

**TEACHER DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION: AN EMPIRICALLY-  
BASED MODEL OF PROMOTING CONCEPTUAL CHANGE IN  
IN-SERVICE LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN SLOVAKIA**

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## **Abstract**

This longitudinal mixed methods study concerns the professional development of eight non-native English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers in Slovakia. Raising awareness of the teacher's role in creating conducive learning environments has not traditionally been part of the aims of EFL teacher education programmes. This study therefore set out to explore the impact of a 20-hour experiential in-service teacher development course that had been informed by theoretical principles drawn from within as well as outside the domain of applied linguistics, including second language motivation research, group dynamics and educational psychology. A combination of quantitative measures (pre- and post-test questionnaires measuring students' perceptions of their classroom environment) and qualitative measures (interviews, observations, and written course feedback) were employed to assess the course impact on the teachers' conceptual change. The results show that although some traces of impact were found in the participants' teaching practice, conceptual change did not occur despite their positive appraisals of the programme. Further interrogation of qualitative data about the reasons for this outcome has led to the generation of an integrated model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC), which accommodates and thus interprets the variable and individual ways in which the eight teachers responded to the course input. The fact that the complex and idiosyncratic growth patterns fitted comfortably into the proposed conceptual framework provides validation for the theoretical construct, and the LTCC model is therefore believed to offer an integrated, theoretically-informed and empirically-grounded framework for future research on language teacher development and for designing effective teacher education interventions.

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## Introduction

This study is about the development of non-native English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers working in a typical state-school system in a small Eastern European country (Slovakia). My motivation to embark on this, what turned out to be an extremely complex and demanding, project was manifold. First, I have always been interested in how people learn, and my own experiences - both positive and negative - as a learner, language teacher and language teacher educator have deepened my fascination with the tremendous power that the teacher has in facilitating or hindering the learning process. This interest has originally led me to the motivation literature, which is reflected in the content of the current teacher development course.

As a language teacher educator, I was always struck by the enormous differences in the ways teacher trainees experienced the same teacher education input and then implemented it in their teaching practice – the variability could reach such a degree that the original input was often no longer recognisable in some novice teachers' practice. This puzzle aroused my enduring interest in the domain of language teacher cognition.

Conducting the research project described in this thesis was intended to combine my two fields of interest, motivation and teacher cognition: I wanted to find effective ways of helping language teachers to create motivating learning environments in which all learners can thrive. The choice of the specific research context – the Slovakian school system – has, naturally, been guided by my own learning background as well as the fact that very little research has been done on the development of non-native English teachers in typical state-school-based EFL contexts (cf. Borg, 2006).

In order to do full justice to the research purpose outlined above, I set out to include the following components in my overall research design: (1) *a mixed methods design*, combining quantitative and qualitative data in order to be able to examine multiple perspectives of language teacher development; (2) *a longitudinal design*, with the aim to capture the teachers' developmental tendencies over time – one year was as long as was feasible within a PhD time framework; and (3) *proper fieldwork* to better understand the tasks, responsibilities, concerns and dilemmas the research participants face on an every-day basis.

When I turned my ambitious objectives into practice, I found that the project turned out to be much more complex and demanding than I had anticipated in terms of research skills, energy, time and money (thank goodness for low-cost airlines!). As a result, the thesis itself kept growing and the final product became more voluminous than what would

probably be considered sensible. However, given the above parameters and the highly interdisciplinary theoretical basis in which the project is rooted, I simply felt that this was the minimum that could do the topic justice. Even so, I am well aware that in some areas I am only scratching the surface, but it is my sincere hope that although a lot of material had to be left out of the current thesis, the analysis of the rich dataset will not stop here but will provide material for several future studies.

The conceptual part of the thesis (Chapters 1-3) describes the theoretical foundations of the study. There are three reasons why this section is rather lengthy: First, in an attempt to ground theoretically the content of the teacher development course, I was faced with the task of conceptualising what is a highly complex construct – conducive learning environments – and this involved an extensive review of the relevant literature within as well as beyond the field of applied linguistics. Second, in order to make sense of the findings of this project in a comprehensive manner, I had to consult several separate bodies of literature – most notably, the fertile domains of motivation, teacher cognition, attitude change, possible selves and conceptual change - and the theoretical model of language teacher conceptual change proposed in this thesis draws on all of these. Third, I decided to introduce my proposed theoretical model at the end of the literature review, even though, strictly speaking, the model was an outcome of the data analysis. I did this first to demonstrate how the theoretical constructs reviewed previously were accommodated in the model and second, to provide a theoretical basis upon which the empirical data introduced in the subsequent sections can be interpreted. The fact, however, remains that this study has followed a theory-building rather than theory-validating path.

The aim of Chapter 4 is to provide a brief background into the Slovakian research context of this study. I look at several general trends in education in Slovakia before specifically focusing on language education. I offer a brief historical overview, a description of the current provision of foreign language education at all levels of the state sector and outline a number of challenges that this type of education faces in Slovakia. I introduce the context of pre-service language teacher education and provide a sample curriculum for the purpose of illustration. Finally, I examine the general attitudes of Slovakian teachers towards in-service teacher development as well as the training opportunities that are available specifically to foreign language teachers.

The research methodology is described in Chapter 5 and to do the rather complex design and multiple research methods justice I adopted the following organisational structure: I first provide the rationale for the overall research approach (i.e. classroom-based mixed methods design), and then discuss the key theoretical issues underlying the use of the specific research methods in my study. Next I introduce the research participants and the

secondary, non-participating informants, followed by a detailed description of the research process, the data collection methods and the specific instruments. The final part of this chapter outlines the analytical procedures employed for both the qualitative and the quantitative data.

Chapter 6 concerns a discussion of methodological, practical and ethical challenges that I encountered while conducting this research study. This chapter combines two different papers that I have written (and which have been accepted) to be published in professional journals. While this further added to the length of the first part of the thesis, I felt that the inclusion of this chapter was justified, given the fact that the kind of methodological, practical and ethical challenges that are inherent in situated studies such as mine, are almost always left out of research reports.

The second part of the thesis, the actual data analysis, is divided into two chapters: In the first (Chapter 7), I present data from both qualitative and quantitative sources to evaluate the effectiveness of the teacher development programme, leading to the conclusion that it failed to generate a real improvement in the participants' teaching practice. In Chapter 8, then, the qualitative data are probed further to find reasons why this may have been the case. The theoretical model, which was, as mentioned earlier, for logical and structural reasons introduced in Chapter 3, is applied in the last part of the analysis to explain the variable developmental paths of individual research participants.

Finally, in the Conclusion, I outline some implications of this study for language teacher education as well as for language teacher cognition research.

# **1 Towards Understanding Conducive Instructional Environments: Preliminary Considerations**

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the theoretical background for the content of the teacher development course entitled ‘Creating a Motivating Learning Environment’, which was offered to EFL teachers in Slovakia as part of the current research project. I provide an overview of approaches both within and outside the field of applied linguistics that examine factors and processes that have been shown to contribute to creating conducive instructional environments. The current discussion focuses particularly on the learning environments’ ability to generate learning engagement, though, admittedly, this is only one of many possible ways of defining optimal instructional environments. After an introduction to the concept of learning engagement and a brief review of the factors affecting students’ learning engagement, I present the theoretical assumptions and major findings of two broad domains that have described various aspects of learning environments, educational psychology and SLA research. Within the first domain, three specific disciplines are explored: classroom environment research, motivational theories and group dynamics, while the SLA strand includes the situated approaches to L2 motivation and outline the main motivational strategies for the language classroom. Because the term ‘conduciveness’ appears rather all-encompassing, it is important to operationalise it through a more examination-friendly concept, conceptualisation of which is the subject of the next section.

## **1.1 *Learning Engagement***

In order to conceptualise conducive environments of instructed SLA, it is necessary to define ‘conduciveness’ in a way that facilitates a closer investigation of the concept and that makes it possible to determine and further examine factors that have a direct or mediating impact on it. As pointed out above, depending on one’s priorities, conducive L2 instructional environments could be operationalised in a number of distinct ways, including, for example, the latest L2 aptitude framework, which incorporates the learning situation (Robinson, 2002) or the interaction approach to SLA (Gass & Mackey, 2006). However, in this thesis, I focus on one crucial aspect of the instructional environment, namely its capacity to generate learning engagement. Because classroom-based learning almost always occurs in tasks, this discussion concerns both learning engagement in general and task engagement in particular.



### **1.1.1 Learning engagement as a central condition for learning**

It does not take much justification to claim that learning a L2 in an instructional setting is seriously limited without actively engaging in tasks that provide opportunities for L2 exposure. The learner's proactive approach towards the learning task is what, according to Dörnyei and Kormos (2000), makes task engagement a central condition for L2 processing. It seems, therefore, that learning engagement, defined by Chapman (2003) as "students' cognitive investment, active participation, and emotional engagement with specific learning tasks", is a key concept to consider in the present discussion and needs to be reflected in the operational definition of conducive learning environments. Following from this, a conducive microcontext of instructed SLA is such an instructional environment that not only creates opportunities for students' meaningful engagement with linguistic input at behavioural, cognitive and affective level, but also actively seeks to minimise influences that discourage it. Pivotal to the current conceptualisation, therefore, is determining components of the instructional environment that have been shown to have an impact on the L2 students' proactive engagement and identify factors that contribute to learning disengagement.

### **1.1.2 Stages of learning engagement**

Breaking the concept of learning, or more specifically, task engagement, down into several distinct, albeit interrelated, stages can shed light on the various behavioural, social, cognitive and affective processes involved in learning engagement and can, therefore, be instrumental to the present task of conceptualising conducive learning environments. A closer examination of the different stages also highlights the various perspectives from which task engagement has been researched.

Three relevant frameworks appear to be particularly useful, one defining stages of achievement tasks (McGregor & Elliot, 2002), another presenting a cyclical model of self-regulation phases from the social cognitive perspective (Zimmerman, 2000), and finally, Heckhausen and Kuhl's motivational theory called Action Control Theory (see e.g. Dörnyei, 2001b), the last of which has been usefully adopted in the process-oriented model of L2 motivation (see Dörnyei, 2000) and more specifically, for researching a motivational basis of task engagement (Dörnyei, 2002; see also Section 1.4.1). Although the three frameworks differ in focus and terminology, learning/task engagement can be, consistently with all of them, divided into the following three distinct stages:

1. *the period preceding task engagement*
2. *the actual experience of task engagement*
3. *the period following task engagement*

The first stage involves the individual's orienting towards the task. A number of task-analysis- and self-belief-related processes in this stage are believed to have a decisive effect upon the actual experience of task engagement and can be predictive of its successful completion. The task analysis processes entail individual's appraisal of the task's requirements, subsequent setting of relevant goals and making decisions regarding appropriate strategies. Another, extremely powerful, set of prior-to-task-engagement processes concerns motivational engagement, including self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, intrinsic interest and goal orientation (for a more detailed discussion, see Zimmerman, 2000). Clearly, then, in order to understand the impact of this stage on learning engagement, consulting the vast body of literature on motivation in language learning as well as general education and psychology will be essential. The first stage of the process-oriented model of motivation, that is, pre-actional, choice motivation (Dörnyei, 2000, 2001a, 2001b) seems particularly relevant here.

The second phase concerns the actual task engagement that can be manifested on several interrelated levels: *actual performance in terms of behavioural indices*, such as task-relevant verbal or non-verbal responses, task-related interaction, time on task, productivity, or actual L2 output; *cognitive investment* in terms of use of various self-regulatory strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies (for more details, see Dörnyei, 2005), and *affective engagement* in terms of positive attitude and interest during the task, which is a crucial prerequisite of the experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). The last two components may not be directly observable on a behavioural level, but can be assessed through post-task self-reports or implied from other task-behaviour indices, for example, decreased frequency of non-functional behaviours, such as pencil tapping or head scratching (Platt & Brooks, 2002), spontaneous use of L1 that may be indicative of affective involvement with the task (Mori, 2004; Swain & Lapkin, 2000), hand-raising, which can be seen as a non-verbal communicative act in that it expresses the desire to communicate (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998) and thus usually implies a certain level of prior cognitive engagement with the task, or even help-seeking (Marchand & Skinner, 2007), which can serve as evidence of self-regulatory action control being in place (for more examples of behavioural, cognitive and psychological engagement, see also Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006; Frederics, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004).

Dörnyei (2002) outlines two important cognitive processes during this stage of task engagement (which he terms *task execution*) that have an influence on the learner's task engagement: *appraisal* and *action control*. The former refers to an ongoing process of appraising cues from the immediate environment in addition to comparing actual progress

with the desired projections. Action control, on the other hand, refers to self-regulatory processes that are activated in order to enhance task-related action when the actual progress does not correspond with expectations and/or the environmental stimuli are perceived as threatening. As has been mentioned above, students' employing of particular action control strategies is indicative of their cognitive engagement with the task at hand. Some learners readily employ self-regulatory mechanisms to subdue threatening clues from the immediate environment and transform them into triggers for positive actions. Some, on the other hand, attempt to protect their self-worth and adopt maladaptive practices, such as avoidance strategies, which result in task disengagement. In order to maximise learning engagement for all learners, therefore, we need to discern those factors of the learning environment that serve as positive cues and whose appraisal by the students lead to adaptive task behaviour.

Finally, the period following task engagement is a period of self-reflection where judgements are formed about one's own performance, feedback is interpreted and responded to and the ground is laid for future motivation and action. Again, the present review needs to consider those aspects of this post-task-engagement stage that are predictive of positive appraisal leading to future engagement.

It is important to emphasise that the three stages should not be understood in a linear way, but may overlap considerably. Although it may not be possible to determine the boundaries when it comes to engagement in learning which is part of a specific course with multiple overlapping tasks (cf. also Dörnyei, 2000), the previous discussion is deemed important for understanding the various processes that impact on students' learning engagement.

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to detail the relationships between the multiple individual and macrocontextual factors that bear influence on learning. Nevertheless, central to this review is the recognition that understanding the impact of the microcontext of instructed SLA will be limited if such discussion occurs in a social and psychological vacuum. Because there is a dynamic interaction between the individual and the many social contexts in which his/her learning is situated, considering one dimension without recognising the influence of the others would be unproductive. Thus, although the present review foregrounds the microcontext of instructed SLA, due recognition must be given to individual differences and broader macro-contexts of SLA, which constitute the subject of the following subsection.

## **1.2 Overview of Factors Impacting on Learning Engagement**

### **1.2.1 Individual differences**

Considering individual differences (IDs) seems to be an unavoidable task in the discussion of learning engagement, given their strong predictive power in relation to L2 attainment in instructed settings (cf. Dörnyei & Skehan, 2003). However, there are two important issues to take into account in the light of the present focus. First, research investigating the relationship between specific IDs and particular learning outcomes has not produced consistent results (Dörnyei, 2005), but has, instead, revealed that almost all IDs, which are considered to be fairly stable personal traits, are mediated by situation-specific variables. Similarly, discussions of IDs as stable personality traits are usually not of the greatest concern for language educators. What teachers want to know is whether (and if so, how) their specific instructional interventions in the particular learning micro-context can enhance the learning process as well as learning outcomes for all students, regardless of their IDs.

This review, therefore, needs to examine how IDs' effect on learning engagement and outcomes is mediated by the specific social context of learning and which particular factors in the learning context are salient in this process. Empirical findings addressing the nature of the interaction of some of the salient IDs, including motivation, willingness to communicate, and self-confidence are outlined below.

*Motivation.* L2 motivation has been an important and well researched individual difference factor for more than two decades and was traditionally conceptualised as an integrative orientation (Gardner, 1985), which is a fairly stable personal trait. Although its impact on L2 motivation is uncontested and a considerable body of research confirms a positive link between integrative orientation and favourable learning outcomes, the arrival of the so called “situated-cognitive period” in L2 motivation (see Dörnyei, 2005) in the 1990s generated ample empirical evidence that highlighted the situated nature of L2 motivation. The empirical findings have confirmed that L2 motivation is enhanced when groups in the learning microcontext are cohesive (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994), when learning tasks present an optimal challenge, when necessary instructional support is provided and evaluation puts an emphasis on self-improvement (Wu, 2003), and when the teacher is perceived as committed to students' learning (Noels, 2003). Because this area is crucial for our understanding of learning engagement, L2 motivation research is dealt with in more depth in Section 1.4.

*Willingness to communicate (WTC).* The construct of willingness to communicate (WTC) adopted from L1 communication studies (where it was originally conceptualised as a

personality trait) has been reconceptualised from a L2 learning perspective by MacIntyre et al. (1998) in a model integrating psychological, linguistic, and communicative approaches. A distinction has been made between relatively stable factors, such as personality traits and macrocontextual factors and situation-specific influences, such as the desire to affiliate with a specific person and state self-confidence. Thus, WTC in L2 has been defined in a manner that accounts for its highly situated nature as “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2” (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547). The importance of accounting for the situational influences in WTC is further corroborated by empirical data, which indeed suggest that the interaction of psychological conditions, such as excitement, responsibility, or security, and situational variables, including the topic, interlocutors, and the conversational context of the communication, are predictive of the learners’ willingness to communicate in a L2 (Kang, 2005).

*Self-confidence and anxiety.* Research focusing on specific components embraced by the WTC model, such as situational self-confidence has also produced convincing findings in this respect. For example, it has been found that self-efficacy, that is, self-confidence regarding one’s ability to perform a specific task, is a highly situated construct, fluctuating enormously throughout the academic year (Bong, 2005). Furthermore, anxiety has been shown to result from tensions caused by a mismatch between one’s expectations of the level of cognitive stimulation in the learning context and the actual lack of such opportunities (Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001).

Although ID research will continue to be important in throwing light on why some learners are generally more successful in learning L2 than others, investigations of IDs’ interaction with situation-specific factors will remain of primary interest to L2 educators and will, therefore, continue to be a particularly fertile ground for future investigations. Of course, it would be an oversimplification to assume that the individual’s engagement in learning tasks only depends on individual differences, trait and/or state. The next subsection, therefore, briefly considers other contexts that exert influence on the learners’ ultimate task engagement (cf. Dörnyei, 2002).

