring, which prevented some of them from questioning their being moulded into *Interact* practitioners (4.2.2). Restrictive interpretations of *Interact* as subscribing to a total TL policy may also be prejudicial to all concerned and will need addressing.

However, other findings have instructional value that relate more firmly to the research foci and which I discuss in what follows. One such concerns the seemingly contradictory injunction to promote an uncompromisingly '*strong message*' (Hannah, 7.5.2) despite the dogmatic or zealous interpretations that might arise as a result. At first glance, an unyielding advocacy is a poor model for the desired discernment and professional agency any teacher educator would wish their trainees to emulate. Yet this was the conclusion I drew from teachers' exhortations to present *Interact* as a '*monolith*' (Neil, 7.5.2) and adopt a '*strong line*' (Hannah, 7.5.2) so that trainees '*buy the whole package'* (Hannah, 7.5.2). At root, as we shall see below, lies a particular

conception of the role of university-based teacher education that holds promise in the present context (see 2.10.3). In what follows, I examine the rationale for the above exhortation and locate it in the expansive notion of 'experience' (Korthagen, 2010) espoused by the PGCE MFL course, based on a belief that a message has better chances of being understood and retained if experienced rather than merely received. It is this belief that underpins the twin notions of congruence and dissonance to better 'de-familiarise the familiar and familiarise the unfamiliar so that new ways of seeing are encouraged' (Burch, 2020, p.32).

6.5.1 Dissonance

Chronologically-speaking, the initial '*culture shock'* (Sylvianne, 5.7.1) reported by PGCE MFL students, irrespective of their countries of origin, was a factor of encountering and experiencing *Interact* for themselves through *ab-initio* Italian lessons on campus. At first, this culture shock prompted negative or, at best, puzzled reactions but was engineered for the purpose of challenging pre-course assumptions and bringing them to the surface so that they could be critically examined. The ensuing 'shockwaves' might then be better able to reach students' deep-seated beliefs; for example, they made Sylvianne envisage novel definitions of learning: *'I didn't feel like a student. I thought I was learning; I **knew** [said with emphasis] I was learning but I didn't know how to sit on my chair'* (5.7.1.4).

6.5.2 Congruence

Secondly, its opposite twin – congruence - aims to familiarise the unfamiliar and, as noted in 2.10.2, it is a key concept in a number of teacher-education programmes. In mine, it forms the conceptual thread that weaves together the following aspects. To begin with, congruence relates to 'walking the walk' (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p.194) whereby core values are espoused and modelled by course tutors. These values further undergird the internal architecture of the PGCE MFL course which then informs trainees' modes of engagement. This led Julie to notice that her and her peers *'were made to see it, to actually live it'* (5.7.1) and Sylvianne to realise that tutors *'made us **feel** [said with emphasis] what our future students would feel'* (5.7.1). As previously mentioned (2.10.2), the above expressions – *see it, live it, feel* – signal an

expanded notion of experience and highlight its Gestalt qualities (Korthagen, 2010). In that respect, the multi-sensory nature of student-teachers' engagement with the course points to the congruence between the intellect and the affect so that the message gains in persuasive power. Furthermore, the ambience was so engaging that PGCE students found themselves '*caught up in it,*' carried '*along for the ride*' (Neil, 5.7.1.5). However, the message would remain idealistic were it not confirmed by visits to local partnership schools to observe actual *Interact* lessons, enabling student teachers to see it and potentially believe it. Finally, congruence also pertains to the imbrication of method and approach (2.9). The tight logic which integrated conceptually convincing communicative principles within a mapped-out procedural 'package' provided trainees with a 'pedagogy of enactment' (Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald, 2009), the constituent parts of which were difficult to '*divorce*' (Beth, 5.6.2) so that it became an '*all or nothing*' (Hannah, 5.7.1.3) or a '*black or white*' affair (Neil, 5.7.1.8). This may have made its eventual disentanglement arduous for some but procured all an early purchase on professional competence and a welcome sense of readiness for school placement, should the latter prove amenable to *Interact.* Indeed, Hannah was '*brimming with enthusiasm*' at the onset of her NQT year (5.7.1.5).

6.5.3 A strong message

The legacy of *Interact* then resides in its aspirational vision of the possible: '*it's a completely different world, it's on another level*' (Simon, 5.7.1.7) which offers 'powerful alternative conceptions' (Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, and Pape, 2006) for teachers to consider. For consenters, at least, it also bequeathed a critical lens with which to decipher their and others' MFL teaching practices. This enabled Sylvianne (5.6.5) to notice the differences between *Interact* and transmissive language teaching approaches, and Simon (5.6.6) and Beth (5.7.1.4) to cast aside their previous pedagogical approaches in favour of *Interact.* Even Neil was left with '*certain underpinning fundamentals*' (5.7.2) that would guide his subsequent pedagogy. The merit of a 'strong message' therefore is in providing (student) teachers with a coherent set of ideas and practices that set them on their course with the ability to interpret and navigate educational currents. In that respect, they were not cast adrift,

'at the mercy of every intellectual breeze that happens to blow' (Dewey, 1997, p.51) but rather able to set sail with some assurance through uncharted waters, secure in their own internal compass, whether they chose to align with or distance themselves from *Interact* shores. The rationale for the above-mentioned exhortation to nail our colours to the *Interact* mast thus lies in its provision of a distinct reference point from which practitioners can get their bearings and orientate their onward professional journeys.

A fundamental lesson I derived from my own journey through this research, and which goes against a personal reluctance to impose any ideas on others, is to be '*monolithic*' (Neil, 5.7.2) and to '*passionately…believe*' (Beth, 5.7.1.7) since the mission statement of teacher education is to '*show people an ideal. It's about inspiring people*' (Camilla, 5.7.2). As a result, I feel secure in committing to a more resolute though not intransigent approach in the future; one that would hopefully continue to inspire confidence but eschew dogma and invite student teachers to reflect rather than merely replicate. More broadly, in the context of teacher education, a strong message which combines a distinct subject-specific identity (2.4 – 2.9) with a pedagogy of enactment (2.10) may be better equipped to withstand the expected 'wash-out' (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1981). Against increasingly technicist visions of teacher education (Llewelly-Williams, 2010), compelled by the 'rush to practice' (Ellis *et al*., 2011) to ensure that trainees are placement-ready (2.10.3), enlisting an expanded definition of experience permits a recalibration of core content and activities. This means that, over and above propositional content and technical aspects, there is merit in attending to the 'self' and to the experiential nature of student-teachers' engagement with the course so that the latter is personally enriching and 'edifying' (Barnett, 2009, p.432).

7 Conclusion

In this final chapter, I aim to relate the conclusions reached on the basis of the findings presented (Chapters 4 and 5) and discussed (Chapter 6) in this research. Linked to these conclusions (7.1), I will then outline potential contributions (7.2) of this study to the knowledge base firstly of MFL teaching and then of teacher education, as well as detail its limitations (7.3). Concluding this chapter will be suggested avenues for further investigation (7.4).

7.1 Conclusions

This study set out to explore participants' perceptions of *Interact* in terms of its currency as a first-order MFL teaching proposition as well as its legitimacy as a second-order teacher-education proposition. Regarding MFL teaching (6.2), *Interact* was found to continue to be valued for the TL lifestyle (Christie, 2011) it promotes, which allows teachers to create an immersive and invitational '*whole little world'* (Cécile, 5.5.2). This secures learners' '*buy-in'* (Neil, 5.7.1.3) and sustains their interest in the subject. Findings further point to the '*greater intensity of learning'* (Rob, 5.6.4), which sees learners '*using [the TL] for a real purpose'* (Simon, 5.6.1) in unprepared and informal '*conversation*' (Hannah, 5.6.1). An expanded definition of spontaneity (2.7), which attends to its attitudinal and discoursal aspects, was key in determining what differentiates *Interact* from other immersive language teaching approaches. It explained why learners were able to 'speak as themselves' in the TL (Legenhausen, 1999, p.181, quoted in Ushioda, 2011, p.14) and develop the resilience and self-belief necessary to engage productively with a TL environment.