### **1.2.2 Social and cultural macro-contexts**

Even if the major concern of the present discussion is the immediate learning environment of the language classroom, its examination is impossible in a sociocultural vacuum. Learners come to the classroom with multiple identities that are situationally anchored (McGroarty, 1998; Norton, 2000). Hence, it is important to take into consideration a wider social context in which SLA takes place (see review in Siegel, 2003) and underlying social factors that leave an imprint on the language learner’s identity and exert influence on how he/she

approaches the learning tasks in the microcontext of the language classroom. These macro-contextual factors include the societal ethnolinguistic influences that have been the subject of social psychological theories, such as the intergroup model and acculturation theory (see review in Dörnyei, 2001b), social milieu and the actual identification with L2 community that has been at the core of social psychological perspective of SLA (Gardner, 2002), power relations between the target language speakers and L2 learners (Norton, 2000), parental influence (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Gardner, 1985; Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, & Holbein, 2005) and school context (Dörnyei, 2001b). Indeed, Dai and Sternberg (2004) are right to claim that these various social and cultural contexts should not be taken as an add-on, but as "an integral part of individuals' intellectual functioning and development" (p. 28).

The above macrocontextual influences have been scrutinized extensively (perhaps with the exception of the school context that is very much lagging behind; see Dörnyei, 2001b) in various theoretical frameworks with substantial empirical support. However, most of them seem to have been examined in isolation from the microcontext of instructed SLA, even when their impact on learner engagement was investigated in relation to achievement in the learning microcontext. Although it seems more demanding to account for the complex situational factors that are more transient and more susceptible to the characteristics of the social psychological microcontext of the classroom (Gardner, 2002), their understanding is critical to increasing effectiveness of L2 instruction.

### **1.2.3 The micro-context of instructed SLA**

Despite the proven impact of individual differences and the social macrocontexts in which the individual's learning is embedded, empirical evidence shows that in some circumstances the microcontext, that is, the social psychological processes inherent in the instructional settings, can significantly influence the learners' task engagement, attitudes towards learning and, ultimately, learning outcomes to such an extent that they can even override the impact of both the macro-level influences (see e.g. Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, & Shohamy, 2004) and any other unfavourable individual dispositions (see review in Section 1.2.1).

Although, as mentioned before, student motivation has traditionally been studied as an individual trait, the immediate context impacts significantly on students' cognitions, affects and emotions (Meyer & Turner, 2006), and influences, in turn, appraisals of the learning process (Boekaerts, 2001). Indeed, students' goals and motivational dispositions may alter as a function of cues from the learning microcontext because they are mediated by subjective appraisals of those aspect of the immediate learning context that are personally relevant to the learner (Boekaerts, 2001; Järvelä & Niemivirta, 2001; Turner, 2001; Volet,

2001). This explains why learning environments have enjoyed a renewed interest in the field of educational psychology.

Empirical L2 motivation studies, too, are a testimony of the impact of the immediate context on the learners' motivation (Clément et al., 1994; Donitsa-Schmidt et al., 2004; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Noels, 2003), indicating that it is the situated factors, including the learners' appraisal of the group, the course, the task and the teacher respectively, that predict learners' classroom engagement and/or their motivation. It seems, therefore, that the more the field knows about the internal cognitive and affective appraisal processes of the learner, the more significant the immediate learning situation appears (Wosnitza & Nenniger, 2001). That is why Boekaerts (2001) calls for putting context-sensitive learner behaviour in a prominent place of the research agendas and this review is an attempt to extend this call to the field of instructed SLA.

#### **1.2.4 Interim summary**

Engagement in learning tasks is a prerequisite of L2 attainment in instructional settings. Although the microcontext of instructional settings constitutes the core of this review, it is important to situate this discussion within the broader influence of personal traits as well as a range of sociocultural contexts in which the individual's learning is embedded and which all function as "motivational contingencies" exerting influence on final task motivation (Dörnyei, 2002, p. 138) and, ultimately, on learning engagement. It has been made clear, however, that the context of the immediate learning situation deserves a more prominent place in the studies of instructed SLA because it is through the contextual cues that learners' various motivational contingencies become activated. The following subsections are devoted to those theoretical frameworks within as well as beyond applied linguistics that have informed the current conceptualization of the microcontext of instructed SLA. I first outline the major theoretical domains investigating classroom environment in educational psychology, namely classroom environment research, motivational theories and group dynamics before looking more closely at the SLA research domain, particularly the situated strand of L2 motivation research.

### ***1.3 Classroom Environment in Educational Psychology***

As mentioned earlier, educational psychology has seen a renewed interest in the social psychological processes inherent in learning environments and researchers have been urged to direct their attention to the microcontext of instruction. The aim of the following section is to briefly introduce three main trends within educational psychology that have generated

results of particular relevance to the present review: classroom environment research, motivational theories and group dynamics.

### **1.3.1 Classroom environment research**

Classroom environment research has been guided by two basic premises: first, achieving a positive and pleasant classroom environment is “an educationally desirable end in its own right” (Fraser & Walberg, 1991, p. x) and second, the quality of the classroom environment has an impact on students’ outcomes. The latter has been a focus of the bulk of prior classroom environment research, which has shown consistent support for the existence of such outcome-environment associations. Two issues are discussed here with regard to classroom environment research: classroom environment components identified in research instruments and the limitations of this vein of inquiry.

#### *Classroom environment research instruments*

Research on classroom environment has been conducted primarily in science education, mathematics in particular, and has traditionally measured students’ and teachers’ perceptions of actual and/or preferred social psychological capacities of the classroom environment by means of carefully designed and tested quantitative instruments (for a detailed description of instrument development procedures, see Fraser, 1986). The most well-known of these, on whose principal framework a great number of other subsequently developed instruments have drawn, is the 90-item Classroom Environment Scales (CES) constructed by Moos and Trickett (described in detail in e.g. Moos, 1979). This instrument was built on Moos’s (see e.g. Moos, 1979) framework classifying human environments in general, which is based on the assumption that “to understand the social climate of an environment fully one must focus on the physical and architectural setting, the types of people present (the human aggregate), and the organizational structure within which they function” (Moos, 1979, pp. vii-viii).

Accordingly, the framework comprises three basic dimensions: Relationships, Personal Development and System Maintenance and Change. In CES, the Relationship dimension taps the degree of student participation in class activities (Involvement), friendships (Affiliation) and teacher relationship towards the students (Teacher Support). Personal development, in turn, can be seen as goal orientation in that it measures the degree of emphasis on subject matter and planned activities in the classroom (Task Orientation) and the extent of competition with peers for grades and/or recognition (Competition). Finally, the System Maintenance and Change dimension assesses student discipline and task organisation (Order and Organisation), classroom rules and to what extent they are adhered to (Rule Clarity), how strict the teacher is in enforcing the rules (Teacher Control), and



student contribution to the overall running of class activities and the teacher use of innovative teaching techniques that encourage creativity (Innovation). (For a concise summary of CES individual dimensions, scales and sample items, see Table 1.1.)

Table 1.1: A summary of Moos and Trickett's Classroom Environment Scales (CES)

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Scale (Number of Items)</i>	<i>Sample Item</i>
<b>Relationships</b>	Involvement (10)	Students put a lot of energy into what they do here.
	Affiliation (10)	A lot of friendships have been made in this class.
	Teacher Support (10)	The teacher takes a personal interest in students.
<b>Personal Growth / Goal Orientation</b>	Task Orientation (10)	Almost all classtime is spent on the lesson for the day.
	Competition (10)	Students don't compete with each other here.
<b>System Maintenance and Change</b>	Order and Organisation (10)	Students fool around a lot in this class.
	Rule Clarity (10)	There is a clear set of rules for students to follow.
	Teacher Control (10)	The teacher is not very strict.
	Innovation (10)	The teacher likes students to try unusual projects.

The CES has been widely used for various purposes in its original form (e.g. Raviv, Raviv, & Reisel, 1990) or in a number of modifications, maintaining, however, the organising framework of human environment dimensions (e.g. Fraser & Fisher's (1986) shortened version of the CES aimed at practising teachers, Rentoul & Fraser's (1983) School-Level Environment Questionnaire (SLEQ) measuring teachers' perceptions of the psychosocial dimensions of the school environment and Fraser, Williamson, & Tobin's (1987) College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI), to give but a few examples). A summary of major classroom environment instruments is provided in Fraser (1991).

### *Limitations of classroom environment research*

This line of research has not been widely taken up by L2 researchers (although see the study by Baek & Choi, 2002, investigating L2 classrooms in Korea) and there may be a number of

reasons for that. First, despite consistent empirical associations between the dimensions of the classroom environment as outlined above and student achievement, classroom environment research has been criticised for lacking in conceptual grounding (see Patrick, 2004). Secondly, no clear links have been identified in terms of individual dimensions and how these are manifested in the actual classroom environment on both student and teacher level, thus making it impossible to suggest instructional interventions that can contribute to the enhancement of students' learning engagement. Finally, as has been mentioned earlier, student engagement in classroom tasks is a function of a host of other factors and undergoes dynamic changes, which classroom environment research has failed to account for in its principal framework. It is, therefore, worth looking at L2 motivation research which has recently focused more prominently on the situated and process-oriented nature of L2 motivation and engagement and the extended discussion of these perspectives can be found in Section 1.4.

### **1.3.2 Motivational theories**

Of the numerous motivational theories that have been developed in psychology, the current review examines two that are the most famous in educational psychology and the most relevant to classroom application, namely goal theories and self-determination theory. Each of them is introduced in a separate subsection.

#### *Goal theories*

A particular strand of goal theories is known as *goal content approach* and with the increasing calls for creating learning environments that go hand in hand with social constructivist theories, there has recently been a renewed interest in this vein of research in educational psychology (Boekaerts, de Koning, & Vedder, 2006). This theory recognises that “being a responsible student involves more than performing well on a task. It involves having management skills, motivation and volition strategies, a good understanding of rules and regulations, and access to a well-established social support network” (Boekaerts et al., 2006, p. 33). Kathryn Wentzel (1999) is given credit for elaborating on the goal-content approach in educational contexts (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). According to her, students' achievement and social goals are coordinated in the classroom settings in several ways and she proposes three models of the interaction of social and task-related goals.

The first assumes *complementary* relations. In other words, pursuing positive social goals and related behaviours such as cooperation contributes to academic performance and, conversely, the academic domain is likely to affect social relationships in the classroom (Kaplan, 2004). There is strong empirical evidence for this model in the literature on

cooperative learning, for example, which indeed suggests that children who engage in socially adaptive classroom behaviour of cooperation and acceptance, achieve better educational outcomes (Dörnyei, 1997; D. W. Johnson, 2003; Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001). It follows that by fostering ways of working in the classroom which are socially acceptable, teachers can directly influence students' performance outcomes.

Another model posits a *developmental* relationship between social and task-related goals. More specifically, this perspective assumes a more general human need of individuals to relate to others and to experience a sense of belongingness in a supportive social environment (see e.g. Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Individuals are likely to adopt academic goals of those who provide such support and help them to meet their social needs. The assumptions behind this model have been the key principle of humanistic psychology and feature prominently in self-determination theory outlined below. This model, too, has important implications for the motivational teaching practice in that "interventions to change maladaptive motivational orientations toward learning must begin with attention to students' social and emotional needs" (Wentzel, 1999, p. 80). This is further corroborated by empirical evidence suggesting that problems of the students in the social domain are predictive of negative changes in their academic achievement (Guay, Boivin, & Hodges, 1999).

Finally, the relations among classroom goals can be *hierarchical* in the students' perceptions of causal links between different sets of goals. Students thus learn which set of goals will lead to the attainment of others in the particular context (e.g. paying attention will secure a positive relationship with the teacher).

*Goal orientation theory* is specifically concerned with achievement-related goals, whereby goal orientation, the main construct of the theory refers to "students' beliefs about the purposes of engaging in achievement-related behaviour" (Brophy, 2004, p. 90). Given its focus and the vast empirically-supported body of scholarship, this theory is considered "the most relevant and applicable goal theory for understanding and improving learning and instruction" (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, p. 213).

The literature on achievement motivation has distinguished between two different goal orientations, mastery and performance goal orientations, though these have been termed variously (see Ames, 1992). They are distinct in that they involve different purposes for engaging in achievement behaviour and, accordingly, different standards for defining success. Learners with a mastery goal orientation engage in a learning task for the purposes of understanding the task and improving and/or developing competence, and rely on internal points of reference in evaluating success or failure. In contrast, those with a performance goal pursue a task with the purpose of demonstrating their competence in front of others, often with the intention to outperform them. Thus, the main source of judging their success

or failure is social comparison. These different goal orientations are elicited by different environmental structures and instructional requirements (Ames, 1992; Bong, 2005; Patrick, Anderman, Ryan, Edelin, & Midgley, 2001; Patrick, Turner, Meyer, & Midgley, 2003; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) and are, as a result, characterised by qualitatively distinct motivational patterns that influence other motivational, cognitive and behavioural outcomes. That is, whereas mastery goal structure result in a motivational pattern linked with the quality of the learning experience (i.e. intrinsically motivated learning engagement), performance goal structure in the classroom results in a failure-avoiding motivational pattern, leading to students' disengagement or only minimal investment and the use of various avoidance strategies in an attempt to avoid looking stupid in front of peers. Such strategies include withdrawing effort, cheating, avoiding seeking help and resisting novel approaches to academic work (Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2001; Patrick et al., 2003; Turner et al., 2002). Because avoidance strategies and work-avoidant goals are negatively correlated with the use of deep processing strategies and attitudes towards class/subject (Brophy, 2004), a heavy promotion of performance goal structure in the L2 classroom is likely to have dire consequences for both learning and non-learning outcomes.

In order to propose practical recommendations with regard to creating conducive learning environments, it is necessary to understand the particular instructional practices and classroom discourse that are perceived by students as promoting one or the other classroom goal structure. Although the empirical findings and related practical implications are discussed in detail in Section 2.5.3, it is important to note here that recent findings in goal orientation theory studies point to the importance of catering for both the academic and social needs of the learners (Patrick, 2004; Patrick et al., 2001; Turner et al., 2002) and have thus begun to renew the early interest of goal theories in the interplay of academic and social goals of the students in achievement contexts.

### *Self-determination theory*

Self-determination theory (SDT) is another theory in motivational psychology in which the social context features prominently. SDT posits that intrinsically motivated behaviour, as opposed to its more externally controlled forms, is driven by the satisfaction gained from voluntarily performing an activity which challenges one's capacities and secures one's acceptance among the members of a community. This form of motivated behaviour thus fulfils the fundamental human needs for competence, relatedness and self-determination. Although the desire for self-actualization is considered to be innate, social environments are believed to either nurture or thwart the highly self-determined form of motivated behaviour.

Thus, SDT “predicts a broad array of developmental outcomes, ranging from a relatively active and integrated self to a highly fragmented and sometimes passive, reactive, or alienated self, as a function of social-environmental conditions” (Ryan & Deci, 2002, p. 5).

Highly self-determined forms of students’ engagement in learning tasks are clearly a desired goal of L2 education. In educational psychology, there is substantial evidence for the educational benefits for students whose teachers engage in autonomy-supporting rather than controlling instructional practices in terms of higher academic achievement, higher perceived competence, self-esteem, greater conceptual understanding, flexibility in thinking, creativity, more active information processing and even higher rates of retention (see reviews in Reeve, 2002; Reeve & Jang, 2006). Parallel links have also been found in L2 studies exploring aspects of learner autonomy (see reviews in Benson, 2001; Benson, 2007; Chamot, 2005) and resulting linguistic and non-linguistic outcomes (Dam & Legenhausen, 1996; Little, Ridley, & Ushioda, 2003). Specific autonomy-supporting instructional practices are therefore of particular interest in the light of the present conceptualisation and are the subject of Section 2.5.2.

### **1.3.3 Group dynamics**

Although group dynamics is a domain rooted in social psychology, its findings have been usefully applied in educational psychological research for its potential to explicate some of the key social psychological processes embedded in instructional environments that contribute to students’ learning engagement. The educational research grounded in group dynamics domain has generated evidence that groups have a significant positive influence on individual students’ learning (see review in Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001), which has been ascribed to specific dynamics inherent in a high-performance learner group characterised by several distinct elements, including positive relationships, a strong sense of goal-orientedness, group identity, positive interdependence, and promotive interaction (D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1997). In fact, the tremendous success of cooperative learning (Slavin, 1999) with a documented massive impact on the learners’ cognitive and motivational engagement (see review in D. W. Johnson, 2003) is, according to Dörnyei (1997), primarily ascribable to its inherent group dynamics, which form the essential affective basis of productivity.

Group dynamics theory posits that groups undergo a developmental trajectory, which involves the stages of forming, norming, storming, performing and adjourning. The norming stage is particularly crucial as once the group has internalised productive social and task-related norms, it exerts pressure on its members to conform to them throughout their

performing, that is, the most productive, phase. In classroom settings, norms are considered to be a group equivalent of individual learner motivation (Dörnyei, 2005, 2007a).

While some groups may reach the productivity stage naturally, many never do. With the focus of this conceptualisation in mind, therefore, it is important to understand (1) the processes that contribute to establishing productive group norms (rather than maladaptive ones, such as the norm of mediocrity; see e.g. Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003) that exert positive pressure on individuals' desire to engage in learning and master the subject-matter and (2) instructional interventions that can promote those processes. These issues will be discussed further in Sections 2.4.2 and 2.5.4.

## **1.4 Classroom Environment in SLA Research**

As pointed out earlier, several directions of SLA research with relevance to the current focus could be pursued here, including L2 aptitude research, the interactionist perspective of SLA or the classroom discourse perspective. The approach that is adopted in this chapter focuses on the psychological foundations of the language classroom and this section, therefore, primarily concentrates on L2 motivation and group dynamics in the language classroom. Rather than looking at L2 motivation from the perspective of individual differences, though, this review is concerned with the motivational processes, motivational dynamics and motivational strategies of the language classroom.

The 1990s brought about a shift in L2 motivation research that is particularly relevant for the present review. Building on the Gardnerian social psychological tradition, L2 motivation researchers started to extend the borders of the domain by considering the impact of situated factors on students' motivation to learn. The theoretical frameworks and empirical findings yielded during this period will serve as an important base for conceptualising a conducive L2 classroom environment in this review, hence the following discussion provides an overview of the major theoretical advances in this expanding field.

### **1.4.1 The situated approaches to L2 motivation**

Although language learning is different from learning other subjects in terms of the unique influence of the social context of the L2 community (i.e. macro-context), it can be argued that the social context of the immediate learning situation, that is, the microcontext of the language classroom makes learning a L2 similar to that of other subjects. It seems that by focusing on the differences, research on L2 motivation characterised by the social psychological period (see review in Dörnyei, 2001b, 2005) overlooked the social perspective of the classroom context, the one that makes L2 learning a similar endeavour to learning

other subjects. A response to that omission marked the beginning of the second phase of L2 motivation research and the debate in the *Modern Language Journal* in 1994 may provide a flavour of this, in the view of the present review, a critical turning point (Dörnyei, 1994a, 1994b; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994a, 1994b; Oxford, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994).

The key premise ‘responsible’ for this “very positive step forward” in L2 motivation research (Gardner & Tremblay, 1994a, p. 359) was that the microcontext of learning had a considerably greater influence on language learner motivation than had been acknowledged before (Dörnyei, 2003a). Hence, the field has seen a boom in motivational frameworks, which, apart from general variables also encompass learning-situation-specific components (e.g. Dörnyei, 1994a; Dörnyei, 2005; MacIntyre et al., 1998; Noels, 2003; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Ushioda, 2001; Williams & Burden, 1997).

A theoretical framework that most comprehensibly describes the learning situation and has thus proven most useful for the current conceptualisation is that of Dörnyei (1994a), in which the learning situation component of L2 motivation is divided into three sub-categories: course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific motivational components. The course-specific motivational components concern aspects related to syllabus, teaching materials and methods. The teacher-specific components, on the other hand, include teacher personality and behaviour and encompass three dimensions of the teacher’s role that impact on L2 motivation: the *affiliative motive* (i.e. students’ desire to please the teacher), *authority type* (i.e. authoritarian, democratic or laissez-faire teaching style) and *direct socialization of student motivation*, which includes modelling, task presentation and feedback. Finally, the group-specific motivational components embrace aspects of group dynamics, *group goal-orientedness*, *group cohesion*, *goal structure* and the *norm system* being its key aspects. Although situational frameworks have been criticised for the lack of empirical grounding and the field of L2 motivation is yet to see robust empirical evidence illuminating the precise nature of the impact of the learning situation-specific factors on learner L2 motivation, the findings of the research programmes outside the L2 motivation field strongly support a need to focus on this particular direction. Chapter 2 will look more closely at the wealth of empirical evidence generated in this respect in diverse lines of inquiry.

When situation-specific factors are at the centre of the debate, a temporal aspect inevitably becomes an inherent part of it. This realisation has led to developing such theoretical models of L2 motivation that would account for its dynamic nature, and thus the time aspect has began to feature in L2 motivation studies (see e.g. Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihic, 2004; Inbar, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Shohamy, 2001; Ushioda, 2001). The process-oriented model (Dörnyei, 2000; Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998) of L2 motivation can be seen as an integration of the social psychological strand of L2 motivation research (represented by

Gardner) and the cognitive-situated phase mentioned earlier in that different motives are believed to come into operation at different stages of learner engagement. Thus, the social psychological perspective, for instance, while not capable of explaining motivation in the later stages of the learning process can throw light on the initial phase. The distinct stages of the process-oriented approach, namely preactional (choice motivation), actional (executive motivation) and postactional (motivational retrospection), each fulfil different motivational functions that have been translated into specific motivational strategies by Dörnyei (2001a) and are briefly reviewed below. As has been indicated earlier (see Section 1.1.2), the process-oriented model seems to comprehensively account for the different stages of learning engagement and thus fully justifies the inclusion of L2 motivation in the discussion of learning environments conducive to SLA.

In the light of the findings pointing to the situated and process-oriented nature of L2 motivation, McGroarty's (2001) call for investigating the motivational power of situations becomes particularly relevant. As she maintains,

...insofar as a framework for the study of motivation is intended to bear on theories of L2 learning or guide pedagogical decisions, it must also provide ways to identify and assess motivationally-relevant aspects of L2 instruction to a far greater degree than is now usually done. Without such research foci, investigation of L2 motivation becomes an intellectual enterprise worthwhile in its own terms but removed from the major site of planned L2 acquisition, the classroom. (McGroarty, 2001, p. 77)

Researching L2 task motivation appears to be an apt response to this call. Indeed, tasks represent a fertile ground to consult in the view of the current focus and several L2 motivation studies (e.g. Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004) hold promise for future potential for a number of reasons. First, tasks represent a convenient unit of analysis, allowing for a clearer definition of boundaries (Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004) and thus for a more focused investigation of the processes associated with learning engagement. Second, studies inquiring into task motivation are an example of a situated approach to studying L2 motivation at its best where both situation-specific and process-oriented approaches meet. Finally, because task motivation has been conceptualised as a function of immediate as well as individual and macrocontextual factors (Dörnyei, 2002), it is a particularly relevant area to consult in future discussions of what contributes to the students' perception of their L2 classroom environments as conducive.



#### **1.4.2 The motivational strategies for the language classroom**

Several lists of motivational strategies have been devised in the educational psychology literature, which have drawn from various motivational theories (e.g. Brophy, 2004; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). However, one of the most significant benefits of the above mentioned process-model of L2 motivation in terms of practical application is that it enables devising a comprehensive list of motivational strategies that the teachers can use in the classroom to address the specific motivational “requirements” of a particular stage. Dörnyei’s (2001a) framework of motivational strategies is one that accounts comprehensively for all stages of learning engagement, including pre-actional (i.e. choice motivation stage in which intentions for action are formed and goals are set), actional (executive motivation stage comprising task execution, appraisal and action control) and post-actional (motivational retrospection where attributions are formed and future action planned). Accordingly, apart from creating the basic motivational conditions with regard to appropriate teacher behaviours, creating a cohesive learner group and a pleasant and supportive atmosphere, there are three key stages of motivational teaching practice: generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, each requiring a set of relevant motivational strategies (see Dörnyei, 2001a).

The empirical evidence is yet to show, however, whether those specific teachers’ interventions indeed affect learners’ motivation to engage in learning tasks as is assumed theoretically and if so, whether these strategies are indeed ‘trainable’ (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, in press). Empirical evidence provided in this thesis, which sheds light on the latter point, seems to suggest that training teachers in motivational strategies may not be as straightforward a task as it may seem, which opens up new venues for investigation in the field of L2 teacher education.

### **1.5 Conclusion**

In this first chapter I have looked at the fundamental condition for learning in instructed settings, *learning engagement*. I have shown that the ultimate learning engagement is a sum of multiple individual variables and sociocultural macro-contexts. Nevertheless, the growing evidence in both educational psychology and SLA domains points to the pivotal mediating role that the micro-context of the learning situation plays in affecting students’ learning engagement in the classroom. It is therefore of critical importance to understand those dimensions of the microcontext that can contribute to creating environments conducive to SLA. To that end, I have looked at two broad areas that have produced a wealth of

scholarship both conceptually and empirically: educational psychology (including classroom environment research, motivational theories and group dynamics) and situated SLA research with the particular focus on motivational processes of the language classroom. The findings of all these disciplines are consolidated in the following chapter whose aim is first, to discern components of conducive L2 classroom environments and second, to outline specific instructional practices which have proved effective.

## **2 Conducive Microcontexts of SLA: Conceptualisation**

The previous review has shown links between the immediate context of learning and the individual's appraisal, which, in turn, affects his/her learning engagement. The objective of this chapter is to consolidate the research findings in these various fields and discern the components of the classroom environment and specific instructional interventions that have been found to trigger positive appraisals despite unfavourable motivational beliefs and thus lead to students' proactive engagement in learning tasks. In other words, the aim of this chapter is to pin down what makes an instructed setting conducive to SLA.

There are two important issues to consider at the outset. First, it is not the ambition of this chapter to bring together the wealth of knowledge accumulated in the distinct lines of inquiry reviewed above into a comprehensive unified model with clear relationships between the components. Given the sheer volume of research in frameworks with distinct foci, overlapping concepts and diverse terminology, this seems an impossible task. Rather, the following conceptualisation is an attempt to extract the crucial dimensions of the learning context that have shown influence on learning engagement, describe them and point to the empirical evidence (if available) demonstrating their impact. This is believed to be useful in identifying important directions in terms of both practical application and future research.

Second, this conceptualisation in no way attempts to dictate teaching methods, but rather aspires to identify the processes of human learning in achievement settings and what particular strategies have been shown to facilitate these processes. The understanding of these components and processes is believed to provide L2 instructors with the information needed for particular context-bound and culturally appropriate instructional choices aimed at creating instructional environments conducive to SLA for their particular learners. The content of the current teacher development course has been informed by this conceptualisation.

### ***2.1 The Interplay of Academic and Social Domains***

All of the previously outlined theoretical frameworks have either always recognised or begun to acknowledge at some point that discussions of achievement contexts would not yield a complete picture without giving equal consideration to both academic and social dimensions. Hence, the classroom research instruments include task-oriented behaviour as well as social support scales (Moos, 1979), L2 motivation frameworks have added social in

addition to achievement-oriented variables (Dörnyei, 1994a; Williams & Burden, 1997), goal content approach and self-determination theories have always been interested in the interplay of the multiple task-related and social goals (Boekaerts et al., 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2002; Skinner & Belmont, 1993) and goal orientation theory has recently begun to uncover a direct link between mastery goal structure and the social dimension of supportive classroom climate (Patrick, 2004; Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007).

In other specific areas of L2 education, the importance of attending to both pedagogic and social priorities (Senior, 2002) has been forcefully emphasised in humanistic L2 education (Stevick, 1990) and a particularly important reminder that only responding to one set of student needs may not be sufficient can be seen in research on L2 anxiety. It seems that anxiety, which has been shown to have negative effects on learning a L2 and has typically been studied from the affective perspective, can be a result of tensions that are of cognitive, rather than purely affective nature. An insightful study by Spielmann and Radnofsky (2001) revealed that students displayed tension when their cognitive expectations were not matched by learning opportunities available. Creating sufficient opportunities for cognitive development thus seems to be equally important as creating a caring classroom climate.

In accordance with the above, the following discussion of the central components of learning environments, including the language course, the L2 task, the learner group and the teacher, is an attempt to integrate both domains, recognising the fact that academic and social dimensions converge in most of the constructs (the role of teacher being perhaps the most apparent one). I first look at the core elements of the microcontext of instructed SLA, including the course, the task, and the learner group. I then examine more closely the role of teacher that embraces both the academic and social domains of all these components. A special consideration is given to the type of instructional interventions and discourse patterns that have been found to facilitate student learning engagement.

## ***2.2 The Language Course***

Students' appraisal of the L2 course as a whole has been found to considerably affect their motivation, actual learning engagement and learning outcomes and even override the influence of macro-contextual factors and more general motivational orientations. A study by Israeli researchers Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar and Shohamy (2004) provides strong evidence for the superiority of the immediate learning context over macro-social factors. Despite the numerous cultural and geopolitical problems negatively affecting attitudes of Hebrew

speakers towards learning the Arabic language, the variable that best predicted student motivation to learn spoken Arabic was the degree of the students' satisfaction with their Arabic study programme. As they state, "although expertise and well-planned language programs are crucial in any context, it seems that they are of even more importance in cases where motivation is extremely low to begin with..." (Donitsa-Schmidt, Inbar, & Shohamy, 2004, p. 227). Another Israeli study (Inbar et al., 2001) revealed that the satisfaction with the Arabic course also showed to be a strong predictor of motivation to engage in the study of the L2 in the future.

A Hungarian study by Nikolov (2001) examining retrospective evaluations of unsuccessful L2 learners revealed that negatively appraised classroom processes, particularly classroom methodology, assessment, focus on form, and rote-learning featured the data and these therefore, as Nikolov concludes, seem to play a central role in long-term outcomes. Furthermore, in her longitudinal qualitative study of changes in motivational thinking of students at an Irish university studying French as a L2, Ushioda (2001) found, amongst other things, associations between stronger motivation through coursework and exams and, in contrast, weaker motivation as a result of coursework dissatisfaction. Demotivation was, in fact, predominantly associated with learning situation factors, such as L2 coursework, methods and institutional policies. It is important to note, however, that some students were able to retain their intrinsic motivation despite the negative appraisal of their course. This points to the crucial role that self-regulation plays, especially in terms of mobilizing one's own intrinsic motivational resources. Nevertheless, Ushioda's as well as Nikolov's studies provide clear evidence that where self-regulatory processes have not been activated towards retaining intrinsic motivation, a negatively appraised course has the potential to erode the students' initially presumably positive attitude towards L2 learning, which results in demotivation, learning disengagement and, ultimately, poor learning outcomes.

Finally, two studies specifically examining student task engagement (Dörnyei, 2002; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000) revealed intriguing associations between measures of students' task engagement and their attitudes towards both the course and the particular task. The studies found that the students whose attitude towards the task was low, but their appraisal of the course as a whole was positive, displayed more productive task engagement than those with negative attitudes towards the course as well as the task.

Interestingly, then, even if students do not perceive a specific task as particularly intriguing, they still engage in it, provided their attitudes towards the course as a whole are favourable. Thus, the curriculum as "an organisation of learning opportunities" (Crabbe, 2003, p. 10) appears a crucial determinant of learning engagement. However, because the curriculum of a course involves opportunities to receive input, produce output, participate in

interaction, get feedback, rehearse and understand about both language and language learning (Crabbe, 2003), it does not require much speculation to conclude that positive attitudes towards the course are hard to accumulate in the absence of positively appraised *tasks*, which constitute the next theme to address.

## **2.3 The Language Task**

Students' motivation to engage in learning and the actual outcome of this engagement depends on their psychological appraisals of content activities (Turner & Meyer, 2000, p. 70). The field of applied linguistics has generated a wealth of knowledge on tasks (see Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001; Ellis, 2003, 2005; Skehan, 2003) and there are numerous studies illuminating the factors that impact on students' task behaviour, which are the subject of this review.

The most decisive task factors determining the quality of learners' task engagement appear to be meaningfulness, personal relevance, balance between perceived difficulty and skill, and the structure that allows flexibility in student interaction and control over the task process and/or outcomes. The importance of these task characteristics has been acknowledged in both conceptual and empirical studies regarding language development during collaboration (see review in Donato, 2004), students' experiences during cooperative learning tasks (Peterson & Miller, 2004), flow theory (Egbert, 2003), task motivation (Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000), and classroom interaction (Mori, 2002). Further characteristics of tasks that are believed to promote students' mastery goal orientation in the classroom have been identified in goal orientation theory (Ames, 1992; Patrick et al., 1997). These include novelty, variety, diversity, interest, reasonable challenge, and opportunities for students to set specific, short-term goals and to use effective learning strategies. Although similar general typologies may be problematic when it comes to context-specific practical application (Blumenfeld, 1992), they, nevertheless, provide useful pointers for task design that promotes student engagement (see, e.g. motivational strategies regarding tasks in Dörnyei, 2001a).

Because many of these characteristics are afforded to tasks by what the teacher does in the classroom and how he/she navigates the classroom discourse, the reader is referred to Section 2.5 for a more elaborate discussion of specific instructional interventions.

## **2.4 The Language Learner Group**

Studying learner motivation at a purely individual level does not fully contribute to the advancement of our understanding of learners' classroom engagement because it overlooks one of the most powerful factors affecting the classroom processes: the social dynamics. As McGroarty (2001) rightly points out, because social interaction can facilitate, constrain, or thwart learning, discussions of conducive learning environments must include "the social relations that surround the classroom and the social and interactional patterns within it" (p. 83).

### **2.4.1 The impact of social relationships on learning engagement**

Peers appear to facilitate learning engagement in numerous ways. Task motivation, for example, has been found to be co-constructed in the sense that students with positive motivational orientations influence those with initially less positive attitudes and/or low self-confidence (Dörnyei, 2002; Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000). Furthermore, willingness to communicate in a L2 in learning situations has been shown to depend on the specific person one has to communicate with (Cao & Philp, 2006; Kang, 2005) and similarly, learning opportunities in conversational interaction are dependent on the interlocutor (van Lier & Matsuo, 2000). Working in favourably appraised cooperative groups positively influences self-efficacy and task appraisal, and leads to learning engagement (Peterson & Miller, 2004). Positive social relationships in collaborative learning events have also been crucial in predicting a willingness to engage in future collaborative tasks (Donato, 2004).

In contrast, Morris and Tarone's (2003) study of peer recasts during a dyadic task provides a fascinating account of how negative peer evaluation at the social level overshadows the ability of the partner to identify corrective feedback at the linguistic level and this has been shown to interfere with SLA. More generally, the qualitative data gathered from the learners in this study clearly confirm that the social dynamics of the learning context has an impact on the learners' overall engagement patterns. If they perceive themselves as negatively evaluated by their more proficient peers, they tend to adopt maladaptive patterns of learning engagement manifested in withdrawing effort, not speaking a L2, letting the better students take over and perform the task, and even abandoning it altogether.

A clear link has also been established in educational psychology between peer relationships and learning engagement, and ultimately achievement. Guay et al. (1999) found that social relations in the peer group can foster or inhibit feelings of connectedness, which affects children's perceptions of academic competence. These perceptions have, in

turn, been found to be predictors of change in academic achievement. Another line of educational psychology research investigates the link between peer group rejection, task engagement and achievement and empirical evidence has proven the existence of such link. Peer group rejection has been found to negatively impact children's engagement and consequently, their achievement in the instructional environment (Buhs, Ladd, & Herald, 2006).

### **2.4.2 Group dynamics**

The previous review has made a strong case for catering for positive social relationships in the classroom. However, it is not just positive social relationships between individual members alone that can explain the significant influence on student engagement, but rather the special dynamics embedded in a larger system of the learner group described earlier in Section 1.3.3.

Although group dynamics is a well-established sub-discipline of social psychology, it has surprisingly not been prominent in the field of applied linguistics, or more specifically, instructed SLA. Apart from a few theoretical and practical publications (Dörnyei, 1997, 2007a; Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997, 1999; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003; Ehrman & Dörnyei 1998; Hadfield, 1992; Kubanyiova, 2005; Senior, 1996, 1997, 2002, 2006), there have hardly been any empirical studies featuring aspects of group dynamics in L2 instruction. Two exceptions that I am aware of both look at *group cohesiveness*, defined by Forsyth (1999) as “the strength of the bonds linking individual members to one another and to their group as a whole” (p. 149), and focus either on its influence on learner L2 motivation (Clément et al., 1994) or on the role of intensity of contact among group members in the development of cohesive L2 groups (Hinger, 2006). Both studies seem to confirm the extensive evidence accumulated in the field of group dynamics pointing to strong bidirectional links between group cohesiveness and productivity (Forsyth, 1999; D. W. Johnson, 2003; Mullen & Copper, 1994) and acknowledging the time spent together as the variable promoting the development of cohesiveness (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001; Wheelan, Davidson, & Tilin, 2003).

Of course, not all classroom groups necessarily display characteristics of groups in the social psychological sense. However, the knowledge accumulated in group dynamics theory on the role group cohesiveness, goal-orientedness, group structure with norms and social roles and group leadership play in the development of highly productive classroom groups can enable L2 instructors to proactively contribute to effective class groups' development. The tremendous impact of groups on individual members' learning engagement and achievement suggests that group-building should be high on all teachers',



including L2 instructors', agenda. Some of the key strategies of building productive groups are outlined in Section 2.5.4.