With regard to *Interact* as a second-order proposition (6.3), this thesis focused on the intersection between a university 'message' and pre- and in-service teachers' interpretations of said message. To eschew a binary theory-practice distinction, I drew instead on a framework (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017), which brought to the fore the complex process of professional identity formation. The analysis revealed a diverse range of reactions and ensuing practices, with loose categories such as dissenters, absenters, consenters and assenters, pointing to the multi-faceted nature of teachers' understanding of the same message. Eventual appropriation or rejection

of *Interact* depended on a number of factors, among which were student-teachers' capacity to discern its underpinning principles and align with or demarcate themselves from its educative intentions. This underscored the importance of designing a PGCE course in ways that attend to the Gestalt qualities (Korthagen, 2010) of the experience of learning to teach. In employing a disruptive yet congruent approach, which 'walked the walk' (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p.194) but provoked '*culture shock'* (Sylvianne), the PGCE course was found to bring to the surface student-teachers' deep-seated assumptions about the nature of language learning and teaching, and confront them with novel ways of engaging with their teacher-education programme and with the MFL curriculum. The intention was to enable student teachers to envisage the curriculum as a 'project' (van Lier, 1996, p.213) in lieu of a product to deliver (Twiselton, 2004) and to envision their roles as developers of what 'might be' (Biesta, Priestley and Robinson, 2015, p.634) rather than equip them 'to function effectively in a society "as is".'

7.2   Contribution to knowledge

The above conclusions point to the potential contributions of this thesis in a range of domains. In the first instance, the study may 'resonate' (Tracy, 2010) with MFL teachers interested in a TL pedagogical approach that has been observed to engage and motivate learners, and to nurture their confidence to perceive themselves as language users as well as language learners. Against an educational backdrop perceived to be inimical to the TL (1.5) and noted for its uninspiring MFL teaching (Ofsted, 2015), such findings may provide encouragement for others to pursue a TL approach in practice and potentially reignite their and their learners' enthusiasm for the subject. MFL teachers could then draw upon *Interact* as a '*whole package'* (Hannah, 5.7.1.3), which integrates a set of cogent communicative principles within a clearly mapped-out procedural method.

In relation to *Interact* as a second-order proposition, although my study focused on a particular university message, its conclusions may be pertinent to teacher educators, in MFL and in other subject areas, concerned with the nature and quality of their trainees' interpretations of university input. Firstly, from a methodological point of

view, it offers a modified framework (5.2) with which to analyse student-teachers' potential stances and the processes at play in their formation. Furthermore, it is hoped that teacher educators with similar interests may derive useful insights if not strategies for the creation of an aspirational and durable vision of a subject curriculum framed as a 'project' that may mitigate against a purely instrumental version to be delivered. In attending not only to the technical and propositional elements of teacher education but also to its experiential and subjective dimensions (6.4), teacher education stands a better chance not only in preparing teachers for the pressing exigencies of the classroom but also in securing '*fundamentals*' (Neil, 5.7.2) that would see them steer a course in line with their educative mission.

Whilst teacher education may no longer claim to be an 'unstudied problem' (Freeman, 1996, p.374), nonetheless Borg (2012) highlighted the paucity of studies focusing specifically on foreign-language teachers of a language other than English. Additionally, the scarcity of more recent studies centred on UK-based MFL teacher education (2.10) leads me to believe that the present thesis illuminates aspects hitherto poorly researched. Alongside other work focusing on the identity formation of MFL PGCE students in the UK (Gutierrez-Almarza, 1992; Cabaroglu and Roberts, 2000; Hulse, 2015), this thesis contributes to the knowledge base of teacher education in the following manner. It firstly builds on the above studies by examining the professional identity formation of a cohort of MFL student teachers but draws attention particularly to the interface between university input and their understanding of a specific TL approach advocated on their PGCE course. Furthermore, this thesis extends the scope of the above-mentioned studies by enlisting the views of early-career and more experienced teachers. In adopting a longitudinal perspective, the legacy of *Interact* was analysed in the context of its long-term practice in the field. This uncovered the reasons why this particular university message resisted 'wash-out' (Zeichner and Tabachnick, 1981), which had to do with its 'strong message' (6.5.3). The long-term angle also shone a light both on the tensions felt by beginning teachers, who struggled to '*marry up*' (Rob) their idealised with their 'ought to' (Dörnyei, 2005) selves, and on the ways in which experienced teachers had sought to resolve those tensions. The epistemological and ontological

journeys (6.4) thus revealed further point to the value in engaging in longitudinal research studies.

Additional contributions pertain to the methodological domain. In his review of the methodologies involved in researching language-teachers' cognition, Borg (2012) called for greater variety in the scope, research tools, and analytical lenses to cover more ground and secure illuminative insights. The pragmatic orientation adopted in this study permitted a flexible approach to data generation and analysis. For example, the adaptation of a framework (McGarr, O'Grady and Guilfoyle, 2017) allowed me to peer beyond surface understandings of *Interact* and tease out qualitative differences in the rationale for its appropriation or rejection. However, departing from the framework also afforded a developmental overview of the journey research participants claimed to have travelled. This methodological versatility enabled me both to capture a moment in time and to chart the trajectories of research-participants' interpretations and practices in relation to *Interact.* In my inclusion of different instruments from questionnaires to interviews, of a range of participants and of analytical approaches, I believe this thesis contributed to answering Borg's (2012) above recommendation.

From a personal point of view, beyond those changes to my own perceptions and practices as a teacher educator mentioned earlier (6.4), this research has contributed to my professional development so that an intuitive awareness of the range of ways (student) teachers interpret *Interact* has been replaced with a better understanding, for a more appropriate and sensitive response. It has also highlighted the need to 'marry up' a convinced and convincing approach - a '*strong line*' (Hannah, 5.7.2) – with an invitation, for potential assenters at least, to engage more critically with my message.

7.3 Potential limitations of the research

The above contributions notwithstanding, I realise that my focus was rather introspective, trained as it was on a singular approach to teaching languages and on a particular 'insider' group of respondents, familiar with *Interact.* Since the purpose of my study was to explore this group's perception of the value of said approach, it was

necessarily inward looking. This said, in line with Tracy's (2010) notion of a 'worthy topic', I consider such a focus to be of professional and personal significance for reasons presented in Chapter 1. Furthermore, in detailing the above contributions for a wide range of interested parties, it is my hope that the latter would find in my study insights and ideas that might speak to them and thus find 'resonance' (Tracy, 2010) in other contexts. Further limitations relate to my position as an insider and as a wearer of multiple 'hats', which may preclude a more objective stance and detached outlook. To pursue the latter, however, would contradict the interpretive (3.2.1) and qualitative orientations of my research (3.2.3). Nonetheless, the power dynamic involved in interviewing one's own students required the deployment of sensitive antennae and a tactful approach to best mitigate positionality issues. Along the measures already outlined (3.2.4), the decision to interview most students towards the end of the PGCE course, at a time when their successful accreditation was known to them, intended to alleviate any pressure they might have felt in responding according to what they thought I wished to hear.