## ***2.5 The Language Teacher: Teaching Practice and Communication Style***

The role of the teacher in engaging students in learning is immensely complex in that it concerns almost all academic and social aspects of the classroom environment. Dörnyei's (1994a) previously mentioned situated framework of L2 motivation (see Section 1.4.1) outlines three key components of the teacher's role that impact on L2 motivation to engage in learning: the affiliative motive, authority type and direct socialization of student motivation. Although the tremendous and complex role a L2 teacher plays in influencing students' learning engagement has been straightforward theoretically and common-sense practically, it has been questioned on the grounds of insufficient empirical evidence (Gardner & Tremblay, 1994a). The purpose of this section is, therefore, to introduce the wealth of empirical evidence in various fields pointing to particular teacher interventions as facilitating learning engagement, while acknowledging at the same time a need for more empirical studies in this respect in the field of applied linguistics.

The abundant research on the subject shows that the extent to which the teacher "constructs" or "obstructs" opportunities for learner engagement in the classroom, does not only depend on what the teacher does in the classroom, but also on how he/she navigates the classroom discourse (Walsh, 2002). The following section will, therefore, consider both teacher behaviours and discourse patterns that have been found to (1) facilitate language development, (2) support autonomy and thus intrinsic motivation to engage in tasks, (3) promote task-oriented rather than ego-oriented goals, and (4) build effective classroom groups, all of which encompass important academic and social aspects with bearings on students' willingness to engage in academic tasks and on the quality of learning and non-learning outcomes resulting from such engagement. Admittedly, the organisation of the following part may not be entirely logical in terms of content as each subsection draws on a different theoretical tradition within or outside the field of applied linguistics, producing thus an inevitable overlap. However, by outlining the research findings in each of these areas, I hope to, ultimately, draw a fuller picture by not only discerning the common patterns that the frameworks share, but also outlining those that have shown importance in some, but might have been overlooked in others.

### **2.5.1 Creating opportunities for linguistic development**

The role of classroom interaction in influencing the quality of linguistic output during learning tasks has been researched in at least two strands of research in the field of SLA that are relevant for the present discussion: output negotiation and classroom interaction. Although they adopt distinct terminology and differ in their scope of focus, their conclusions appear to converge.

Research on output negotiation in the L2 classroom has revealed that it is not just comprehensible input that assists SLA, but also student output and its subsequent modification in the process of negotiating meaning that has proved to be crucial in developing native-like competence (see review in Musumeci, 1996). The implications for the present discussion are straightforward: teachers who invite the modification of students' own output are seen as those who create opportunities for SLA.

More specifically, Musumeci's (1996) study provides a revelatory picture of how the traditionally conceived teacher role, reflected in teacher discourse, minimises opportunities for students' output modification and thus for their learning engagement. The summary of discourse features produced by teachers of a content-based Italian (L2) course is as follows: teachers appear to "speak more, more often, control the topic of discussion, rarely ask questions for which they do not have the answers, and appear to understand absolutely everything the students say, sometimes even before they say it" (Musumeci, 1996, p. 314). Although such verbal behaviours of the teachers under examination were not so much a reflection of their desired status quo, they, nevertheless, significantly limited the type of discourse the students were given opportunities to participate in. Because negotiation of meaning was mostly uni-directional, that is, it was the teachers who took responsibility for all classroom misunderstanding and miscommunication and made every attempt to adjust their linguistic input in order to facilitate mutual understanding, the students' output was markedly reduced.

Van den Branden's (1997) study has, on the other hand, looked at discourse patterns that created opportunities for negotiation of output. The results confirmed that teachers who encourage negotiating of learners' output in ways that are relevant to completing the tasks (i.e. regardless of whether the negotiation is meaning-, form- or content-oriented) and in ways that put the learner in charge of the exchange, facilitate a more productive learning engagement with resulting output that is more complete and accurate in terms of content and vocabulary. This conclusion appeared to be true of both more and less proficient L2 learners.

In their review of research on L2 classroom teacher-student interaction, Hall and Walsh (2002) outline two typical classroom discourse patterns, IRE (initiation-response-

evaluation) and IRF (initiation – response – follow-up), the final stage of the former featuring simple evaluation comments, such as ‘very good’, or ‘that’s right’, while the latter involving asking students to expand on their opinions, justify or clarify their views, or make links with their own situation and experience. The findings of the research studies they review show that it is the latter pattern of classroom discourse (which can be considered equivalent to negotiated content-based interaction as termed in the previous strand) that facilitate learner engagement. The outcome of such interactional pattern was characterized by coherent topics, cognitive and linguistic complexity and meaningfulness to the learners.

However, Clifton’s (2006) study shows that even the IRF pattern can, in fact, hinder students’ responsibility for their learning by limiting opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions if the initiation and follow-up stages are solely under the teacher’s control. Hence, a teacher who wants to facilitate students’ learning engagement must break away from this pattern and, as has also been hinted in Hall and Walsh (2002), give opportunities to the students to propose topics and to comment on others’ contributions. Certainly, Clifton (2006) does not suggest that one interactional style should have preference over the other, but instead asserts that the desirability of one style rather than the other is determined by pedagogical purposes of the particular class in a particular context.

Walsh’s (2002) study, in fact, directly addresses this issue. By adopting a conversation analysis approach in two distinct lesson transcripts, he illustrates that teachers can maximise learning opportunities if their discourse is aligned with the pedagogic purpose of the exchange. Thus, contrary to popular beliefs, *direct error correction*, as opposed to elaborate explanation, can be a highly effective means of maintaining the flow of an exchange, whose pedagogic purpose is oral fluency practice. Examples of other discourse features that have proved to be instrumental in constructing learning opportunities include *content feedback*, *checking for confirmation* and thus encouraging negotiation of meaning in both teacher-student and student-teacher directions, *extended wait time* and *scaffolding*. In contrast, teacher verbal behaviours that the data showed obstruct opportunities for learning engagement include *turn completion*, in other words, teachers’ attempts to fill the gaps in students’ speech without allowing thinking time, *teacher echo* and *teacher interruptions*.

The extent to which teacher discourse facilitates learner involvement and consequently linguistic development is dependent on the extent to which it corresponds with the pedagogic purpose of the task. The above subsection has outlined student-teacher discourse patterns that have shown to be instrumental in facilitating learning engagement and consequently language development. Allowing learners opportunities for meaningful two-directional teacher-student, but also peer negotiated interaction not only on the form or meaning, but also on the content level, is pivotal to creating opportunities for language

development. At the more general level, however, there are also other contexts in the micro-context of the classroom which need to be considered. The following three subsections will concern autonomy, task-oriented goals and effective group building and will consider ways in which teachers can contribute to these in what they do and what messages they convey in the classroom.

## **2.5.2 Autonomy supporting versus controlling teacher practice**

As has been suggested earlier (see Section 1.3.2), students' perception of themselves as autonomous depends on whether the teacher engages in autonomy-supporting or controlling behaviour in the classroom (Noels, 2003; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999). The former encourages students to draw on their inner motivational resources while the latter attempts to align students with the teacher's agenda, undermining thus their intrinsic motivation to engage in learning tasks (Reeve & Jang, 2006). Teachers who are perceived by their students as autonomy-supporting are those who nurture the students' intrinsic motivation, which is, in turn, believed to be a prerequisite for meaningful learning engagement. The aim of the following discussion is, therefore, to outline specific interpersonal teacher behaviours and discourse that have been empirically proven to support learners' autonomy.

At least two studies within the L2 motivation field have confirmed that *informative, constructive feedback on students' performance* which is believed to demonstrate teachers' commitment to students' learning, is linked with students' perceptions of their autonomy, particularly in terms of competence (Noels, 2003; Noels, Clément, & Pelletier, 1999). As goal setting theory posits, the most effective feedback is one which conveys information on efficacy, fosters a sense of mastery and provides opportunities for self-development (cf. Locke & Latham, 1990).

Ross's (2005) longitudinal study, although not specifically grounded in the self-determination framework, has looked in more detail at two distinct forms of assessment of foreign language learners. As the results suggest, formative assessment (as opposed to its summative counterpart), such as self-assessment, peer assessment, process-oriented portfolios, group projects and collaborative tasks, yields gains in both learning (listening proficiency) and non-learning (enhancing learner engagement and increasing autonomy) outcomes. The latter is the case especially when the formative assessment counts towards the ultimate summative criteria, which directly points to the importance of promoting self-determined forms of student engagement. In other words, teachers who provide opportunities for learners to participate in their own formative assessment and consider this as a legitimate input in the final summative assessment engage in autonomy-supporting practice by

enhancing students' intrinsic motivation to participate in the learning tasks. This, in turn, leads to enhanced progress in specific-skill areas.

There is also some evidence suggesting that students' control over the management of their own learning (Benson, 2001) can be achieved by explicit learning strategies instruction. Chamot's (2005) review reveals links between explicit strategy instruction and students' increased motivation, metacognitive awareness, positive attitudes towards the strategies and students' continuous use of these, significant improvement on oral proficiency tests, listening comprehension, vocabulary learning, and the quality of writing. Helping the students to acquire specific strategies needed for particular task accomplishment is, therefore, another example of autonomy-supporting instructional intervention leading to enhanced students' learning engagement.

Reeve and Jang's (2006) experimental study validated, amongst others, the following instructional behaviours as autonomy-supporting (i.e. as having links with students' self-perceptions of autonomy): listening, creating time for independent work, giving the student opportunities to talk, praising signs of improvement and mastery, encouraging the student's effort, offering progress-enabling hints when the student seemed stuck, or being responsive to student's perspective and experiences. While the above behaviours are considered "supportive acts", the following set correlated negatively with students' perceptions of autonomy and can thus be categorised as controlling, or "autonomy thwarts": monopolizing the learning materials, physically exhibiting worked-out solutions and answers before the student had time to work on the problem independently, directly telling the student a right answer instead of allowing the student time and opportunity to discover it, uttering directives and commands, introjecting 'should/got to' statements within the flow of instruction, or using controlling questions as a way of directing the student's work.

Noels's (2003) study has revealed a correlation between students' perceptions of the teacher as controlling on the one hand and as critical and negative on the other. However, it was not the negativity as such that had negative bearings on student motivation. Rather, the controlling behaviour seemed to override the "pleasantness" of the teacher. As Noels summarises, "Friendly disposition toward students predicts neither perceptions of control nor of competence directly. Rather, the teacher must be viewed as an active participant in the learning process, who provides feedback in a positive and encouraging manner" (Noels, 2003, p. 126). Accordingly, teachers may not necessarily have to be friendly, humorous, or share personal information with the students, but what counts is their personal commitment to the students' learning.

It is important to remember, however, that the above lists of autonomy-supporting behaviours have been theoretically compiled and then validated by an experimental study in controlled conditions in the Reeve and Jang's (2006) case or relied solely on self-reports in Noels's (2003) study. Some differences could, therefore, be expected in research projects that are situated in naturalistic classroom environments and make use of datasets that, in addition to student self-reports, provide objective description of actual teacher behaviours and discourse patterns. Indeed, recent developments in goal orientation theory suggest that when classroom events are explored through multiple, including qualitative lens, a new perspective emerges on how teachers' commitment to students' learning, to give but one example, is manifested in the actual teacher practice.

### **2.5.3 Promoting a mastery goal structure**

Bong's (2005) study has produced powerful evidence that changes in students' perceptions of their classroom environment structure towards being more mastery-oriented are predictive of their changes in their personal mastery goals, that is, their intrinsic motivation to engage in learning tasks. It must be noted that this particular study was conducted in a school context with an overall heavy emphasis on performance and ability and therefore it is a rather encouraging prospect to see that even in such environments mastery-oriented messages have a power to transform students' motivational orientation from external to its internally controlled forms.

A specific strand of goal-orientation research has been concerned with identifying teacher behaviours that were associated with students' perceptions of their classroom goal structure as being mastery-oriented. After an extensive systematic process of analysing survey and observational data, a list of relevant categories was compiled in a protocol for classroom observations, called OPAL (Observing Patterns of Adaptive Learning, see Patrick et al., 1997), which lists categories, such as tasks, authority, recognition, grouping, evaluation, time, social interactions, and help-seeking that are relevant in identifying classroom environments with mastery goal structure. This protocol has been widely used for research in this domain.

One of the specific goals of a series of multi-method studies conducted in this area (see e.g. Turner et al., 2002) was to determine teacher instructional discourse that is associated with students' perceptions of the classroom goal structure on the one hand (i.e. mastery vs. performance-oriented), and their reported adoption of avoidance strategies on the other. The list of supportive and non-supportive forms of instructional, motivational, and organisational teacher discourse presented in Table 2.1 is particularly relevant for our

enhanced understanding of the role of teacher in facilitating or inhibiting learner engagement.

Patrick et al.'s (2001) mixed methods inquiry into discourse of 4 fifth-grade teachers with distinct motivational profiles (i.e. high- versus low-mastery orientation) revealed two important findings. First, observational data showed that the teachers differed from each other not so much by the absence or presence of certain behaviours, as in what meaning was associated with them. For instance, both high- and low-mastery oriented teachers made public announcements of students' grades and public comments about their performance (which would, traditionally, be considered as unsupportive teacher behaviour). However, while the former made such comments in a matter-of-factly way, the latter added judgemental, affectively charged remarks with regard to students' ability and/or expected future effort. Similarly, while both types of teachers used formal assessment, such as grades, the emphasis they placed on them was different in that the high-mastery-oriented teachers did not deem them crucial indicators of students' ability whereas low-mastery did.

A second finding concerns the interplay between academic and social domains, more specifically, between teachers' concern for students' learning and their physical and emotional well-being. Interestingly, both *teacher commitment to students' learning* (conveyed through the teachers' communication of high expectations and confidence in students' ability to satisfy them) and *teacher social support* (communicated as concern for students' well-being and comfort) were inextricably linked with students' perceptions of their classroom as high-mastery oriented. No such link was found in the performance oriented classroom and what is more, the classroom in which the social support was communicated but the messages relating to the teachers' commitment to students' learning were absent was appraised by the students as low mastery-oriented.

Such results clearly indicate that first, only attending to social and affective priorities is not sufficient; and second, teachers who are perceived as being committed to students' understanding of the subject and thus creating a mastery-oriented classroom, are those who also provide a supportive climate characterised by positive personal teacher-student relationships (Meyer & Turner, 2006; Patrick, 2004; Patrick et al., 2001; Patrick et al., 2007; Patrick et al., 2003; Turner et al., 2002). Therefore, although it is the teachers' commitment to students' learning that is the most influential, as confirmed in the previously discussed study by Noels (2003), the adoption of multi- and mixed methods approaches to studying instructional environments enables us to see that such a commitment is manifested through the teacher's social support. Catering to social-affective issues in the classroom seems therefore to be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for creating mastery-oriented environments.

**Table 2.1: Supportive and non-supportive forms of instructional, motivational, and organizational teacher discourse, adapted from Turner et al. (2002)**

INSTRUCTIONAL DISCOURSE	
<p><b>Supportive (scaffolding)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Negotiating meaning</i> (adjusting instruction, simplifying, clarifying, highlighting concepts, key features, modelling what students should do – “thinking aloud” with students)</li> <li>• <i>Transferring responsibility</i> (supporting strategic thinking and autonomous learning, holding students accountable for understanding).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Non-supportive (non-scaffolding)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Telling</i> (prescribing how students should think and act conceptually)</li> <li>• <i>Initiating and evaluating</i> (I-R-E sequence) (asking display questions, evaluating student response without demonstrating understanding).</li> </ul>
MOTIVATIONAL DISCOURSE	
<p><b>Supportive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Focus on learning</i> (focusing on the process of learning, challenging students, viewing errors as constructive, supporting persistence)</li> <li>• <i>Positive emotions</i> (using enthusiasm or humour, reducing anxiety, addressing emotional needs)</li> <li>• <i>Peer support and collaboration</i> (building collaboration, emphasising common goals and shared responsibilities)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Non-supportive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Focus on errorless performance and completion</i> (emphasising perfection, high scores, viewing errors as detrimental to learning, labelling an activity as too difficult for the students to understand)</li> <li>• <i>Impersonal, insignificant, or negative affect</i> (using superficial, positive statements that deemphasise authentic accomplishments, using threats, sarcasm)</li> <li>• <i>Individual success and failure</i> (emphasising competition among students that excludes or socially compares students)</li> </ul>
ORGANISATIONAL DISCOURSE	
<p><b>Supportive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making transitions between activities, giving directions about procedures</li> </ul>	<p><b>Non-supportive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commenting on student off-task or inappropriate behaviour that detracts from learning or interrupting learning</li> </ul>



#### 2.5.4 Building effective learning groups

Research on small group behaviour (group dynamics) has traditionally examined the natural development of groups with minimal or no direct intervention of the leader to alter/speed up the process of group development (Stanford, 1980). As a result, there is scant empirical evidence directly attesting to the effectiveness of any particular type of teacher intervention in the group facilitation process. Yet, considering the evidence that has been generated in other disciplines, especially cooperative learning and motivation in educational contexts, it is possible to discern the type of teacher interventions that are likely to facilitate the process of group development towards the stage of productivity characterised by high levels of cohesiveness and task-oriented behaviour. In the following part, I draw on practical recommendations provided in L2 motivation literature as well as more general group dynamics research and focus on three interrelated areas of teacher instructional intervention: building productive group norms, developing group cohesiveness and providing effective leadership. It seems that the implementation of these interventions in the learning environment is crucial from the early stages of the group's life.

##### *Building productive group norms*

By adapting the group developmental stages to suit instructional contexts, Stanford (1980) has outlined intervention strategies that address typical learner concerns in each phase, including orientation, norm-building, coping with conflict, productivity and termination. Because establishing productive group norms is deemed to be essential in guiding learners' social and task-oriented behaviour, a closer look at the norm content is warranted. Stanford distinguishes between five distinct norms which can lead to creating effective classroom groups. They are as follows:

- *The norm of responsibility*, enforcing of which ensures that the group takes increasing responsibility for their own learning. Autonomy-supporting teacher practice outlined earlier has thus a great potential to build powerful learning groups if applied on a whole-group basis.
- *The norm of responding to others*, including a demonstration of active listening, accepting peers' opinions, or directly building on others' views (also see examples in Ehrman & Dörnyei 1998) has also been discussed earlier in Sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.3. It appears that if this behaviour is modelled by the teacher and expected equally of all group members in their student-student interactions, the development of an effective group is actively promoted.

- *The norm of cooperation*, the rationale behind which has been explained in Sections 1.3.3 and 2.4.2.
- *The norm of decision-making through consensus* is an important norm which ensures that minority opinions are not lost or simply dismissed in favour of the majority. Promoting this norm also ensures that the group does not fall into the trap of “groupthink” (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003), but gives due consideration to and even encourages critical and/or controversial views and thus enhances the quality of the group’s learning process.
- *The norm of confronting problems* whenever they occur rather than ignoring them ensures the healthy functioning of the group. It involves first, becoming aware of the problem and second, solving it. Observing this norm is, arguably, a group equivalent of action control in task engagement discussed in Section 1.1.2 whereby the group is gradually made responsible for monitoring their progress and employing relevant strategies in order to resolve discrepancies between expected and actual performance.

The norm establishment and internalisation process does not only involve explicit norm-building exercises, during which norms are negotiated with and agreed on by the group (for examples of this procedure, see Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003), but need to be constantly reinforced through a variety of tools, such as wall charts, teacher modelling, regular reviews, newsletters, learning contracts (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003) as well as specific “structured experiences” (Stanford, 1980) the teacher provides to the learners not just in the first few classes but throughout the period prior to the stage of productivity. Because group development is a dynamic process, and a class group may shift back and forth between the stages depending on specific circumstances, enforcing, renegotiating and reminding the students of the classroom norms is potentially an ongoing process requiring constant vigilance and conscious effort on the teacher’s part.

### *Developing group cohesiveness*

Enforcing the abovementioned norms caters for the development of both group cohesiveness, which is promoted through acceptance (Dörnyei, 2007a), and goal-orientedness, the absence of which in highly cohesive groups can be detrimental to the learning process (see e.g. Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003; Forsyth, 1999). Apart from norm-building, there are also other factors and instructional practices that can contribute to the development of cohesive groups. These include the time spent together, creating group

legends, public commitment, difficult admission, investing in the group, or defining the group against another (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1997; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003). The only empirical study specifically focusing on group cohesiveness I am aware of in the field of L2 education is the earlier described Hinger's (2006) study, which indeed confirms the role of contact intensity on cohesiveness. Although the study does not provide practical implications regarding conscious teacher intervention that can facilitate group cohesiveness, we could speculate that the conscious modelling of the discourse features (so called *group-building communication*) that Hinger's as well as other studies in social psychology used as measures of cohesiveness could potentially have a promotive effect on group cohesiveness. Such discourse encompasses both teacher and learner utterances and includes positive statements about the individual learners' and group's ability to perform well on the one hand and discourse of mutual support, expressions of self-appraisal and self-esteem and utterances allowing learners to participate actively and voluntarily in classroom tasks. Teacher's avoidance and direct discouragement of dependency and fight statements (see Wheelan et al., 2003) could also complement the conscious process of building cohesive classroom groups. It, however, remains to be empirically tested whether teacher's early modelling of "group-building communication" would indeed positively intervene with the process of cohesive group development. Results of studies investigating teacher discourse in other fields, such as the earlier discussed goal orientation theory (see Section 2.5.3), give every reason to be optimistic.

### *Providing effective leadership*

The space does not allow an elaborate discussion of leadership, an extremely rich area of investigation. There have been numerous frameworks outlining various leadership styles in psychology and education (for compact reviews, see Dörnyei, 2007a; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003) and it will suffice to state at this point that it is not so much a matter of choice among the many distinct styles that has an impact on the development of productive classroom groups, as it is a wise application of appropriate style that acknowledges the developmental stage a group is at at the given point in time. More controlling autocratic forms may be needed at the beginning of a group's life before the group is gradually given more power to guide their own learning. A certain degree of group's independence from the teacher is essential for establishing interdependence among the learners (Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001) and should be an ultimate goal of group-building efforts reflected in the provision of appropriate leadership. As Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) note, "A group-conscious teaching style involves an increasing encouragement of and reliance on the group's own resources

and the active facilitation of autonomous learning that is in accordance with the maturity level of the group” (p. 99).

There are a number of challenges, whatever the leadership style, that a teacher-leader must grapple with in order to maximise learning engagement of classroom groups. The five of them listed by D. W. Johnson and Johnson (1997) provide a compact summary of the teacher-leader’s social and academic role in promoting classroom groups’ engagement in learning tasks:

- *Challenging the status quo*, in other words, challenging the traditional individualistic and competitive structure of the classroom.
- *Creating a shared vision*, which not only involves having a vision of what the classroom should be like, but also (1) communicating it in such a way that it becomes shared among all group members and (2) pursuing strategies which implement it.
- *Empowering members through cooperative teams*, which includes both promoting positive social relationships through establishing trust, open communication and support and empowering group members through team projects.
- *Modelling*, in other words, leading by example involves active modelling of cooperative procedures, taking risks to increase expertise, and all the other norms previously discussed.
- *Encouraging the heart of group members*, that is, providing encouraging and supportive feedback and celebrating group achievement and success.

The teacher qualities which are believed to be essential to live up to these challenges, including *trust in the group*, *enthusiasm*, *commitment to student learning*, and *rapprochement with the students* (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003) seem to directly match the qualities outlined in the other frameworks discussed in this chapter.

### **2.5.5 Engaging in a process-sensitive teaching practice**

Having considered a vast number of instructional strategies that are believed to facilitate learning engagement, a specific point needs reiterating: the process-oriented nature of teacher instructional interventions. As suggested in the extensive empirical body of research on group development (see e.g. Forsyth, 1999; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1997; Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001) as well as the process-oriented L2 motivation model reviewed earlier (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998), different goals of students become active in different phases of their L2 learning experience. It follows that some instructional interventions and leadership styles

may be critical early in the course (see e.g. Patrick et al., 2003), while others begin to play a greater role at a later stage. The importance of teacher awareness of the distinct phases is henceforth undeniable and the relevance of motivational strategies designed around the different phases (Dörnyei, 2001a) underscored. To sum up, the role of instructor in creating environments conducive to SLA involves recognising the dynamic nature of this process and responding appropriately to students' social and academic concerns that arise in different phases of their learning engagement.

### **2.5.6 Summary of teacher style and practice**

A consensus seems to emerge from the above review of the role of the teacher in creating conditions conducive to learning engagement. In order to increase student engagement, the teacher must cater for both academic and social environments of the microcontext of learning and this is achieved by both teacher behaviour and his/her classroom discourse. Providing enhanced opportunities for linguistic development, which involves promoting student negotiation of output and student's participation in initiation, response, and follow-up stages of classroom interaction clearly constitutes a form of autonomy-supporting practice, a result of which students' intrinsic motivation is increased.

Furthermore, promoting mastery goal structure in the L2 classroom seems to be associated with adaptive patterns of learning engagement. It is reasonable to expect that if teachers communicate messages associated with mastery orientation, they, in fact, communicate important academic norms that have shown to be essential for building productive classroom groups. Because, as recent research in goal orientation theory suggests, social support is an inextricable part of the mastery goal structure of the classroom, fostering it also works towards promoting acceptance, an essential ingredient of cohesive groups. It is my contention therefore, that even though research on group dynamics in L2 education and the role of teacher in building effective groups has not been sufficiently empirically examined, there is good reason to believe that teacher instructional styles and discourse identified as supporting learning in other conceptual frameworks will work towards building norms conducive to effective classroom group development and, ultimately, enhancing L2 learning outcomes.

However, it would be naïve to assume that simply by displaying the outlined verbal and/or non-verbal behaviours, students' learning engagement is secured. In fact, most perspectives, including L2 classroom discourse research, goal orientation theory and self-determination theory emphasize that this is not so straightforward. The classroom interaction perspective suggests that specific teacher discourse must be considered in relation to the pedagogic tasks, because the task can determine which teacher discourse patterns can best

facilitate students' engagement in it (Clifton, 2006; Van den Branden, 1997; Walsh, 2002). Within the goal orientation perspective, Patrick et al.'s (2001) study revealed that it was not so much the actual behaviour displayed that made the difference but the meaning associated with that behaviour and teacher beliefs with regard to specific practice. Similar concerns have been raised in the self-determination framework, whereby Reeve (2002, p. 190) maintains that autonomy-supporting teachers are characterised not simply by displaying certain behaviours, but by particular *teacher beliefs about motivation* (i.e. autonomy support vs. control), *interpersonal orientation* (i.e. willingness to enter into relationships with the students, encourage initiative, nurture competence, and communicate in ways that are non-controlling and information-rich), and *interpersonal skills* (including perspective taking, acknowledging feelings, providing rationales for uninteresting lessons, and recognizing interest in others).

It seems, therefore, that a motivational teaching practice must always be considered in relation to the specific instructional context and pedagogic purpose and, consequently, it entails more than the adoption of the listed teacher behaviours, as it requires teachers' deep commitment as well as specific skills. Any teacher education initiative aimed at encouraging teachers to create environments conducive to SLA will, therefore, have to address these concerns.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to conceptualise the immediate learning environment conducive to SLA. I have identified key dimensions of the microcontext of instructed SLA that have shown to influence students' learning engagement: the course, the task, the learning group, and the teacher. In doing so, I have drawn on the wealth of empirical evidence from various disciplines in which a clear consensus emerges, namely that both academic and social properties of the classroom context seem to matter in enhancing students' learning. The role of the teacher is complex in that it encompasses both these dimensions and his/her instructional interventions can mediate the effect of both individual differences and macro-social influences on students' achievement behaviour. However, there is also a cross-disciplinary consensus that creating environments conducive to learning entails more than implementing a fixed set of particular strategies. Rather, engaging in a teaching practice that facilitates learning engagement clearly requires the teacher to acquire new skills and a new mindset which acknowledges the role both cognitive stimulation and social support play in enhancing the students' learning engagement and thus their learning outcomes. A central

issue with regard to teacher training processes must, therefore, concern training practices that can promote not only behavioural, but also underlying cognitive change in L2 teachers.

### **3 Towards Understanding the Process of Language Teacher Change**

Understanding how language teachers change as a result of teacher education is the central focus of this thesis. With the aim to facilitate optimal conditions for teacher learning, the teacher development course offered to EFL teachers in Slovakia as part of the present research project was designed around the principles generated by teacher education and language teacher cognition research. The review of these domains of inquiry is the subject of the first two sections of this literature review chapter. However, the findings of the current research project revealed a number of gaps in these literatures and prompted a further examination of learning theories within the broader domain of the social sciences. Thus, four theoretical paradigms are reviewed in the four subsequent sections, each of which illuminates aspects of human learning from a specific angle. The first concerns the social cognitive perspective of learning, which is used here as an umbrella for the brief overviews of the social cognitive theory, goal setting theory and self-efficacy. I then examine the study of attitude change in social psychology and focus specifically on dual-process models of attitude change, before describing the main findings of the conceptual change research and possible selves theory, each dealt with in a separate section. The final section of this chapter attempts to bring these various literatures together into an integrated theoretical model of language teacher change.

#### ***3.1 Teacher Change Research: Research on the Impact of Formal Programmes on Teacher Change***

Teacher change has been investigated from various conceptual perspectives and with distinct underlying purposes, which is reflected in the diverse terminology used in this field of study to refer to teacher change, including ‘teacher learning’, ‘teacher development’, ‘teacher socialization’, ‘teacher growth’, ‘teacher improvement’, ‘implementation of innovation or reform’, ‘cognitive and affective change’, and ‘self-study’ (Richardson & Placier, 2001). Within this complex picture, at least two distinct approaches to the study of teacher change can be discerned, each being informed by a different theoretical tradition. The first of these traditions has examined teacher change within the broader social, cultural and political contexts of the school organisation, and this approach has primarily been informed by sociological, anthropological, and organizational perspectives.



The second tradition has focused on individual or small group change and has investigated cognitive, affective and behavioural change processes in teachers (see review in Richardson & Placier, 2001). Research within this perspective has been conducted in both teacher education and educational psychology domains (see also review in Borg, 2006). While educational psychology has concentrated more on isolated constructs of teacher learning, such as decision-making or specific antecedents for teacher change, teacher education has been, particularly recently, looking at teacher change in a more holistic manner, bringing in data from teacher personal narratives and reflections, thus accounting for broader contextual and emotional aspects of development besides the cognitive ones (Woolfolk Hoy, Davis, & Pape, 2006).

The purpose of this review is to provide a brief sketch of this latter perspective of individual or small group change as investigated within both the teacher education and the educational psychology domains with the specific focus on formal programmes for teacher change, particularly in-service teacher development programmes whose purpose is to help teachers improve their teaching practice. Because of the terminological diversity within the abovementioned disciplines, I use the terms teacher learning, teacher development and teacher change interchangeably, referring to the process whereby in-service (my focus) teachers come to alter aspects of their belief systems and practices as a result of a new input.

### **3.1.1 What constitutes teacher change and what we know about it**

Research examining the impact of teacher development programmes from the traditional perspective has defined change in terms of the teachers' replication of classroom behaviours specified by the training programmes, and the long-term impact has typically been measured against whether the new practices were sustained and to what extent they remained close to the standard (Franke, Carpenter, Levi, & Fennema, 2001). The change within this tradition, which has also been referred to as the *empirical-rational* (Richardson & Placier, 2001), has typically been conceived of as a successful implementation of a top-down, mandated recommended practice. The primary research activity within this domain has concentrated on the behavioural evidence of such implementation (see e.g. research by Sparks, 1988).

An alternative, so called *normative-reeducative* perspective of teacher change (Richardson & Placier, 2001) is based on the view that teachers constantly change as a result of their everyday classroom practice, participation in teacher development programmes or professional conversations with colleagues. The change within this perspective is understood as voluntary and naturalistic. Therefore, instead of focusing on the implementation of specified techniques defined in behavioural terms, the impact of teacher development programmes is evaluated in relation to the teachers' understanding of the training content

and how this leads to the development of new practices which are congruent with the teachers' particular context and responsive to the learners' needs within this context (Franke et al., 2001). The research focus within this perspective has moved away from *what* is implemented to *how* and *in what directions* the teachers' practice transforms as a result of a formal programme for teacher change. Collaboration between researchers/teacher educators and teachers is often emphasised as an important element in bringing about teacher change (Blumenfeld, Krajcik, Marx, & Soloway, 1994) and the educational context has shown to play a significant role in affecting, often negatively, the teacher development process (Sarason, 1996).

The normative-reeducative view of teacher change reflects a broader shift in the field of psychology and its beginnings are characterised by the move away from behaviourist process-product approaches to teacher learning towards a greater emphasis on the mental lives of teachers. Because it became clear that how teachers learn and what they do in the classroom depends on what conceptions of teaching they hold, teacher education research has drawn extensively on research in cognitive psychology (Borko & Putnam, 1996; Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006), embracing constructs of teacher beliefs (Pajares, 1992), teacher knowledge (Calderhead, 1996; Golombek, 1998; Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001) and teachers' thought processes (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Shavelson & Stern, 1981; Shulman & Shulman, 2004).

Knowledge and beliefs, which are often examined as overlapping constructs (see e.g. Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006), are considered to be *filters* as well as *targets* of change (Borko & Putnam, 1996) and because teachers had formed their educational beliefs well before attending a teacher preparation or teacher development programme during hundreds of hours of the "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975), teacher change often requires a radical restructuring of the current belief systems. This type of change has been termed *conceptual change*. Although this term has not been as firmly established in relation to teacher change in the field of teacher education as it has been in psychology, the shift from behavioural to cognitive indices in what constitutes teacher change has been obvious since the 1970s (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006). Recently, so called *generative change* has received attention in teacher change literature which involves conceptual change (i.e. restructuring of the current belief system) while placing an emphasis on the teachers' ability to continue to add to their new understanding by engaging in their own inquiry (Franke et al., 2001).

*Significant* and *worthwhile change* are two further characteristics which need attention in defining teacher change, the former referring to change in the teacher's practice which ultimately makes a difference for the students' learning, while the latter referring to change which takes place in valued and worthwhile directions (Richardson, 1990). Within

the empirical-rational tradition, what is worthwhile is typically determined by subjects external to the change process (e.g. researchers and policy makers), whereas the normative-reeducative perspective views the teacher as co-constructing the definition of what constitutes worthwhile practice in the particular educational context. The significance of teacher change, on the other hand, would appear to be a crucial element of any definition of teacher change as, presumably, the ultimate goal of teacher education and development programmes is to bring about significant change in the participating teachers. Yet, judging from the chronic lack of research investigating the connections between teacher change and student learning (Grossman, 2005; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Zeichner, 2005), this critical aspect of teacher change has received far less attention than it demands.

To sum up, while the definitions of what constitutes the impact of teacher education tend to vary from one study to another (cf. Grossman, 2005), there is a need to conceptualise the kind of change that teacher education should strive to bring about. From what we know about how teachers learn to teach and what impacts on their practice, it is clear that in-service teacher development programmes should aim to foster change that is conceptual and generative and, consequently, significant and worthwhile. This implies change that is not only reflected in new conceptual understanding, but, essentially, in classroom practices which are transformed by the new understanding and lead to improved conditions for student learning.

### **3.1.2 Methodological issues in assessing teacher change**

Along with the cognitive shift in perceptions of the nature of teacher learning and change, the field has seen a growing interest in *qualitative methodologies* which are believed to allow a more in-depth inquiry into teachers' mental processes and better account for contextual variables (Richardson & Placier, 2001). The tendency to utilise more holistic methodologies (e.g. narrative biographies, reflective journal writing and stimulated recall) examining both teacher practice and teacher talk of practice - in other words, contexts relevant to the assessment of teacher change (Tittle, 2006) - is particularly evident in the teacher education domain, although there is a general awareness in educational psychology, too, of the need to move beyond conceptual and methodological boundaries of the discipline to truly understand the role of beliefs and knowledge in teacher learning (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006).

However, even though the methodological developments have afforded us the opportunities for a more in-depth understanding of teacher change, some methodological concerns with respect to assessing teacher change remain and what Marcos and Tillema (2006) have concluded about the state of empirical research on teacher reflection and action

rings true of the broader domain of teacher change. First, the field is largely *fragmented* in that researchers have tended to concentrate on isolated constructs (e.g. prior beliefs, changes in beliefs, personal identity or self-efficacy), but very rarely investigate teaching as an “interrelated whole comprised of many functional relationships between thinking and action. By studying only particular aspects, no matter how important each may be, these studies fragment teacher activity, and portray isolated understandings...” (Marcos & Tillema, 2006, p. 114).