7.4 Future directions

In the above limitations lie the seeds for further research. Firstly, in terms of scope, the small sample of rejecters in the study tipped the balance in favour of a positive portrayal of *Interact*, at odds with the anecdotal 'home truths' disclosed privately (Chapter 1). This suggests the need to involve a larger sample of respondents that might be more representative of the range of perspectives in the field. Furthermore, although my study included a longitudinal outlook in the sense that it explored the perspectives of pre- and in-service teachers, it did so on the basis of interviews with various participants, each at a different stage in their careers, with the exception of Ceri and Rhiannon who were interviewed both during their PGCE and NQT years. A suggestion would be to follow the same participants and trace their developmental journeys over a number of years. Another would be to investigate for oneself the life that *Interact* takes *in situ* rather than in the ways it is reported by practitioners. However, to do so might bring to light inevitable discrepancies between allegiance and enactment that may put practitioners in uncomfortable situations and create defensive positions to the detriment of all concerned. This does not preclude a school-

based focus in future whereby a collaborative, 'ground-up' approach would explore the life of *Interact* along strands chosen in conjunction with participants' expressed interests. One such strand could include the intersection between subject mentors' stances on *Interact* and their student teachers'.

Borg (2012, p.26) highlighted the low profile of studies on language-teacher cognition in the domain of 'foreign languages other than English' and suggested bringing work that exists 'to the attention of a broader global audience.' Dissemination of the preliminary findings of this thesis has already begun (IPDA, Stirling, Oct 2016) and will continue so that it may reach a wider range of stakeholders. To this end, inviting other university-based PGCE MFL courses to explore and share their respective messages may contribute to the above. It would also throw light on the nature of the subject, the perceptions of its underpinning principles and associated 'pedagogy of enactment' (Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald, 2009). As a community of MFL teacher educators, a collaborative project of this kind may entail asserting our rights in contributing to the articulation of our discipline. It might also let emerge a collegial identity centred on definitions of the subject that, I would personally hope, steer them away from the purely transactional, 'lifeless' (Hulse, 2015, p.159) and prescribed delineations, and towards 'confluence' (2.8), that is, 'the cooperative construction of meaning…in dialogue' (McCarthy, 2005, p.26). I conclude with the words of Camilla, an MFL teacher of 14 years' experience, for whom the mission statement of university-based teacher education resides in '*inspiring people. Showing them the ultimate best that you can be. This is what perfect, fantastic, inspirational teaching is.*'

8 References

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9 Appendices

9.1 Ethical Approval

Of note, whilst the form attached is dated 05.02.2014, the research proposal received written confirmation of its approval by e-mail in May 2013. I therefore started the research in September 2013. Upon realising that the panel had not forwarded the official confirmation, I contacted them and received the following non-backdated form.

School of Education – Research Ethics Approval Form

The University of Nottingham

2014/6/JG

Name	Anne Dareys
Main Supervisor	Dr Philip Hood
Course of Study	PhD
Title of Research Project:	The UCA approach to the teaching and Modern Foreign Languages in Secondary School

Is this a resubmission? No   **Date statement of research ethics received by PGR Office:** 30/01/14

Research Ethics Coordinator Comments:

I have read all the documents accompanying this submission and I am satisfied that they meet the requirements for ethics approval as long as the following is observed:

Please add the following to all the Participant Consent Forms:

1. The statement: "I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research"
2. The name and contact details of the researcher and the supervisor, and the generic email of the School Research Office.

I consider this research to be above minimum risk ☐

Final responsibility for ethical conduct of your research rests with you and your supervisor. The Codes of Practice setting out these responsibilities have been published by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the University Research Ethics Committee. http://www.educationstudentinternet/researchethics/index.aspx http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/Ethical%20Guidelines. If you have any concerns during the conduct of your research then you should consult these Codes of Practice and refer again to the School of Education's Research Ethics Committee.

Independently of the Ethics Committee procedures, supervisors also have responsibilities for the risk assessment of projects as detailed in the safety pages of the University web site. Ethics Committee approval does not alter, replace, or remove those responsibilities, nor does it certify that they have been met.

Outcome:

Approved ☑   Revise and Resubmit ☐

Signed: _____   Name: Dr J. Gimenez   Date: 05.02.2014
(Research Ethics Coordinator)

9.2 Participants' Information Sheet

9.2.1 Letter of information: PGCE MFL Secondary Students

Dear student,

As part of my PhD with the University of Nottingham, I wish to explore your views on the ████████████ approach to teaching Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). To this end, I would like to carry out questionnaires and interviews with volunteer participants and I outline below what this entails.

<u>What is this study about?</u>

My aim is to explore your views on the particular approach to teaching MFL that we advocate on the PGCE course. I am interested in finding out what your personal views are as well as how and why they may evolve over the course of this academic year.

<u>What will this entail?</u>

I will issue three paper-based questionnaires throughout the course of the year, one in September, one in January and one at the end of May. Signing up to one does not obligate you to sign up to the rest. For each questionnaire, I will re-issue a consent form as I do not wish to take your participation for granted. I would ask that you complete questionnaires individually so as to reflect your own personal opinion. I will give them out during a campus-based session so that completion need not take up your free time. I will also leave the room to give you privacy. However, I would ask that you provide your name so that I can also carry out follow-up interviews later in the year. Those one-to-one interviews will again be voluntary and take place at a time and location of your choosing. They will be audio-recorded and transcribed by the university-approved transcriber.

<u>What are the benefits?</u>

Whilst the findings from this study may not affect you personally, I envisage that they will inform decisions regarding the future direction of PGCE MFL course. Beneficiaries would then be future cohorts of PGCE students as well as future MFL colleagues and learners.

<u>What are the risks?</u>

I am well aware that there are risks involved in disclosing your name. Below, I explain how your identity will be kept confidential and secure. Here, I would stress that if you feel uncomfortable about answering any question, either during interviews or in the questionnaires, you are under no obligation whatsoever to continue. You may wish to skip questions or altogether withdraw at any point without any judgement on my part. Your involvement in this study is entirely voluntary and will not affect in any way your completion of the PGCE.

<u>How is the information you provide stored and secured?</u>

Paper-based questionnaires will be scanned and stored on my work computer. Your name will appear on the 2nd page and will therefore not be visible on the front page. Audio-recordings of interviews will also be saved and stored on my work computer. This provides maximum security as access to files is password-protected. I will be using a data analysis software accessible through the encrypted university system, meaning that I am the only person who can access the voice files. However, the university-approved transcriber will be sent some of the interview audio files, stored on a USB key and sent by courier, to begin transcription. I will make use of a pseudonym for each volunteer so that your real identity is not disclosed in this thesis or in any future publication. I will take care to ensure that any biographical information you provide does not allow any external reader to identify you. Upon completion of this thesis, all information you have provided and its subsequent processing will be destroyed.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter of information. I hope you will consider taking part.

Anne

9.2.2 Letter of information: Secondary School MFL Teachers

Dear colleague,

As part of my PhD with the University of Nottingham, I wish to explore your views on the ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ approach to teaching Modern Foreign Languages (MFL). To this end, I am looking for volunteers who would be willing to take part in one individual interview with me, and I outline below what this entails.

What is this study about?

My aim is to explore your views on our advocacy of a TL approach to the teaching of MFL. I am writing to you because of your familiarity with our approach, either through your training with us or via third parties. I am interested in finding out what your personal views are. In particular, I would like to find out if and how this approach may have shaped your thinking and your practice as an MFL teacher, how and why your views and practice may have evolved, and whether you feel that our approach contributes or not to the quality of MFL teaching in your setting. I intend to send you a short list of questions in writing beforehand, should you wish to think about your answers in advance. However, the format will remain flexible so that we may depart from those prompts, so please do not feel as though you need to prepare for this. May I stress that I would be grateful for as honest, 'warts and all' an exchange of views as you feel able to engage in?