The second charge pertains to the *relevance of research outcomes*. As the report of the AERA (American Educational Research Association) Panel on Research on Teacher Education (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005) summarises, research conducted in the field is marked by the absence of relevant conceptual frameworks, by unclear and inconsistent definitions of terms, by inadequate descriptions of data collection and data analysis methods as well as research contexts, and by the missing links among teacher preparation, teacher learning, teacher practice and student learning. Furthermore, much of the teacher education research has been conducted by teacher educators on their own programmes and classes and research reports rarely deal with the issues of dual researcher/teacher educator roles (Grossman, 2005), which leaves us with unanswered questions with regard to the status of data generated in this way (Silverman, 2001). Yet another limitation concerns the fact that although the wealth of studies published on the subject suggests that teacher change is a well-established and thriving domain of inquiry, much of this research does not extend beyond certain geographical and subject boundaries. As Marcos and Tillema (2006) warn, referring specifically to limitations of research on teacher reflection and action which match those outlined above, “This state of affairs must give us pause about our claims and any conclusions we draw from these studies; it also throws into question the importance of any understandings gained from them” (p. 114), and similar caution needs to be exercised when assessing the relevance of outcomes of other domains of teacher change literature.

### **3.1.3 Current gaps in teacher change research**

Research on the impact of teacher education and staff development programmes on individual and small group change has explored a number of themes, some of which have been mentioned above. This includes teacher cognitions (of which most frequently investigated are beliefs, knowledge and reflective practice), constructivist practice in terms of either constructivist processes of teacher change or creating constructivist classroom practices (Mayer-Smith & Mitchell, 1997), and the importance of context (Sarason, 1996). However, there are several areas which remain unaddressed, but which will need attention in future studies:

1. *Effects of teacher change on students.* As pointed out earlier, few studies of teacher change provide an insight into how student learning is affected when teachers change their practices. Admittedly, it is a difficult (Grossman, 2005), yet indispensable link which must be examined if research on teacher change is to fulfil its primary ethical requirement of social utility (cf. Ortega, 2005a).
2. *Pedagogy of teacher education.* Although a number of studies have investigated the impact of specific interventions on teacher learning (for a comprehensive review, see Grossman, 2005), there is a need for a more systematic examination of the effectiveness of both specific instructional strategies (e.g. case methods, action research or microteaching) and the overall microcontext of teacher education, which embraces the social as well as academic dimensions of the particular programme (see also review in Chapters 1 and 2). This will require better conceptual clarity and increased methodological rigour, and more attention will also need to be paid to the long-term impact as opposed to the short-term effect of teacher educational interventions which is currently the focus of most studies (Grossman, 2005).
3. *The interaction of dispositional and contextual factors.* Zeichner and Gore (1990, cited in Richardson & Placier, 2001) point out that there are serious gaps in our understanding of the interface between individual teachers and their schools. The questions which remain largely unaddressed pertain to the differences among individual teachers' response to the same contextual conditions. The influence of context has been acknowledged and well documented in teacher change literature (Munby et al., 2001; Sarason, 1996), yet it may have been done so at the expense of our understanding of the role individual differences and self-regulation in particular play in the process. The questions that need to be examined concern the differences/similarities in how individual teachers working in the same context respond to the same teacher education programmes.
4. *Beliefs about self and related emotional and motivational factors.* Woolfolk Hoy et al.'s (2006) review of teacher beliefs demonstrates that self beliefs seem to be particularly important with regard to teachers' implementation of reforms: "Research on teacher identity, efficacy, and change reminds us that the teacher's motivation, emotional responses, and openness to change are closely tied to beliefs about self" (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006, p. 729). Self-beliefs should therefore receive considerably more attention than is presently the case especially within the teacher education tradition. Similarly, with the heavy emphasis on cognitions, the role of emotions in teacher change has not been sufficiently addressed although research has produced evidence that they are an

important part of what teachers do in the classroom (Nias, 1996; Zembylas, 2004, 2005). Few studies address motivation and affective factors in-depth (Tittle, 2006), although the field has begun to acknowledge their importance (Shulman & Shulman, 2004). Recently, a promising attempt has been made to incorporate these factors into a theoretical framework of teacher change (Gregoire, 2003), but because it draws significantly from outside the field of teacher education and educational psychology, it will be discussed in relevant sections later in this chapter.

5. *Communities of practice*. The calls have been voiced in the teacher change literature to shift our investigations from focusing exclusively on individuals to examining communities of practice (Richardson & Placier, 2001; Shulman & Shulman, 2004) and how shared visions and shared knowledge and belief systems impact on teacher learning.

It seems that in order to address the above themes, research on teacher change will need to develop *theory-driven, multidisciplinary and multimethodological approaches* (Grossman, 2005; Marcos & Tillema, 2006; Richardson & Placier, 2001; Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006; Zeichner, 2005) which will account for the complexities of teacher activity and change and provide a more holistic picture of cognitive, affective, behavioural, dispositional and contextual variables that play a role in this process.

## **3.2 Studying Change in Language Teacher Cognition Research**

Language teacher change has been investigated within the domain of language teacher cognition, which is now fairly well established in the field of applied linguistics (Borg, 2003c, 2006). Therefore, the following section provides a brief overview of this domain of inquiry, summarising the main themes investigated and the key findings generated in the area of language teacher change.

### **3.2.1 An overview of the language teacher cognition domain**

A host of constructs have been investigated within language teacher cognition, ranging from teachers' beliefs, knowledge, conceptions, principles, images, theories, maxims, metaphors and perceptions. The term teacher cognition is used to embrace all these aspects of teachers' mental lives, in other words, it refers to "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" (Borg, 2003c, p. 81). The studies of language teacher cognition therefore constitute those which

examine, in language education contexts, what teachers at any stage of their careers think, know or believe in relation to any aspect of their work, and which, additionally but not necessarily, also entail the study of actual classroom practices and of the relationships between cognitions and these practices (Borg, 2006, p. 50).

In his latest comprehensive review, Borg (2006) has identified more than 180 studies published between 1976-2006 in the areas of first, second and foreign language contexts.

The findings of language teacher cognition research, just like those in general teacher cognition, have shown that language teachers' instructional decisions are influenced by an interaction among a host of cognitive and contextual factors. In relation to the specific area of L2 grammar teaching, for instance, language teacher cognition research has made it clear that whether or not teachers include explicit grammar instruction in their classes does not always correspond with the findings and pedagogical recommendations generated by SLA research, but is instead based on teachers' beliefs and knowledge regarding students' expectations, classroom management and students' intellectual and affective needs (Borg, 1998c, 2003b), or even the teachers' self-perceptions regarding their own grammatical knowledge (Borg, 1999b, 2001). Students' acquisition is thus not always the primary reason behind utilising certain instructional approaches, and what SLA research may consider competing and mutually exclusive approaches (e.g. inductive vs. deductive) may in fact happily co-exist in the practice of the same teacher and be used to respond to these different concerns (Borg, 1998c, 1999a). It has been argued that a deeper understanding of these various concerns can "provide the kind of insight into grammar-related instructional decisions that the field of L2 pedagogy currently lacks but that has clear potential for broadening current conceptions of the processes involved in L2 grammar instruction" (Borg, 1998c, p. 29) and the same conclusion can be made about any other aspect of language teachers' instructional practice.

As can be seen in Table 3.1, several thematic strands have been examined within this field of study. Language teacher change and development has been explored in both pre-service and in-service contexts and the following section provides a brief account of this specific strand of language teacher cognition. Before I examine selected empirical studies documenting language teacher change, let me summarise the key findings of language teacher cognition research in relation to pedagogy of language teacher education.

Table 3.1: A thematic classification of studies in the field of language teacher cognition  
(Borg, 2006, p. 46)

Broad Focus	Specific concerns
Pre-service Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trainees' prior learning experiences and cognitions</li> <li>• trainees' beliefs about language teaching</li> <li>• trainees' decision-making, beliefs and knowledge during the practicum</li> <li>• change in trainees' cognitions during teacher education</li> </ul>
In-service Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the cognitions of novice language teachers</li> <li>• cognitions and reported practices of in-service teachers</li> <li>• cognitions and actual practices of in-service teachers</li> <li>• cognitive change in in-service teachers</li> <li>• comparisons of expert-novice cognitions and practices</li> </ul>
Specific Curricular Domains	<p>Teachers' cognitions and/or practices in relation to the teaching of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grammar</li> <li>• reading</li> <li>• writing</li> </ul>

### 3.2.2 Key findings and pedagogical implications of language teacher cognition research

To ensure that language teacher education programmes have an impact on language teachers' practice, they "must account for how individuals learn to teach and for the complex factors, influences, and processes that contribute to that learning" (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 407). This is the key premise that has led to reconceptualising the language teacher education knowledge-base. The results of the studies investigating language teacher cognition have pointed to the variable ways in which teachers make sense of their teacher education programmes as well as their classroom experiences, but the two factors that seem to be particularly influential in the process of teacher learning are *teachers' prior experience*



and the *sociocultural context*. The educational interventions that have been recommended as facilitating teacher learning are summarised below.

### *Teachers' prior experience in learning to teach*

As mentioned before, it has now been well established in research on teacher cognition that what teachers learn in teacher education programmes is filtered by prior experiences accumulated over the years of the “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975). This set of language learning experiences is transformed, largely subconsciously, into beliefs about how languages are learnt and how they should or should not be taught. The extensive body of research on the subject shows that if these beliefs are not made explicit, questioned and challenged (Freeman, 1991), teachers’ pre-training cognitions regarding teaching a L2 may be influential throughout their career despite the training efforts (Borg, 2003c).

Several tools have been suggested that can facilitate belief change by accommodating new principles into the teachers’ existing belief systems. These include *language learning autobiographies* (Bailey et al., 1996), methods of cognitive apprenticeship, namely, *narratives* (Golombek & Johnson, 2004; K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2002), *case studies*, and *practical arguments* (K. E. Johnson, 1996a), or *teacher development activities* which are *data-based* (Borg, 1998a) and provide opportunities for teachers to *explore their own theories* (Borg, 1999a). When teacher’s newly formed beliefs (as a result of a TD course, for example) are in conflict with their stable models gained through the apprenticeship of observation, *access to alternative images* of teaching and teachers are required for conceptual change to occur (K. E. Johnson, 1994). Thus, the modelling of desired behaviours and attitudes as well as the generation of experiential opportunities to engage in new practices are highlighted (Grossman, 1991; Kolb, 1984; van den Berg, 2002). Because implementing alternative models poses considerable threat, *receptive and supportive training environments* where individuals are free to expose their beliefs and experiment with new ideas (Calderhead, 1991) appear to be a prerequisite for teacher development (K. E. Johnson, 1994; McCombs, 1991; van den Berg, 2002). Finally, we have come to understand that teachers develop in variable and individual ways (Borg, 2003c, 2006) as a result of teacher education. This implies the importance of *variable inputs* (Woodward, 2004) which cater for these varied ways in which teachers make sense of and are shaped by teacher training programmes.

However, it has to be said that, similarly to mainstream teacher education research (cf. Grossman, 2005), very little empirical evidence has been produced to date attesting to

the effectiveness of these specific instructional approaches in positively influencing teachers' cognitive development across diverse teacher learning contexts.

### *The impact of the social context on learning to teach*

Despite claims to the contrary (see Tarone & Allwright, 2005; Yates & Muchisky, 2003), the place of theory in teacher education programmes has never been questioned within the reconceptualised language teacher education knowledge-base (Freeman & Johnson, 2004, 2005a). Instead, attention has been drawn to the importance of pedagogical processes that enable L2 teachers to make sense of theory in light of their experiential knowledge of the context in which they work.

An example of such processes include creating forums such as Sharkey and Johnson's (2003), in which "expert" knowledge of researchers and authors of journal articles is entered into a dialogue with practitioners. These dialogues document how teacher practice is transformed as a result of reflection on theoretical knowledge through the teachers' experiential knowledge of the contexts in which their practice is embedded. Thus, any teacher education programme aspiring to promote teacher change should provide opportunities for teachers to situate theory within their own socio-cultural contexts through reflection (Bartlett, 1990; K. E. Johnson, 1999).

To sum up, it has been argued that to bring about significant change in teachers, we need to take into account several conditions identified by research on teacher cognition when designing and conducting teacher education programmes. These include confronting teachers' prior experience, providing opportunities to reflect on new knowledge in the light of the particular socio-cultural context and creating a supportive and receptive climate in which such high-risk endeavours can be realised. The syllabus and the procedures of the TD course delivered as part of the present study have been informed by these recommendations (for a further discussion, see Section 5.5.1). Let me now examine in more detail the empirical basis on which these suggestions for teacher education pedagogy have been articulated.

### **3.2.3 The impact of language teacher education programmes**

The impact of teacher education on language teachers has been examined from various perspectives and while some studies focused on the changes in the *content* of cognitions (e.g. MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2001; Peacock, 2001), others have looked at the *process* of change (e.g. Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). Furthermore, Borg (2006) maintains that the impact does not necessarily have to translate to change and even the affirmation in the teachers' prior beliefs can serve as evidence of a formal teacher education/development

programme's influence. In the following part I briefly review a selection of studies that have examined the link between pre-service as well as in-service teacher education and teachers' cognitive development.

### *Pre-service teachers*

A variety of pre-service teacher education programmes have been studied, including PGCE programmes (Cabaroğlu & Roberts, 2000; Gutierrez Almarza, 1996), CELTA courses (M. Borg, 2005), MA in TESOL programmes (Warford & Reeves, 2003) or its various components, such as the teaching practicum (K. E. Johnson, 1994, 1996b) or individual modules like SLA (MacDonald et al., 2001; Peacock, 2001). The results are inconclusive, some studies indicating impact while others pointing to the absence of it. However, the diversity of examined teacher education programmes and contexts as well as differing conceptualisations of impact across the studies make any attempts at drawing generic conclusions problematic (see also Borg, 2006). Nevertheless, despite rather pessimistic views of teacher education as a weak intervention (Kagan, 1992), various degrees of influence have been noted in most of language teacher cognition studies, although, admittedly, caution must be exercised when interpreting the often controversial results.

Cabaroğlu and Roberts (2000) conceptualised change as “movement” or “development” in beliefs because, as they argue, “shifts which standard measurement may register as quite minor, such as on a rating scale, may actually represent movement in beliefs that meaningfully influence a student teacher's perceptions and practice” (Cabaroğlu & Roberts, 2000, p. 389). They devised a classification system that labels different types of belief development (e.g. awareness, consolidation, elaboration, addition, re-ordering, re-labelling, disagreement, reversal, pseudo change, no change). As they conclude, some degree of the cognitive development occurred in all but one participants and can be ascribed to the *early confrontation of trainees' prior beliefs* and *self-regulated learning opportunities* on this specific PGCE programme, though the link between the specific interventions and the particular belief development processes is not systematically interrogated in this study. It is unclear also which type of belief development was actually the intended outcome of the course. Because this is a critical issue, I return to it later in Section 3.2.4 when discussing limitations and potentials of language teacher cognition research.

Both MacDonald et al. (2001) and Peacock (2001) used pre- and post-course instruments to assess the development of teacher trainees' beliefs with regard to SLA. MacDonald et al. (2001) concluded that changes in key beliefs did take place, although, as they point out, it would have to be further examined whether the new beliefs would also be

matched by observable practices during the trainees' practicum or microteaching. In contrast, although Peacock (2001) anticipated that the three-year immersion in the BA TESL programme would have a positive impact on the development of the trainees' beliefs in the desired direction, very few changes were in fact noted. While findings of the two studies may seem contradictory, the methodological approach in both studies needs further scrutiny. It is possible that the student teachers' questionnaire responses in the former study simply indicated their increased awareness of the key SLA principles rather than their actual personal identification with them (see also Borg's (2006) note with regard to this). On the other hand, the elicitation method employed in the latter study might not have been able to capture the nuances in the trainees' cognitive development (cf. Cabaroglu & Roberts, 2000). It is also questionable whether the studies provide a full picture of teacher beliefs which, as Pajares (1992) argues, can be implied in relation to what teachers say, what they intend to do and what they actually do. Thus, claims regarding meaningful belief change must be made with caution where data on some of these aspects are not available, as is the case in the studies reviewed above.

A further example of a contradiction, this time within a single research project, is that of Gutierrez Almarza's (1996) study, the results of which indicated changes in trainees' behaviours which were, however, not accompanied by changes in their belief systems. It is possible, she concludes, that such behaviours may have been a result of the pressure on the trainees to conform to the expectations of the programme, but would be abandoned as soon as the external pressure ceased to exert influence on the trainees. This result as well as the findings of the previous studies raise two important methodological points that need to be addressed in language teacher cognition research: (1) it seems that our understanding of teacher change is limited if cognitions are examined in isolation of behaviours because behavioural change does not imply cognitive change and vice versa (see also Borg, 2003c; 2006, who has repeatedly stressed this point), and (2) caution must be exercised with regard to claims based on data elicited as part of the trainees' formal assessment. With language teacher education research conducted mostly in such contexts in which teacher educator / supervisor's role converges with that of researcher, a more critical inquiry into the status of data elicited in this way will need to be pursued.

I include two further studies here which, although focusing on in-service teachers, throw light on the impact of their pre-service teacher education. The first is Borg's (1998c) study of an experienced teacher's grammar-related instructional decisions in the EFL classroom. As the extensive qualitative data in this research project (interviews and classroom observations) reveal, the initial intensive teacher training programme that this teacher had participated in had a profound impact on his belief system. Moreover, contextual

factors, which are routinely quoted in much of the research in this domain as powerful forces that diminish the impact of teacher education, did not in any way interfere with this teacher's adherence to his belief system developed through the initial teacher education as well as in-service development. Borg (1998c) suggests a number of course-related as well as dispositional factors that could have contributed to such a powerful impact, including the intensity and strong practical focus of the course, the expertise and reflexivity of trainers, the novelty of the course content and an open mind and a willingness to learn on the part of this teacher. Although the links between these characteristics and the impact will have to be further investigated, this study demonstrates that (1) the initial teacher education impact could perhaps be more meaningfully assessed within a longer time-span and in relation to in-service teaching practice and (2) employing a multi-methodological approach (as this study did) which embraces multiple data sources could be an avenue towards a fuller understanding of the nature of the pre-service teacher education influence.

The second study by Watzke (2007), which seems to confirm the above assertions, explores a long-term impact of pre-service teacher education by following up in-service teachers for the first three years of their teaching career. Although initially, the teachers' practices could have been seen as traditional and even contradictory to their initial teacher education, these teachers began to develop in alignment with their initial teacher education as they moved along their developmental pathways and resolved issues of their initial concerns, such as control over students and instructional content. As Watzke (2007) concludes, the theoretical approaches advocated in teacher education programmes "develop as pedagogical content knowledge through a process of teaching, conflict, reflection, and resolution specific to the in-service classroom context" (p. 74).