What will this entail?

I would like to hold one individual interview with you at a time and place of your choosing. Ideally, I would like to audio-record the interview and therefore we would need to locate a quiet space and uninterrupted time slot. I do not envisage this interview to last more than an hour. If you give me permission to audio-record the interview, then I will employ the services of the university-approved transcriber. More information on how your anonymity and confidentiality will be protected throughout follows.

What are the benefits?

I envisage that the findings arising from this study will inform decisions regarding the future direction of PGCE MFL course and of our continued advocacy of a TL approach. In effect, your involvement will help shape our thinking and, in turn, influence the content and nature of the PGCE course. Beneficiaries would then be future cohorts of PGCE students as well as their MFL colleagues and learners.

What are the risks?

Below, I explain how your identity will be kept secret and secure. Here, I would stress that if you feel uncomfortable about answering any question, you are under no obligation whatsoever to continue with the interview. You may wish to skip questions or altogether withdraw at any point without any judgement on my part. Your involvement in this study is, of course, entirely voluntary.

How is the information you provide stored and secured?

Audio recording of the interview will be saved and stored on my work computer. This provides maximum security as access to files is password-protected. I will be using a data analysis software accessible through the encrypted university system, meaning that I am the only person who can access the voice files. However, the university-approved transcriber will be sent some of the interview audio files, stored on a USB key and sent by courier, to begin transcription. I will make use of a pseudonym for each volunteer so that your real identity is not disclosed in this thesis or in any future publication, and not passed on to any other person. I will also ensure that any biographical information you provide does not allow external readers to identify you, your students / colleagues / school or any other person associated with you. Upon completion of this thesis, all information you have provided and its subsequent processing will be destroyed.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter of information. I hope you will consider taking part.

Anne

9.3   Participants' Consent Form template

9.3.1   Participant Consent Form: PGCE MFL Secondary Students

Thank you for reading the information sheet. If you agree to take part in this study, then kindly please read the following statements and tick only those that apply. As mentioned in the letter, a new consent form will be issued for the 2nd and 3rd questionnaires to follow and for the interviews. Ticking the boxes below therefore merely indicates your understanding of the process and willingness to take part. It does not obligate you in any way.

1. I have read and understood the participant information sheet.   ☐

2. I understand the nature of my involvement (questionnaire & interview).   ☐

3. I understand that, if consenting to completing questionnaires,
   then *I will provide my name* so that I can be identified for follow-up interviews.   ☐

4. I realise that I may withdraw at any time *during* the course of this study.   ☐

5. I also understand that I may withdraw consent *after* my willing completion
   of questionnaires and interview. In other words, I may change my mind about
   taking part after the event and request that none of the information I have
   provided is used in this study or for any other purpose.   ☐

6. I understand that I cannot be identified in this study and in any other
   publication. All information about me will remain **anonymous**.   ☐

7. I am aware that any information I provide remains absolutely **confidential**,
   meaning that it will never be disclosed by the researcher to any other person.   ☐

8. I trust that the information I provide will be stored safely and securely so I
   cannot be traced and it cannot be leaked.   ☐

9. I understand that the result of this study will lead to a PhD thesis and possibly
   published articles. This means an external audience may read some extracts
   of what I have said or written but that a pseudonym will be used so that
   I cannot be identified.   ☐

I provide the information overleaf as indication that I agree to take part in this study and I understand that there will be a separate consent form to be signed for each questionnaire and for the interview.

I provide the information below as indication that I agree to take part in this study and I understand that there will be a separate consent form to be signed for subsequent questionnaires and for the interview.

Finally, I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor named below if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, research@nottingham.ac.uk , if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in this research.

Name: _____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Contact name and detail of the researcher:

Anne Dareys

Contact name and detail of PhD supervisor:

Dr Philip Hood
School of Education
University of Nottingham
e-mail: Philip.Hood@nottigham.ac.uk

9.3.2 Participant Consent Form:– MFL Teachers

Thank you for reading the information sheet. If you agree to take part in this study, then kindly please read the following statements and tick only those that apply.

1. I have read and understood the participant information sheet. ☐

2. I understand the nature of my involvement (one-to-one interview). ☐

3. I realise that I may withdraw consent at any time *prior* to the interview. ☐

4. I realise that I may withdraw at any time *during* the course of the interview. ☐

5. I also understand that I may withdraw consent *after* my willing involvement in the interview. In other words, I may change my mind about taking part after the event and request that none of the information I have provided is used in this study or for any other purpose. ☐

6. I am aware that the interview will be audio-recorded. ☐

7. I am also aware that the audio file may be sent securely to the university approved transcriber who will not retain either the audio file or the written transcript but will destroy both upon sending the transcript to the researcher. ☐

8. I understand that I cannot be identified in this study and in any other publication. All information about me will remain **anonymous**. ☐

9. I am aware that any information I provide remains absolutely **confidential**, meaning that it will never be disclosed by the researcher to any other person. ☐

10. I trust that the information I provide will be stored safely and securely so I cannot be traced and it cannot be leaked. ☐

11. I understand that the result of this study will lead to a PhD thesis and possibly published articles. This means an external audience may read some extracts of what I have said but I or any other person associated with me cannot be identified. ☐

12. In light of the above, I hereby agree to take part in this study, meaning that I consent to being interviewed at a time and place of my choosing for the purpose explained in the information sheet. ☐

I provide the information below as indication that I agree to take part in this study. Finally, I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor named below if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, research@nottingham.ac.uk , if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in this research.

Name: _____

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Contact name and detail of the researcher:

Anne Dareys

Contact name and detail of PhD supervisor:

Dr Philip Hood
School of Education
University of Nottingham
e-mail: Philip.Hood@nottigham.ac.uk

9.4 Questionnaires

9.4.1 September questionnaire template:

Start Questionnaire September 2013   PGCE Secondary MFL

Context for the research: I am undertaking a PhD at the University of Nottingham, focusing on the ███████████████ approach to MFL teaching. As a result of your own language learning and teaching experience prior to the course, and following your first few weeks on the PGCE MFL course, you will hold certain views on the value of TL use in MFL classrooms.

Purpose: A primary purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate what these views are and how they may shape your practice and your thinking. In order to understand this better, I need some information about the contexts in which you operate. To this end, I would like you to provide some information on your adopted class.

Ethics: I should like to emphasise, though, that there is no judgment attached. There is no 'good' or 'bad' label being applied to the views that you hold; indeed the spirit of this research is very much an honest 'warts and all' exploration of your views, your ideals, your beliefs and your concerns. If you are willing to complete this questionnaire, then please fill in and sign the consent reply slip below. Your responses will remain confidential and will not be used for purposes other than this particular research. However, for ease of identification in terms of follow-up interviews, then may I ask that you do identify yourself?

✂---

Consent reply slip: Start Questionnaire   PGCE Sec MFL 2013-14

Surname(s): _____   First name(s): _____

By signing the above, I am indicating that I am willing to complete this September questionnaire and I understand that the information is confidential but not anonymous, i.e. it will be retained and viewed by Anne Dareys and her supervisor only and used for the sole purpose of this research.