Although one of the limitations of this study is the absence of a specific description of the curriculum and pedagogy of the given teacher education programme and thus its impact is hard to establish, the study, nevertheless, signifies the importance of bridging pre-service education with in-service teaching practice in studying the long-term impact of pre-service education. The findings indeed give us a pause to reflect on whether investigating an immediate impact tells the whole story of language teacher change. For example, Richards and Pennington (1998) found that none of the five teachers who had been trained in the communicative language teaching approach applied its principles in their first year in-service teaching practice. Although the researchers cite unfavourable contextual factors as responsible for the lack of impact, it could also be that the first year of the research participants' full-time in-service practice was simply a transitional period during which they had to grapple with issues such as establishing their role as a teacher, their control over the class as well as the classroom tasks, and thus the potential long-term impact may have

remained hidden to the investigation limited to this transitional phase of their teaching. Therefore, capturing in our data where the teachers are going rather than just where they are at the moment (Watzke, 2007) may be an important next step in investigating the impact of pre-service language teacher education.

### *In-service teachers*

The volume of research into the impact of in-service teacher development programmes on language teachers' growth is markedly thinner than that of pre-service teacher education. Here I review two studies that examined the impact of a specific in-service teacher development programme before looking at the third which investigated the influence of a specific pedagogical approach on the in-service teachers' development.

Freeman (1993) explored how four high school French and Spanish teachers responded to the new ideas encountered on their in-service MA degree course. The qualitative data of this study provide evidence of the teachers' new ways of thinking, which Freeman refers to as *renaming experience*. However, the answer to the question whether the renaming of experience actually led to *reconstructing practice* remains, according to Freeman (1993), inconclusive because although there was clear evidence of changes in some practices, others remained to be part of the teachers' old routines. However, Freeman (1993) points out that now that we are aware of the interaction of cognition and behaviour, we can no longer use purely behaviour indices as evidence of change. Rather, what we need to examine is how teachers rename their every-day experience, which, in turn, enables them to reconstruct their practice and, as he points out, this does not necessarily happen in an externally observable way. Yet, we can hardly speak about the success of an educational intervention if change which is manifested in teachers' new understanding of their teaching leads to no improved practice and thus no improved conditions for student learning. Of course, such link may not be observable in a traditional sense, but needs to be examined nevertheless even if that implies more complex research designs.

Another study with the focus on language teachers' change as a result of an in-service teacher development initiative is that of Lamie (2004). In agreement with many other studies previously discussed, the findings generated by her study provide evidence of the Japanese teachers' change in their attitudes and practices as a result of their participation in an in-service teacher development course organised by a UK university. However, the same caution applies in this case as has already been noted in the previous section. The research design of this study does not rule out the possibility that the significant differences between pre- and post-course questionnaire appraisals indicating a positive shift in attitudes are

simply a result of the teachers' heightened awareness of the 'correct' attitudes and their desire to demonstrate their knowledge of these, rather than a genuine shift in their attitudes towards teaching. As Gutierrez Almarza's (1996) findings mentioned earlier indicate, behaviours, too, can be a result of such desire and, I would argue, can easily be reproduced even a year after the training. Therefore, unless we have a more holistic picture of the teachers' cognitions and teaching practice and a more detailed description of how the evidence of change in teaching practice was assessed, any claims regarding the impact may be unfounded and their broader relevance questioned.

Finally, Golombek and Johnson's (2004) study focused on the teacher-authored narrative inquiry as a tool for professional development and was grounded in the theoretical framework of the sociocultural theory. This makes the study unique in that a theory of learning had not been previously applied to language teacher cognition research findings. Analysing the narratives of three ESL/EFL in-service teachers who took part in an MA degree programme, Golombek and Johnson (2004) conclude that this particular tool "creates a mediational space in which teachers can identify contradictions in their teaching" (p. 324), a recognition of which is associated with emotional dissonance. This dissonance, they conclude, functions as a catalyst for the teachers' professional development.

This study's contribution is manifold: first, it is theoretically grounded and in this way the data are not simply described, as is the case in much language teacher cognition research, but the relationships and the role of specific constructs are defined and drawn together in a particular framework. In this case, the role of emotional dissonance is highlighted and the conclusions of the study point to its central role in triggering teacher development. Secondly, what this study offers is the focus on a specific instructional strategy, that is, the teacher-authored narratives and their role in facilitating development. However, it is important to stress that there were notable differences in the impact of narrative inquiries on different teachers. For instance, while Michael was able to use his new narrative-inquiry-facilitated understanding of himself as a teacher to devise and implement a clear action plan and thus respond by engaging in new instructional practices, Jenn's development did not go beyond her verbalised commitment to action. The crucial task of the language teacher cognition research, then, for which the sociocultural theory applied in this study does not seem sufficient, is to account for those differences in a conceptual manner.

### **3.2.4 Limitations and potentials**

The language teacher cognition research domain is a growing discipline and has undoubtedly generated a large volume of insightful data about the interaction between what teachers think, believe and know and what they do in the specific instructional and sociocultural

contexts in which their teaching practice is embedded. However, it seems that similar concerns to those articulated in mainstream teacher education research plague the domain of language teacher cognition. The previous review has revealed that fragmentation, terminological diversity, a limited geographical spread, methodological limitations and a lack of conceptual grounding (see also Borg, 2006) make it hard to draw generic conclusions with regard to teacher change which could inform language teacher education practice or policy in various educational contexts. Let me outline several areas which, I believe, will need more attention in the future language teacher cognition research agenda.

### *1. Defining language teacher change*

The single most striking feature of the reviewed studies is the absence of any coordinated effort to define not only what constitutes teacher education impact, but also what constitutes a meaningful and desirable impact. It is refreshing, then, to find that Borg (2006) has recently made an attempt to critically engage with the former issue. Besides establishing what constitutes the impact of teacher education and in-service development, it is our, I would like to argue, ethical responsibility to ponder and define what constitutes a *significant* and *worthwhile* impact (Richardson, 1990, see also section 3.1.1) that language teacher education programmes should strive to make and what are, therefore, *worthwhile* purposes of our research activity (cf. Ortega, 2005a; see also the next point). As Hargreaves (1995) points out, “It makes little sense to analyze ... forms of teacher development without first establishing what it is that needs to be developed, what teachers and teaching are for” (Hargreaves, 1995, p. 9). In future research on the impact of particular teacher education programmes, therefore, we will need to see a more explicit engagement with the definitions of the intended impact and the adoption of methodological designs capable of examining such impact.

### *2. Revising/extending the purposes of language teacher cognition research*

In the light of the previous point, language teacher cognition domain will have to be scrutinised more rigorously for the social utility of its research results. If this research is hoped to be beneficial for teaching, teacher education, and educational policy, our efforts will have to go significantly beyond generating descriptions of the content and nature of language teacher cognitions. We will need to engage in more systematic inquiry into *language teacher education interventions* that facilitate significant and worthwhile language teacher change and a *programmatic exploration of the relationship between* (1) language teacher education, (2) teacher learning, (3) teaching practice, and (4) students’ learning as well as non-learning outcomes, which have traditionally been left out (although, see



Freeman and K. E. Johnson's (2005b) examination of the "relationship of influence" between teacher learning, teacher activity and student learning). Although this is undoubtedly a difficult link to address, the vision of the social utility of our research will not allow us to avoid it for much longer. One of the important avenues in this respect could also be closer collaboration between the instructed SLA and language teacher cognition camps (Borg, 2006).

### *3. Broadening the geographical and institutional scope*

In addition to the previous two points, broadening the geographical spread of researched contexts will go some way towards increasing the relevance of the research findings. Most of what we currently know about language teacher cognitive development is a result of studies situated in the USA, although some European contexts are also becoming more represented (Borg, 2006). However, Borg's (2003c) conclusion that we know very little about cognitions of language teachers working in typical language teaching contexts (i.e. non-native speaking EFL teachers within the state school system with prescribed curriculum and textbooks and a heavy teaching load), remains true today. Some attempts to look at unrepresented yet the most typical language teaching contexts have been made (see e.g. Hayes, 2005), but we will need to continue in this effort.

### *4. Integrating dispositional, motivational and affective factors into studies of language teacher cognition*

The impact of individual differences on language teacher learning has been hinted at in research findings, but not examined more systematically. As a result, we do not know exactly what role they play and how they interact with the cognitive and contextual factors that have been explored extensively in the literature. In addition, given that teacher learning, just like any kind of human learning, is a motivated activity, it is striking that motivational factors have not been researched explicitly in language teacher cognition. Finally, general teacher education literature has indicated a significant role of affect in teacher change. Yet, very little attention has been paid to the emotional dimension in empirical studies within the language teacher cognition domain (for an exception, see Golombek & Johnson, 2004). If we aspire to understand the complexity of language teacher cognitive development, dispositional, motivational and affective factors will need to be investigated alongside the cognitive and contextual ones which are currently the main focus in studies of language teacher change.

### *5. The absence of a conceptual framework of language teacher cognitive development*

While valuable attempts have recently been made to “impose some structure on this field” (Borg, 2006, p. 280), the findings generated in language teacher cognition domain remain atheoretical, drawing mainly on mainstream teacher education research, a domain that has also failed to go much beyond the mere description of various types of teachers’ cognitions and factors which appear to play a role in influencing them (although see the recent theory-building effort in Shulman & Shulman, 2004). However, if one of the aims of this domain of inquiry is to understand how pre-service and in-service language teachers learn to do their work, then the fact that our current findings do not explicate in a comprehensive manner the role that cognitive, affective, dispositional and situational factors play in the process, and offer no explanation when development does not occur, should perhaps encourage us to reassess the contribution psychology as well as other disciplines concerned with human learning can make towards building a theory of language teacher development. While there have been some praiseworthy but, unfortunately, isolated, attempts to ground research in a theory of learning (see the application of the sociocultural theory in Golombek & Johnson, 2004; K. E. Johnson & Golombek, 2003), they alone do not seem to provide a big picture of how, why, when and under what circumstances language teachers develop and, even more importantly, why, when and under what circumstances they do not. Programmatic empirically-driven theory-building efforts which also draw on findings from across a variety of disciplines and methods should therefore be an essential next step in advancing this field.

### **3.2.5 Summary**

Language teacher cognition research has accumulated a wealth of descriptive knowledge of the various types of cognitions language teachers have with regard to all facets of their work. Nevertheless, the domain has yet to generate an empirically-grounded conceptual framework which will account for the complexity of language teacher development and embrace the many variables that play a part in the process, some of which have remained a largely uncharted territory in this field.

Because I am going to propose a working model of language teacher change in the final section of this chapter, the following sections are devoted to a summary of the main research domains that the model will draw upon. It is necessary to emphasise at this point that the inclusion in the literature review of the model and the theoretical frameworks that it draws on should not be interpreted as chronological, suggesting that the aim of the present research project was to validate a pre-established conceptual framework. On the contrary, the research project described in this thesis followed a theory-building path that is typical for exploratory qualitative projects (grounded theory being an example of one such approach)

and the proposed model is a result of this process. The inclusion of the conceptual review before the discussion of the data is purely for practical reasons, so as to orient the reader into the concepts that the data of the present research project (discussed later in the thesis) point to. I look at four broad theoretical traditions: social cognitive perspective, dual-process models of attitude change, conceptual change models, and the possible selves theory. Due to space limitations, this discussion is restricted to the description of those concepts and mechanisms of each theory which resonated with the findings of the present research project's qualitative data and proved fundamental to understanding language teacher change.

### **3.3 Social Cognitive Perspective of Learning**

In this section, I start by looking at the social cognitive theory. Because of space limitation, the discussion of this complex theory is restricted to outlining its principal tenets as formulated by Bandura (1986). The other two subsections examine the specific constructs grounded in the social cognitive tradition: goal setting, and self-efficacy.

#### **3.3.1 Social cognitive theory: The basic tenets**

The social cognitive theory developed by Bandura (1986) postulates that human behaviour is a function of various behavioural, cognitive and other personal and environmental factors which interact in the so called “triadic reciprocity” relationship. The strength of these bi-directional influences is not symmetrical, but the actual weighting of the impact each factor exerts on human functioning depends on individual circumstances. For instance, a strong environmental impact can override the personal factors and vice versa, where the environmental influence is weak, various dispositional factors will be activated to guide behaviour. This theory is grounded in the agentic perspective in which individuals are characterised as possessing five key capabilities:

- *Symbolising capability.* This means that people can assign symbolic value to their lived experiences and store them in memory as internal guides for future action. People with a particularly high level of symbolising capability are able to create images and models that go beyond their lived experiences and represent imagined future states.
- *Forethought capability.* This refers to people's capacity to regulate their behaviour by setting goals or anticipating consequences of their prospective actions. This capability is closely linked with the previous one simply because the future event cannot guide one's present behaviour, but its cognitive representation in the person's mind, which is an

outcome of one's symbolic capability, can function as a strong determinant and antecedent of behaviour. Thus, "by representing foreseeable outcomes symbolically, people can convert future consequences into current motivators and regulators of foresightful behaviour" (Bandura, 1986, p. 19). The forethought is activated through a person's self-regulation mechanisms (see also Section 3.3.2).

- *Vicarious capability*. It refers to people's capability to learn by observing actions of others as well as consequences that arise from them without having to directly experience them. This capability enables people to form various behavioural, social, or cultural norms and standards which are used for regulating one's future functioning.
- *Self-regulatory capacity*. The agentic perspective is rooted in this capability. The social cognitive theory postulates that people's functioning is not simply swayed by circumstances or demands of the environment, but much of their behaviour is regulated through their own internal norms and appraisals of their own actions. The appraisal of the discrepancies between one's performance and the internal standard against which it is evaluated will influence subsequent action. However, as Bandura and Locke (2003) note, people are not only motivated by reducing a discrepancy, but as aspiring and proactive beings, "they are motivated and guided by foresight of goals, not just by hindsight of shortfalls" (p. 91). Consequently, as they maintain, self-regulatory capacity is not conceived of simply as a "reactive discrepancy reduction system", but also as a "proactive discrepancy production system."
- *Self-reflective capacity*. As Bandura (1986) points out, this is perhaps the most distinctively human characteristic and it refers to peoples' capability to analyse and inquire into their experiences, actions, and thought processes. A result of this reflection is not only a new understanding, but also a re-evaluation of and change in one's own cognitive processes. One of the most pervasive cognitions that impact on human behaviour is believed to be self-efficacy, that is, "people's judgements of their capabilities to deal effectively with different realities" (Bandura, 1986, p. 21).

To summarise, in social cognitive theory humans are conceived of as anticipative, purpose-oriented and self-evaluating proactive regulators of their motivation and behaviour (Bandura, 2001, cited in Bandura & Locke, 2003), who not only *react* to discrepancy between their internal standards and the actual behaviour, but who, primarily, motivate themselves through *creating* discrepancies to be mastered. More specifically, people exercise proactive self-regulation over their functioning by setting themselves challenging goals and mobilising their internal resources based on their anticipation of what fulfilling those goals will entail.

They subsequently respond to feedback on their performance by adjusting their efforts. The extent to which the goals have been accomplished successfully will determine the level of people's self-efficacy, which, in turn, will influence the nature of future goals. People with high self-efficacy will typically set themselves increasingly higher standards as opposed to those with low self-efficacy beliefs. As Bandura and Locke (2003) maintain, "the adoption of further challenges creates new motivating discrepancies to be mastered. Thus, discrepancy reduction is only half of the story and not necessarily the more interesting half" (p. 91).

Two concepts of social cognitive theory which have been mentioned above, *goal setting* as an integral part of self-regulation and *self-efficacy*, are further discussed in the following two sections.

### **3.3.2 Goal setting**

Goal setting is an integral component of self-regulation (for further discussion of self-regulation mechanisms, see Section 1.1.2). According to Locke and Latham (1990), goal setting generally refers to determining, either quantitatively or qualitatively, standards of performance. Such establishment of performance standards coupled with perceived efficacy can be a powerful influence on individuals' achievement (Bandura & Locke, 2003; Pintrich & Schunk, 2002) and can enhance self-regulation (Cervone, Mor, Orom, Shadel, & Scott, 2004; Vohs & Baumeister, 2004).

There are, however, three important characteristics that goals need to possess to exert such influence on individuals' behaviour: they must be *specific* rather than vague, *proximal* rather than distant and of *moderate challenge* rather than too easy or, in contrast, unattainable. Furthermore, as important as goals are in guiding behaviour, it is not only the determination of the individuals and their enthusiasm to attain a previously set goal, but also the action targeted towards its attainment that is crucial. Indeed, "*believing* that a goal is desirable and reachable does not automatically force an individual to act. The individual must *choose* to put his or her judgment in action" (Locke & Latham, 1990, p. 127). *Goal choice* and *goal commitment* are therefore essential aspects of the goal setting theory and a number of factors are believed to impact on whether or not individuals choose to pursue their goals, including *personal-individual* (e.g. past performance, actual ability, perceived self-efficacy, causal attributions, value that is placed on the goal in question, and mood) and *social-environmental factors* (group factors, role modelling, reward structure, nature of authority, and feedback that conveys information on efficacy, gives a sense of mastery, and provides opportunity for self-development; see also Vohs & Baumeister, 2004). Many of these factors are elaborated on in the first two chapters of this literature review.

### 3.3.3 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy beliefs are defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Although one’s actual knowledge, abilities and skills are essential for competent human functioning, they are not sufficient for successful task accomplishment. On the other hand, one’s judgement in one’s capability to perform a particular task may not necessarily be an accurate judgement of one’s actual capability (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004), yet acts as a central mediator between one’s knowledge and behaviour in that it (1) influences decisions regarding which goals to pursue, (2) affects one’s effort and persistence in pursuing those goals, (3) impacts on one’s affective experience during the goal pursuit, and (4) influences the quality of self-regulation, cognitive performance and achievement (Cervone et al., 2004). It appears, therefore, that among the mechanisms of human behaviour, self efficacy beliefs are the most pervasive (Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Perceived self-efficacy is a *future-oriented* (Goddard et al., 2004) and *context-specific* (or “person-in-context”) construct in that it refers to “peoples’ thoughts about their capabilities for performance within a particular encounter, or type of encounters” (Cervone et al., 2004, p. 190). Bandura (1986) identifies four sources of self-efficacy beliefs:

- *Enactive attainment*, which refers to a direct mastery experience.
- *Vicarious experience*, that is, information conveyed through other people’s modelling, in other words, a result of the observation of others.
- *Verbal persuasion*, which entails verbal messages by others that work towards either boosting or lowering one’s appraisals of personal efficacy.
- *Physiological state*, referring to one’s appraisal of their emotional and physical states.