Surname(s): _____   First name(s): _____

SECTION ONE
I. You as a language learner (and teacher) prior to the PGCE course
   Thank you for answering the following questions:

i.   What   language(s)   are   you   training   to   teach?
        _____

ii.   Are you a native speaker of a foreign language*?*_____ And, if so, which one(s):
        _____

iii.   Where / when / to what level (qualifications) did you learn your foreign
        language(s)?
        *e.g. 'I've learned French from primary school to University Degree, entirely in a
        school context but with short periods in France with my family and then a Year
        abroad as a FLA'*

iv.   What language **teaching** experience and/or qualifications, if any, do you have
        prior to the PGCE course? *e.g. 'I hold a Tefl (Celta) qualification and taught English
        in China for 6 months in 2011-201 to young adults with an intermediate level of
        English.'*

**II. The place of the target language (TL) in your language learning & teaching
experience prior to the PGCE course**

i.   Did your teachers, at primary, secondary schools and/or university, use the TL as
        the main medium of interaction? Please try to be as detailed as possible e.g. '*I
        started learning German at secondary school and the teacher rarely spoke
        German but the FLA did, for one hour a week, in small groups'*.

ii.   Did you use the TL in your own teaching experience (as a FLA, SAS, Tefl...teacher)?

iii.   Did you observe MFL teaching in English secondary schools prior to the course?
        (Y/N) _____

iv.   If you answered YES to question iii above, please give some detail, e.g. '*I observed
        a series of MFL lessons for 2 weeks in a comprehensive high school where students
        were taught German twice a week. I saw three Year 8 classes and 2 Year 10 Option
        lessons'.*

v.   If you answered YES to question iii, then what was the place of the TL in those lessons? Where would you place a mark indicating use of TL by the **teacher**:

0%   50%   100%
Never   Always*

_____

*indicates that the teacher always spoke in the TL when addressing the whole class or individuals in one typical lesson

vi.   If you answered YES to question iii above, then where would you place a mark indicating use of TL by the **pupils?**

0%   50%   100%(of the time)
Never   Always*

_____

*indicates that some / most / all pupils respond or speak in the TL all the time and don't revert to English. You may wish to select one class or indicate a general opinion.

vii.   If your answer above (vi) indicates that pupils use the TL between 50 and 100% of the lesson, would you say that pupils mainly:

Please tick ☑ all the ones that apply (you may therefore tick all of them).

1. Repeat after the teacher

2. Engage in well-rehearsed role-plays

3. Speak in the TL spontaneously when addressing the teacher

4. Speak in the TL spontaneously when interacting with one another

SECTION TWO: Your views on the use of the TL in MFL classrooms

Please answer as honestly as you can to the following questions.

1. How do **you** envisage you will use the target language with your adopted class(es) during your PGCE year?

   | 0% | 50% | 100% |
   | Never | | Always* |

   _____

   *indicates that you will always speak in the TL when addressing the whole class or individuals in one typical lesson

2. If your answer above is less than 100%, please give scenarios where, or reasons why, you would envisage using English: *e.g. I think I would speak English in the following cases…*

3. What benefits, if any, do **you** think a TL approach brings to pupils' MFL learning?

4. What disadvantages or constraints, if any, are there to teaching in the TL (for both teachers and pupils) in **your** opinion?

5. Do **you** envisage teaching mainly / solely in the TL in your future career (NQT and beyond?) Why/why not?

Thank you ever so much for spending time answering this questionnaire. I really appreciate your willingness to help me research this particular area of interest for me and I look forward to continue working with you on this.
Anne Dareys

9.4.2 September questionnaire extracts:

R5

3. What benefits, if any, do **you** think a TL approach brings to pupils' MFL learning?

If teacher is competent, it ~~rem~~ should remove ppls' fear of TL used spontaneously; that is, it should unfocus ppls' ⌄attention on the challenge of TL use and make it more 'sub-conscious'; normalizing the use of TL.

conscious

4. What disadvantages or constraints, if any, are there to teaching in the TL (for both teachers and pupils) in **your** opinion?

I think it is more natural to teach in the TL, but it opens up the possibility of the unknown, the unpredictable and the unplanned. ~~Also linguistic~~ Human interaction is, to a great extent, a guessing game, and not easily planned.

5. Do **you** envisage teaching mainly / solely in the TL in your future career (NQT and beyond?) Why/why not?

My resolve now is to teach solely in the TL because I can understand in general that it is ⌄more useful to language learning process and more satisfying for the teacher. I hope my resolve doesn't waver.

R7

3. What benefits, if any, do **you** think a TL approach brings to pupils' MFL learning?

(I do think you can explain grammar points more quickly in English as opposed to TL)

They 'pick up' the language naturally, they can speak spontaneously, they get into a habit of speaking TL in the classroom and are therefore speaking more of the TL day to day. It is a more efficient, natural and effective way of learning the language.

4. What disadvantages or constraints, if any, are there to teaching in the TL (for both teachers and pupils) in

5. Do **you** envisage teaching mainly / solely in the TL in your future career (NQT and beyond?) Why/why not?

Yes. It exposes your pupils to ~~a~~ the target language in a way which will help them to pick it up and in a way which demonstrates how they should aim to use the language ie not just one word answers to text book Qs.

Thank you ever so much for spending time answering this questionnaire. I really appreciate your willingness to help me research this particular area of interest for me and I look forward to continue working with you on this.
Anne Dareys

9.4.3 January questionnaire template:

Mid-point Questionnaire January 2014   PGCE Secondary MFL

The September questionnaire sought to find out your views on a TL approach to teaching MFL prior to the PGCE course. This January questionnaire intends to explore whether your views on this have changed in the light of your first block placement.

As I stressed in the first questionnaire, there is no judgment attached to your answers. Indeed the spirit of this research is very much an honest 'warts and all' exploration of your views, your aspirations, your beliefs and your concerns. If you are still willing to complete this questionnaire, then please fill in and sign the consent reply slip below. Your responses will remain confidential and will not be used for purposes other than this particular research. However, as with the previous questionnaire, in order to identify who said what when, then may I ask that you do identify yourself?

Consent reply slip: Mid-point questionnaire   PGCE Sec MFL 2013-14

Surname(s): _____ First name(s): _____

Please answer as honestly as you can the following set of questions. There is no value judgement attached to your views at all. I am interested in finding out whether your views have changed and, if so, why and in what ways.

1. How many classes have you regularly been teaching during your first block placement (IEP)? *E.g. I have been teaching one Yr7 French (top set) and a lower set Year 9 Spanish from Feb and I've also taken over a mixed-ability option group Year 10 Spanish whom I'm team-teaching with the class teacher.*

2. How regularly do you teach them? *E.g. I see Yr10 once a week…I teach Yr7 3xweek in week A and twice in week B.*

3. Would you say that these adopted classes were being taught in the TL prior to you taking over? *(please go beyond 'yes / no / it depends' answers and describe as fully as you can):*

4. For each adopted class, please indicate on the lines below whether you used the TL.
   100% indicates that you always spoke in the TL when addressing the whole class or individuals in a typical lesson.

   KS3 adopted class(es):
   0%   50%   100%
   Never   Always

9.4.4 January questionnaire extracts:

> 6. The previous questionnaire asked you to outline what benefits, if any, a TL approach brought to pupils' MFL learning. How would you answer this question now, in view of your recent school experience?

R24

They can do a lot more than I realised they would be able to. My PM observed that I could speak German at a normal pace to my year 8s and they could follow. They quickly picked up new vocab that they heard me use.

I don't think it's right to expect Ps to speak in the TL if you yourself don't model that. They don't always know all the vocab they need but through 100% TL use they have problem-solving skills – they know how to muddle through.

7. What disadvantages or constraints, if any, are there to teaching in the TL (for both teachers and pupils) in **your** opinion?

It can take more time to explain things. You might choose an easier game because it would take them 20 mins to understand a hard one. Maybe you find yourself relying on the 'tried and tested' games. This 4 On the other hand, Ps know how to cope when they don't understand; they know you'll help them to 'get it' It helps to have a supportive department who don't mind extra time being taken.

It's tiring. You always have to be 'on'. You can't have a 'down lesson'. You give everything. Is it sustainable?

3

6. The previous questionnaire asked you to outline what benefits, if any, a TL approach brought to pupils' MFL learning. How would you answer this question now, in view of your recent school experience?

R5

I think I referred to the fact that pupils get used to the TL as a normal part of the lesson, and not some ~~recent~~ scientist's specimen in a jar. ~~for~~

Things have got a bit more complex having done my first placement. I'm grappling with the idea of ~~the~~ TL being the means and the end of MFL teaching, and with how this benefits the learning for each individual pupil. It's not quite as simple as a "TL approach" anymore: it's how it's handled in the teacher-pupil dialogue - that's where I think the learning can happen. Tricky.

7. What disadvantages or constraints, if any, are there to teaching in the TL (for both teachers and pupils) in your opinion?

Well, my opinion on this didn't exist until I started the PGCE course and undertaking the research into language teaching. So, ~~it's naturally informed by~~ my opinion is naturally informed by my reading. But, I feel that the pitfalls open up as a trainee teacher using sole TL in lessons - pitfalls for both the teacher (failure to engage, failure to foster learning), and the pupils (aversion to the TL, lack of comprehension leading to ~~it~~ anxiety or negativity). However, the long-term benefits of sole TL use seem to be greater than mixing with English. And, of course, you can't skip the TL use during training and take it up later on. I mean, ~~I know you can~~ you have to go through the hard-slog before you become skilled in sole TL use.

257

8. Do you envisage teaching mainly / solely in the TL in your future career (NQT and beyond?) Why / why not?

As I said in the first questionnaire, it's the right course to teach solely in the TL. There are no cognitive reasons that ~~pp~~ pupils can't survive and thrive in a TL classroom.

Whether I will or not depends on how resilient I am to stick to my resolution, and on how supportive my school is.

It's the same answer as last time, I think.

R24

8. Do you envisage teaching mainly / solely in the TL in your future career (NQT and beyond?) Why / why not?

I see all the benefits so yes. At this point, I know I often simply imitate good practice. I worry I'll be molded by a 2nd placement that doesn't use the TL in hopes of not rocking the boat. On the other hand, I can't imagine myself as a teacher who doesn't teach in TL. I haven't met many ex UoC teachers who still do it. Why is that?

9. At this stage in your PGCE, how would you define, in your own words, the ▇ approach to teaching MFL? In other words: what does it advocate, what are its features, what does a ▇ MFL lesson look like?

Routines + development
Competition
Real communication - implicit knowledge of grammar at first
Genuine interaction
Pairwork.

10. What have you found most challenging in terms of implementing some of the features of the ▉ approach during your second placement?

Just when they aren't your class & they know. you're a trainee, it can be hard to implement things. You feel stuck between the uni & the school & what you thinn!

11. Which features from the ▉ approach would you see yourself adopting in your own career and why?

Routines - a TL classroom. Focussing on interaction + a purpose behind activities.

9.4.5 May questionnaire template

End-point Questionnaire May 2014   PGCE Secondary MFL

The September questionnaire sought to find out your views on a TL approach to teaching MFL prior to the PGCE course. The January questionnaire was to explore whether your views on this had changed in the light of your first block placement. This final questionnaire seeks again to probe whether these views have evolved, in what ways and why.

As I stressed in the first questionnaire, there is no judgment attached to your answers. Indeed the spirit of this research is very much an honest 'warts and all' exploration of your views, your aspirations, your beliefs and your concerns. If you are still willing to complete this final questionnaire, then please fill in and sign the consent reply slip below. Your responses will remain confidential and will not be used for purposes other than this particular research. However, as with the Jan & Sept questionnaires, in order to identify who said what when, then may I ask that you do identify yourself?

Consent reply slip: End-point questionnaire (May 2014)   PGCE Sec MFL 2013-14

Surname(s): _____ First name(s): _____

Thank you for your time and willingness to complete this questionnaire. I really value your help in letting me research this particular area of interest for me and I am most grateful for your support & availability so far. I do hope that you have likewise enjoyed the process and have found it of value for your own personal and professional development.

My very best wishes for the future.

Anne Dareys

6) With regards to Q4 and Q5 above, do you feel that your views on TL use have changed over the course of this academic year? If so, in what ways and why?

7) The previous questionnaire asked you to define in your own words the ██ approach to teaching MFL. Would you kindly have another go at this? Could I ask that you focus on what you think the purpose behind the ██ approach is, in terms of language learning?

8) Which features of the ██ approach have you sought to implement with your classes during your second block placement? Why those?

9) Would you say that those features were effective in promoting what you hoped to achieve? Why / why not?

10) What have you found most challenging in terms of implementing some of the features of the ██ approach during your second placement?

11) Which features from the ██ approach would you see yourself adopting in your own career and why?

12) If you were to adopt a ██-influenced approach to the teaching of MFL in your future career, what would you find most helpful in order to support you in this?

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your help is very much appreciated.

9.4.6   May questionnaires extracts:

R7

6. With regards to Qs 4 & 5 above, do you feel that your views on TL use have changed over the course of this academic year? If so, in what ways and why?

I am still a proponent of TL and will use this much more next year when I am not directed in my teaching by someone else.

R24

6. With regards to Qs 4 & 5 above, do you feel that your views on TL use have changed over the course of this academic year? If so, in what ways and why?

At the start I thought TL use was impossible but at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ I saw it was! I still firmly think MFL lessons should take place predominantly in the TL but going into someone else's lessons as a trainee makes it difficult.

7) The previous questionnaire asked you to define in your own words the ▮▮ approach to teaching MFL. Would you kindly have another go at this? Could I ask that you focus on what you think the purpose behind the ▮▮ approach is, in terms of language learning?

R5

I hear a lot of colleagues using the phrase 'CLT' synonymously with the approach advocated by the ▮▮'. It's not, I don't think. What's true is that there's a clear philosophy driving the course teaching, and it's a communicative philosophy, but my impression is that it's a responsive philosophy. As in the teaching profession, the approach has probably evolved with time. It advocates TL communication with 'eye-contact', so to speak, ~~mimicking~~ facilitating real-life communication, with emotion and argument at it's centre, since that is the purpose of language in the contexts our pupils are

approach to teaching MFL. Would you kindly have another go at this? Could I ask that you focus on what you think the purpose behind the ██ approach is, in terms of language learning?

To facilitate the learning of a language through a lively, communicative TL classroom and to produce language learners who have cultural knowledge of another country + who can have a go + cobble together new language and not be put off if at first they don't know the grammar.

8. Which features of the ██ approach have you sought to implement with your classes during your second block placement? Why those?

- Pairwork.
- P.A. routines
- Greetings routine

because I don't see any point in a classroom where only the teacher speaks the TL, and these routines get them talking, not me.

9. Would you say that the above features were effective in promoting what you hoped to achieve? Why/why not?

Yes, because they want to get involved + they like the structure of routines where they're learning how to say things.

8. Which features of the ███ approach have you sought to implement with your classes during your second block placement? Why those?

Routines because I think they are very important not only to show the consistency of the teacher but also by the amount of language used by the pupils.

Mimes and drilling, because I found that they can remember better when they emiene of when they repeat with rhythm.

Intro of vocab. I think it shows a really nice way to introduce new vocab that students enjoy.

9. Would you say that the above features were effective in promoting what you hoped to achieve? Why/why not?

Yes, because all of them are pro TL and spontaneous language and at least with my adopted class, it is obvious how they have developed a natural way for the language.

8. Which features of the ▮ approach have you sought to implement with your classes during your second block placement? Why those?

Routines, register & pair feedback. Creates a structure to hang the 'TL environment' from. Team points, good motivation to speak in TL and discussion point. Pair work & Groupwork to practise the language without pressure of speaking in front of the whole group.

9. Would you say that the above features were effective in promoting what you hoped to achieve? Why/why not?

Yes. Students enjoy using the TL to expressive effect. They are engaged and motivated. They have the confidence to 'have a go' in the TL. They are excited to come into their German class!

10. What have you found most challenging in terms of implementing some of the features of the ▮ approach during your second placement?

For me the TL thing is a bit 'all or nothing'. I have been encouraged to take over classes gradually and in the style of the current teacher, this has made it ~~so~~ challenging to adopt a true TL culture in some classes, as I ~~will~~ would make the TL routines the foundation of my classes, not a decoration which you put on top at the end.

11. Which features from the ▮ approach would you see yourself adopting in your own career and why?

Routines → we need routine language!
Points → Reward for TL & talking point
Pair & Group work → Everyone practising TL production in fun activities

Open ended activities → e.g. name as many / come up with an idea
I've been amazed at what my Y7s can do when given open ended Qs. e.g. how shall we decide on the teams for points
how many adjectives to describe a town can you name?

12. If you were to adopt a ▮-influenced approach to the teaching of MFL in your future career, what would you find most helpful in order to support you in this?

Networking & opportunity to discuss with like minded practitioners. This is a good question because although I feel capable of and highly motivated to adopt a ▮ approach with my classes next year I'm worried this will diminish next year if ~~the~~ ~~slip~~ the approach is not supported / valued by my department. If this happened I know I would be able to contact mentors from my placement schools to give me a boost of TL confidence!

Thank you again for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your help is very much appreciated.

Anne Dareys

9.5   Interview question prompts

The questions below were sent in advance of the individual interviews with teachers, together with the information sheet and consent forms. Some teachers prepared answers ahead of the interview, either on paper or in their heads. Others declared they did not have the time or the inclination to do so. Below is a synthesis of questions, some of which were meant for PGCE students and others for in-service teachers. Not all questions were asked as each interview was a unique event. Questions in brackets were further prompts if respondents struggled with the more open-ended versions.

1. Would you say that there is such a 'thing' as the *Interact* approach to the teaching of Modern Languages?

2. If so, would you kindly describe the *Interact* approach? (What would an *Interact* lesson look like?)

3. In your opinion, what does *Interact* seek to do? (What is the purpose of the approach?)

4. What do you remember from your PGCE course, if you have trained with us?

5. Do you feel *Interact* was a prominent feature of your training?

6. Would you say you still teach in a manner that is influenced by *Interact?*

7. What has enabled you / prevented you from teaching in an *Interact*-inspired manner?

8. What do you feel are the benefits of *Interact* for MFL learners?

9. What are its drawbacks for MFL learners – for MFL teachers?

10. Would you wish to teach in a more *Interact*-inspired manner?

11. What is your overall opinion about *Interact*? Why so?

9.6   Examples of Codes and Categories

As mentioned in section 3.8.3, codes were later grouped under categories and the screen shots below show some of these categories: *benefits, challenges*, and some of the sub-categories: *benefits for <u>learners: confidence</u>, benefits for <u>learners: enjoyment</u>, benefits for <u>teachers: sense of pride</u>* as well as a few remaining unassigned codes such as 'a prism', 'do it for a reason', 'no hard evidence'. UCA refers to the previous name for *Interact.*

UCA_a prism~
UCA_benefits: 'it makes my lessons better'
UCA_benefits: it works~
UCA_benefits_learners: confidence~
UCA_benefits_learners: enjoyment~
UCA_benefits_learners: exposure to TL, immersive environment, 'it goes in'
UCA_benefits_learners: inclusion~
UCA_benefits_learners: independence~
UCA_benefits_learners: it helps them automatise the language~
UCA_benefits_learners: mindset~
UCA_benefits_learners: motivation~
UCA_benefits_teachers: creativity
UCA_benefits_teachers: enjoyment
UCA_benefits_teachers: it got me the job
UCA_benefits_teachers: sense of pride
UCA_challenges: limitations~
UCA_challenges_learners: class size
UCA_challenges_learners: distraction~
UCA_challenges_learners: resistance~

UCA_challenges_learners: resistance~

UCA_challenges_learners: 'you wind them up'

UCA_challenges_teachers: accountability~

UCA_challenges_teachers: assessment~

UCA_challenges_teachers: competences required~

UCA_challenges_teachers: competing priorities~

UCA_challenges_teachers: coverage

UCA_challenges_teachers: demanding~

UCA_challenges_teachers: differentiation

UCA_challenges_teachers: explaining grammar

UCA_challenges_teachers: lack of support~

UCA_challenges_teachers: not your classes~

UCA_challenges_teachers: planning~

UCA_challenges_teachers: theatricality~

UCA_challenges_teachers: they're too low ability

UCA_challenges_teachers: unpredictability~

UCA_challenges_teachers: workload

UCA_difficulties in defining what it is / what it aims to do~

UCA_do it for a reason~

UCA_do it for a reason~

UCA_enabling factors: doing it~

UCA_enabling factors: pupils~

UCA_enabling factors: resources~

UCA_enabling factors: seeing it in action~

UCA_enabling factors_external influences: positive~

UCA_enabling factors_MFL beginners

UCA_features: it's more complex than meets the eye~

UCA_features: rigour~

UCA_features_CM: banter, humour

UCA_features_CM: competition~

UCA_features_CM: routines

UCA_features_CM: struggling to arrive at meaning

UCA_features_CM: techniques~

UCA_features_it's intense~

UCA_features_TL management: pair work

UCA_features_TL management: promoting communicative competence~

UCA_features_TL management: repetition

UCA_features_TL management: scaffolding~

- UCA_features_TL management: scaffolding~
- UCA_features_TL management: TL ethos
- UCA_features_TL: real language, dealing with meaning~
- UCA_features_TL-management: cross over between routines and topic l...~
- UCA_features_TL-management: speaking
- UCA_identity: it's what we do~
- UCA_it asks questions
- UCA_it works but: they're self-motivated, anything would work
- UCA_it works but: year group matters~
- UCA_labels_a flexible model
- UCA_labels_all or nothing
- UCA_labels_following a recipe~
- UCA_labels_fun and games~
- UCA_labels_it's distinctive~
- UCA_labels_it's idealistic~
- UCA_labels_the whole package~
- UCA_links with learning in general~
- UCA_no hard evidence
- UCA_opinions: it clashes with my understanding of effective MFL learnin...
- UCA_opinions: it clashes with my understanding of effective MFL learnin...
- UCA_opinions: undecided~
- UCA_opinions_negative~
- UCA_opinions_positive~
- UCA_opinions_positive: a starting point
- UCA_opinions_positive: it makes sense~
- UCA_risks: misunderstanding arising from untrained eyes~
- UCA_risks: taking UCA at face value~
- UCA_spreading the message~
- UCA_this is what we can do~

9.7   Examples of 'groundedness' of categories

As noted above and in section 3.8.3, codes were later grouped under categories and the table below shows some of these categories: *features, identity*, and some of the sub-categories: *classroom management (CM), target language (TL)*. As explained (3.8.3), groundedness relates to the frequency of references to particular aspects of *Interact* and not to the number of respondents who referred to those aspects*. In effect, there were 65 references to routines and 63 mentions of TL ethos but the way data are displayed below does not indicate the spread of these references across all respondents. A few respondents may have mentioned these features many times in the course of their interview.

Search Codes

Show codes in group INTERACT

Name		Grounded	Density
○ ◇ UCA_features_CM: competition~	▲	▪	14
○ ◇ UCA_features_CM: routines		▬	65
○ ◇ UCA_features_CM: struggling to arrive at meaning		▪	11
○ ◇ UCA_features_CM: techniques~		▭	35
○ ◇ UCA_features_it's intense~		▪	13
○ ◇ UCA_features_TL management: pair work		▪	11
○ ◇ UCA_features_TL management: promoting communicative competence~		▪	13
○ ◇ UCA_features_TL management: repetition		▌	3
○ ◇ UCA_features_TL management: scaffolding~		▪	20
○ ◇ UCA_features_TL management: TL ethos		▬	63
○ ◇ UCA_features_TL: real language, dealing with meaning~		▪	12
○ ◇ UCA_features_TL-management: cross over between routines and topic l...~		▪	8
○ ◇ UCA_features_TL-management: speaking		▪	13
○ ◇ UCA_identity: it's what we do~		▪	20

9.8 Examples of annotated transcripts

For ease of orientation, I have kept to a portrait rather than a landscape layout. However, Atlas-Ti™ adds all codes horizontally. This means that, to the right of the comments margin, there are many more codes that do not appear below. The following extracts are meant to provide a flavour of the transcripts and their codes, and re-contextualise some of the quotations used in the thesis. However, post-viva, some of the longer extracts have been removed to further protect interviewees' anonymity.

INT: So we're going to go into role of former PGCE student and then looking forward to the future so I sent you a list of questions, well a list of questions, a focus and the first of these was 'does the UC approach to the teaching of Modern Languages exist?' Is there such a thing? Would you recognise a UCA class as opposed to one that isn't?

Rob Well I can describe what I think it is and I think that would mean, because I have a description of it in my head, that I'd be able to recognise what I think is a UCA approach and I think the key parts to it are use of Target Language by teacher and students and that's important because it's one thing to use it yourself but another thing to actually promote Target Language use in the class and everything that feeds into that so having a structure of interaction language in lessons that's not superficial, that's actually functional in the class so things like points routines, negotiation between students and teacher and, you know, questions that help students get things done, tasks done in the class.

So there's that feature of it but also I think certain ways of handing language over to kids. If you think about the start of the process of teaching a language, everything that's to do withholding information, withholding language for kids so that they have the chance to speculate and work things out, that's been quite enduring for me.

It's never giving answers to them but setting up a structure whereby they're going to work out what language they need and use all of the right target language to get that rather than just a process where you'll say 'well this is how you say dog in French and Italian' or whatever it is so there's that aspect to it as well but then also

I think probably if you were to look at a lesson by somebody who I'd recognise as UCA trained, the high frequency of pair work so that actually what's happening after that process of introducing and giving over language is it's used very quickly by the students.

So I suppose what you have is the background is interaction language but also a method for introducing new language all the time that you could recognise as UCA.

Codes (right margin):
- RQ: UCA approach
- UCA_labels_it's distinctive
- UCA_features_TL managem...
- UCA_features_TL management...
- UCA_features_CM: routines
- UCA_features_TL: real languag...
- UCA_features_CM: struggling t...
- Legacy
- UCA_features_CM: struggling t...
- UCA_labels_it's distinctive
- UCA_labels_it's distinctive

Rob Well if I think about – because there's always going to be an element of give and take with what you want and the style and the approach you want to take and what's appropriate for a class but if I think of the classes where I consider that I've been able to fully impose my own style on the activities of the classroom, that is certainly 100% Target Language which probably only at the moment accounts for two or three of all the classes that I teach and I'm a bit ashamed to admit it because I think part of the UCA approach, certainly if I think back to my time as a trainee, was a commitment to 100% Target Language.

Sometimes and frequently in my lessons that now falls by the wayside as a compromise but it's important to say that it is a compromise because in an ideal world you'd like to be able to achieve that with all classes.

The reason is that I find the ones I use 100% Target Language in, there is a greater intensity of learning going on actually. There is more language being used and produced and learnt in a lesson compared to a class where you compromise and give instructions in English and talk to them in English and resort to native language.

Codes (right margin):
- Compromise
- UCA_enabling factors: gently d...
- UCA_features_TL management...
- Guilt
- UCA_features_TL management...
- Compromise
- UCA_labels_it's idealistic
- UCA_benefits: it works

Sylvianne

SO: In a way. Can I give an example? The objectives, she could have put it in French. She put it straightaway in English and she translated in – she said it in English and then she tried to translate it in French but I think it should be the other way around. Put it first in French; don't put – it doesn't have to be that complicated and then put, you know, A, B, C, you know – how do you say, some choices for the kids to see, like 'apprendre' does it mean 'whatever' you know, so that they can try to think – take it *from* the kid and not say straightway *to* the kids. I just – you know when we say 'make them thirsty': there's not such a thing in that training. I do think that is more: 'I deliver and you do whatever' ... There's no communication.

We do act a lot, don't we, like in the UCA? Which I must say that at first I was very shocked when I just first came here but I do understand why because you need to – because obviously they don't know all the language you're using so you need to mime a lot and you do things that you wouldn't ever imagine you would do one day but you do it and it works and I think people, especially in here, in our region, I think they are used to it now. That teachers, especially foreign language teachers, just do such things. Yeah, with her, it's just, she doesn't – if she gives, for example, an instruction she will translate it straightaway in English which I think first what she should do is say, 'OK what did I just say? What is it? Comment dit-on "savoir"?' Just make the kids guess the objectives and not straightaway give it to them.
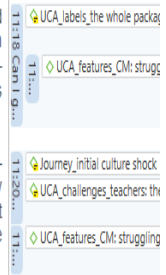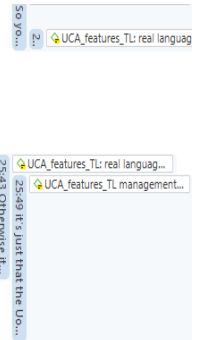
Simon

You know they're actually saying it. I guess the only thing that then needs exploiting a bit more is perhaps the writing skills which we can then take care of ourselves. It's a real – I hate to say it but it's communicative in a real sense, you know? All the songs that we do. You know 'est que je peux ...?' and so on, when you go abroad on holiday and things it *seriously* [with emphasis] is one of the most useful phrases that the kids can know.

INT: The kids are doing something that they wouldn't have been doing without this?

SG: I think so, yeah. Otherwise it would be, you know, as I described earlier – flashcards or replaced now with PowerPoint replaced with – I mean don't get me wrong the pair work and stuff and those types of ideas were very, very good and so on but it's just that the UCA way holds everything together in a sort of much more – I don't know – sort of like real life I suppose kind of way. I tell you what it is. It's the difference between studying about a language or actually using a language. So the kids are using it for a real purpose all the time in lessons, rather than just 'right if you go to France or if you go to Spain you might be asked this and you know, this is what you can say' type of thing whereas with the UCA method they are actually using it for real purposes so they've got support around the classroom and in their exercise books – all the things that they might want to ask. Like 'is the homework due in for next lesson?' Or 'can I go to the toilet?' which inevitably the answer's always 'no'. All those things like 'I've left my book at home', 'can I borrow a pen?' This is all exploited and used in lessons.

Simon

INT: So in between having trainees you carried on with the approach?

SG: Yeah. Oh yeah absolutely because it's something that works and yeah it does – it takes it to a whole new level and that might sound a bit like over the top and everything but it really does. I guess, you know, coming from somebody that hasn't trained in that style and what have you and having been used to three stage questioning, there's your flashcard and so on it is, it's just a whole different world really so I've certainly improved as a teacher since having the trainees in and seeing what they've been able to do and working together to come up with new routines and how could we do this, you know and coming up with some idea for it. Yeah I think I've improved tremendously really since being a Mentor really so it's all been good.

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