A wealth of empirical evidence suggests that mastery experiences have the strongest influence on self-efficacy appraisals (Bandura, 1997).

#### *Teachers’ sense of efficacy*

Self-efficacy has also been studied in relation to teachers’ work and several distinct concepts have been suggested, such as *general teaching efficacy* (i.e. teachers’ beliefs that they, as teachers, can influence students’ motivation and learning) as opposed to *personal teaching efficacy* (i.e. the personal expectation that the teacher can attain positive learning results with his/her personal capacities) (see e.g. van den Berg, 2002), although such distinctions are a matter of debate and other conceptualisations have been suggested (Goddard et al., 2004;

Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006). Teachers' sense of efficacy, just like personal efficacy, is context-sensitive and depends on the analysis of the task at hand as well as on the assessment of teaching competence for that particular task. Again, similarly to personal self-efficacy, information that serves as a source of this analysis comes from mastery and vicarious experiences, affective states and social persuasion (Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000).

Empirical evidence suggests clear links between teachers' sense of efficacy and productive teaching practices. For example, teachers with a strong sense of efficacy tend to organise and plan their teaching better and are more likely to engage in innovative classroom practices (Goddard et al., 2004; Wozney, Venkatesh, & Abrami, 2006). This may be because teachers with a higher sense of efficacy are not put off by initial failures, but instead persist in their efforts to foster student learning even in the face of repeated obstacles (cf. Goddard et al., 2004).

#### *Collective teacher efficacy*

A final construct within self-efficacy concerns *collective teacher efficacy*, which refers to a shared judgement of the educational organisation's capacities to impact on students' learning outcomes. Goddard et al.'s (2000) empirical study has demonstrated that the level of collective teacher efficacy, in other words the interaction between the analysis of the task and the assessment of group competencies, is a powerful predictor of the school's students' achievement. It has been argued that it is because a school with a high level of collective teacher efficacy possesses a strong sense of organisational agency, which motivates its teaching staff to purposefully pursue the goals of bringing about student learning. Schools with a high sense of collective efficacy are, therefore, self-regulating organisations which intentionally identify, select, and monitor instructional efforts that are likely to address individual needs of their students (Goddard et al., 2000).

These findings point to an important line of future inquiry and suggest that teachers' *collective cognitions* may have a significant impact on individual teacher's classroom practice and consequently, on the students' achievement. Therefore, Borg's (2006) call for shifting the emphasis from individual to collective cognitions in language teacher cognition research seem particularly relevant also in the light of the social cognitive perspective of human behaviour.

#### **3.3.4 Contribution to language teacher cognition research**

The social cognitive perspective of behavioural change postulates that in order for individuals to exert control over their behaviour and learning, they must have developed a

set of necessary competencies and skills, they must judge themselves capable of performing the action or achieving a particular goal, and they must be able to employ self-regulatory mechanisms which will, on the one hand, monitor the pursuit of the goal and, on the other, adjust subsequent effort. Therefore social cognitive theory seems to support the findings in language teacher cognition research regarding the role personal and environmental factors play in influencing language teachers' behaviour, but it also introduces constructs which will need further attention in language teacher cognition. This concerns the role of self-regulation and goal-setting in language teacher cognitive development and, particularly, language teachers' efficacy beliefs, which, as the social cognitive perspective reveals, seem to be central in guiding people's actions and yet, remain largely unexplored in our domain of inquiry.

### **3.4 Attitude Change**

The theoretical domain discussed in this section concerns attitude change theories and because attitudes embrace all forms of evaluative response, including cognitive, affective and behavioural (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fazio & Olson, 2003), the research findings generated in this field are believed to be applicable to the focus of this thesis. However, just a cursory glance at this domain of social psychology reveals a great degree of richness and complexity of attitude research (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), which precludes its detailed analysis in this literature review. Instead, this section is restricted to the discussion of the so called dual-process models of attitude change which are particularly pertinent to the study of language teacher change, in that they specify the role of prior cognitions in the process of change and explicate two distinct developmental paths leading to different quality of resulting attitudes. Because of this potentially key relevance to the domain of language teacher cognition, a more detailed explanation of this theory follows.

#### **3.4.1 Dual-process models of attitude change**

The attitude change theories described here focus specifically on message-based persuasion, that is, the mechanisms whereby an individual cognitively engages with arguments of a persuasive message supporting a particular position and undergoes change in attitudes as a result of this engagement (Visser & Cooper, 2003). Certainly, teacher education programmes are neither exclusively nor primarily based on persuasive arguments in this sense.

Nevertheless, the content of teacher education input can be taken to represent a certain form of a persuasive message in that the teacher-learners are expected to cognitively engage with it and, consequently, form or change their attitudes towards a particular educational



phenomenon that the message advocates. Therefore, the findings of dual-process theories are hoped to be relevant to our purposes and shed some light on the processes that teacher learners engage in when dealing with the content of teacher education input.

The basic assumption of the dual-process theories is that people do not always meticulously examine each and every persuasive message they come across and the reasons can range from the lack of cognitive ability, the gap in background knowledge, lack of motivation or insufficient time (Visser & Cooper, 2003). Although, originally, only such careful scrutiny was thought to produce attitude change, the main contribution of the dual-process theories is their recognition that attitudinal change can occur even in the absence of ability and motivation, albeit through different processes and with different quality of the resulting new attitude (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Visser & Cooper, 2003).

Two dual-process models were developed in the 1980s that describe the different routes marked by different degrees of cognitive engagement: The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM). While they differ in certain details, let us consider key premises that they share.

Both theories assume two routes to attitude change: *systematic (central)* and *heuristic (peripheral)*. The former has been defined as “a comprehensive, analytic orientation to information processing in which perceivers access and scrutinize a great deal of information for its relevance to their judgment task” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 326). In other words, systematic processing implies a deliberate deep-level cognitive engagement with the reform message. The processing via the systematic route is data-driven, in other words, it is the message *content* that is scrutinised rather than other, so called *heuristic or peripheral cues* (see below) and because this demands a greater degree of effort and cognitive capacity, embarking on this route is regarded as more “cognitively taxing” (Visser & Cooper, 2003, p. 213). The attitudes that have been either formed or changed as a result of this process are believed to be more durable, more predictive of behaviour and less susceptible to counterpersuasion than attitude changes that result from the alternative route.

The heuristic route, in contrast, is the less effortful processing route which relies on heuristics, that is, “learned decision rules used to make quick evaluative judgements during the processing of a persuasive message” (Gregoire, 2003, p. 159), rather than on the analysis of the message itself. Heuristics constitutes a part of the individuals’ knowledge system and is generated from prior observation, experience, or affective responses. If, for instance, individuals believe in a simple heuristic rule that more arguments in support of a certain position imply a more convincing message, they are likely to be persuaded if the message contains an impressive number of arguments regardless of their actual quality and soundness. Similarly, people may be distracted from the systematic route of message-

processing if they are guided by their affective response to the message source. Provided they find the source particularly attractive, credible, or knowledgeable, they might be persuaded without further engaging with the actual content of the message. Similarly, if their affective response to the message source is negative, people tend to dismiss the message regardless of its merits unless they have motivation and ability to systematically analyse it. The variables which affect message-processing in this way are also termed ‘peripheral cues’ and they offer people “resource-conserving cognitive strategies for coping with persuasive messages” (Visser & Cooper, 2003, p. 213). In contrast with the central route, however, attitudes that are an outcome of the heuristic route are less stable, do not necessarily predict behaviour and are much more susceptible to counter-argumentation. Of course, both routes of processing can occur simultaneously, when, for instance, one forms an attitude towards the message based on a peripheral cue (e.g. dismisses the reform message out of hand because the source of message is not perceived as trustworthy or because one’s attitude towards reforms in general is negative), but has also the motivation and ability to systematically process the actual arguments of the message and, subsequently, either changes the initially formed attitude or reinforces it in light of the new information gained from the systematic analysis of the message.

The abovementioned heuristic cues refer to “any variable capable of affecting persuasion without affecting argument scrutiny” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 307) and can encompass message source (attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise), message content (length, number of arguments), as well as recipient’s variables (gender, age, relevance, value, relevant knowledge, personality, self-regulation and intelligence) (Visser & Cooper, 2003). Further such cues have been identified in a research programme pursued by Fazio and colleagues (see reviews in Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Fazio & Olson, 2003) investigating affective priming paradigm and automatic attitude activation. The findings suggest that one’s prior attitudes can function as peripheral cues in that, provided they are readily accessible, they can get activated automatically at the mere presentation of the attitude object and exert influence on people’s perception of the object and their behaviour without requiring further investment of cognitive effort. Another factor which can function as a peripheral cue according to this paradigm concerns subjective norms, or other people’s interpretation of the event. That is, people’s affective and behavioural responses to the message can be influenced by responses of significant others. Although not explicitly examined in attitude change theories, the awareness of group dynamics, particularly group norms and peer pressure, which are an inherent part of training contexts (see also Chapters 1 and 2 for a further discussion of the peer group as one of the microcontextual variable), appear to be instrumental to our understanding of teacher change.

However, as Visser and Cooper (2003) point out, the persuasion variables discussed above fulfil multiple functions and apart from serving as ‘peripheral cues’ which allow forming attitudes without having to scrutinise the actual content of the message, they can:

- serve as a persuasive argument, providing substantive information relevant to the attitude object
- influence the extent of cognitive elaboration
- influence the direction of cognitive elaboration, biasing the information processing (Visser & Cooper, 2003)

The implications for teacher education are quite intriguing. The variables of the microcontext of the training environment would seem to promote the systematic route of processing on the one hand (serving as “persuasive arguments”), but they could, at the same time, induce heuristic-based processing and detract from the central process that leads to a more stable attitude change (fulfilling thus their function of “peripheral cues”). The latter assumption appears rather disappointing given the robust evidence presented in the first two chapters attesting to the positive impact of microcontextual factors on students’ learning engagement. It seems crucial, therefore, to specify the conditions under which the different functions of persuasion variables become prominent and this issue will be the subject of the final section of this chapter.

In sum, dual process theories postulate that not all human behaviour is intentional, thoughtful and a result of deliberate processing. On the contrary, individuals often tend to apply ‘the least effort’ principle when assessing persuasive messages and rely on various heuristic cues which directly influence their attitude with no further need to deliberately scrutinise the content of the message. Systematic processing, which results in attitude change that is more sustainable and more predictive of behaviour, makes extra demands on the individuals’ time and energy and unless people are motivated to expend this extra effort and have the ability and opportunity to persist in it, the prospect of lasting change is reduced.

### **3.4.2 Contribution to language teacher cognition research**

Dual-process models of attitude change provide sound support for the findings in language teacher cognition research. Firstly, reflection, also conceptualised as “robust reasoning” (K. E. Johnson, 1999), has been found the single most important factor capable of bringing about language teacher development. The contribution of dual-process models is in the theoretical explication of why this is so and in the specification of the mechanisms that are inherent in

this process. Secondly, by identifying an alternative route of attitude change (peripheral/heuristic), dual-process models provide a theoretical explanation of findings in numerous studies in language teacher cognition domain indicating superficial change. Furthermore, while language teacher cognition research has produced evidence of the hindering function of prior cognitions, the exact nature of this function has not been theoretically explained. In contrast, the role of heuristic cues, which include prior cognitions, is described in detail in dual-process theories and the automatic assessment of input through prior attitudes, beliefs, and theories is explained in the automatic attitude activation model.

It appears, therefore, that the dual-process theories have great potential to explain why teacher education programmes, pre-service or in-service, often fail to induce “significant and worthwhile” change (Richardson, 1990) and their impact is often superficial, temporary, and, most importantly, not reflected in the teachers’ classroom practice despite the teachers’ positive appraisal of the programme. However, as Gregoire (2003) rightly points out, dual-process theories leave us with several question marks, particularly with regard to the mediators of situation-specific motivation (i.e. we do not know how educational interventions could influence motivation for systematic processing) and the role of anxiety in message-processing. Therefore, the next section concerns research on conceptual change, the latest developments in which may provide some answers in this direction.

### **3.5 Conceptual Change Models**

By the time student teachers enter teacher education programmes, they will have already acquired a common-sense understanding of their natural and social environment based on experiences in everyday life. This extends to their understanding of learning and teaching, which, however, is frequently naïve, simplistic and inappropriate and, thus at odds with the knowledge taught at teacher education programmes. Learning, therefore, does not only entail an integration of new information into memory or adding new concepts to one’s knowledge base, but also involves the restructuring of existing knowledge representations, in other words, a more radical change in a person’s conceptual system. The outcome of processing new information through existing knowledge has been termed *assimilation*, whereas the latter process of change in one’s conceptual system results in *accommodation* and it is precisely this restructuring process that has been termed *conceptual change* or *conceptual change learning* (Posner, Strike, Hewson, & Gertzog, 1982). It seems, therefore, that this

research domain is particularly relevant in our quest for understanding language teacher cognitive development.

Conceptual change has been primarily investigated in two domains: science education and cognitive developmental psychology, the former focusing on instructional strategies of bringing about conceptual change in learners and the latter describing the cognitive processes involved in intellectual activity (Vosniadou, 1999). The evolving process of conceptual change theory can be divided into two historical periods, involving the period of so called “cold” conceptual change in the 1980s and early 1990s and a recent “warming” trend (cf. Sinatra, 2005) that sprung with the publishing of an influential paper by Pintrich, Marx and Boyle (1993) in which they challenge the “cold”, rational, scientific notion of learning and call for an integration of “hot” mechanisms into the model of conceptual change learning. Let me first briefly describe some of the key assumptions of conceptual change as a cognitive and highly rational process before outlining the major reservations this model attracted, followed by a description of revised models of conceptual change.

### **3.5.1 ‘Cold’ conceptual change**

The first historical phase of the conceptual change research explored three general themes: (1) the influence of students’ cognitions on change, especially the role of prior knowledge on resistance to change, (2) developmental changes in young learners’ knowledge representations, and (3) the design of instructional methods to foster change (cf. Sinatra, 2005). Some of these key processes are well explicated in a seminal paper by Posner et al. (1982), who attempted to explain how learners’ current conceptions interact with new, often incompatible information.

Posner et al.’s (1982) model was derived from the philosophy of science and its central question concerned ways in which students’ existing concepts change under the impact of new ideas or new information. The researchers identified *dissatisfaction* with current concepts as the essential condition for conceptual change and postulated that new concepts must be *intelligible*, *plausible* and *fruitful* for accommodation to occur. The primary source of dissatisfaction is the experience of an anomaly between current concepts and empirical evidence. However, the anomaly will only produce dissatisfaction with an existing conception if (1) students understand why the new information represents an anomaly, (2) they believe it essential to reconcile the new information with their existing conceptions, (3) they are committed to the reduction of inconsistencies, and (4) attempts at assimilation of the new idea into the students’ existing conceptions do not seem to work. Because it is unlikely that all these conditions will be met, conceptual change is seen as

difficult and less demanding alternatives to conceptual change are often likely to be pursued by individuals. In fact, Chinn and Brewer (1993) have identified seven basic responses by students to anomalous data, only one of which, requiring the greatest cognitive effort, constitutes conceptual change. These responses include (1) ignoring anomalous data (e.g. because of their irrelevance to one's current conceptions or students' lack of concern with the anomaly), (2) rejection, (3) excluding the data from one's current theory, (4) holding the data in abeyance, (5) reinterpreting the anomalous data without amending current theory, (6) reinterpreting the data and making peripheral changes to current theory, and, finally, (7) accepting the data and restructure current theory, possibly in favour of new theory.

Of course, just because accommodation represents a radical change in person's conceptions, it does not imply an abrupt change. On the contrary, as Posner et al. (1982) claim, accommodation may be a gradual and incremental process as the students attempt to make sense and more fully appreciate the meaning as well as implications of their new knowledge. Also, what may initially appear as accommodation, may later turn out to be less than that. This is because as learners begin to realise the counterintuitive implications of their newly developed concepts or their conflicts with other existing conceptions, their commitment to the new concept may weaken. In the view of this proposition, the call for more longitudinal studies into the impact of teacher education programmes on language teachers expressed earlier seem particularly relevant.

However, Pintrich et al. (1993) criticised the theory's 'coldly' rational approach grounded in philosophy of science, arguing that a scientific community, whose primary purpose is to seek new intelligible, plausible, and fruitful theories to resolve the conflict between the current available theory and the contradicting empirical evidence, operates under mechanisms that are distinct from those of a classroom community in which a variety of individuals' goals, intentions, purposes, motivational beliefs and social interactions come into play. In other words, the major criticism of the previous models of conceptual change related to its lack of concern for motivational and contextual dimensions which, as Pintrich et al. (1993) have argued, play a significant role in determining whether or not conceptual change in learners is likely to occur. Bringing about conceptual change in learners according to the 'hot' vision of conceptual change would therefore not only involve challenging their cognitive conceptions by presenting new data, but also developing strategies that would motivate the learners to systematically engage with the conflict between their existing knowledge and the new concept and develop in them a desire to work on resolving it (for a full review of such micro-contextual factors and ways of creating conducive learning environments, see the first two chapters of this literature review).

### 3.5.2 A ‘warming’ trend in conceptual change research

The notion of resistance to change and the acknowledgement of the alternative routes of responding to conflicting data in the early conceptualisations of conceptual change clearly “ignited a motivational spark” (Sinatra, 2005, p. 108). Yet the explicit integration of motivational constructs in conceptual change models was not triggered until Pintrich et al.’s (1993) open challenge and their paper could therefore be considered as the beginning of a ‘warming trend’ in research on conceptual change (Sinatra, 2005), one which has been described as “exciting change with great promise for educational research” (Vosniadou, 1999, p. 9).

It was mainly Paul Pintrich and colleagues who made a systematic effort to integrate motivational and contextual variables into the discussions of conceptual change (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003; Patrick & Pintrich, 2001; Pintrich, 1999; Sinatra & Pintrich, 2003a). As Pintrich (1999) argued, doing so enables researchers to avoid the trap of decontextualising learners by placing too much emphasis on individuals on the one hand (the trend is also obvious in earlier motivational psychology, see Dörnyei, 2001b) and ignoring individual differences at the expense of the social context on the other (as can be seen in e.g. Säljö, 1999). In his discussion, Pintrich (1999) considers the facilitating as well as constraining role of students’ motivational beliefs and contextual factors and introduces a number of propositions in relation to:

- *Achievement goals*, proposing that mastery rather than performance goals are likely to lead to conceptual change and empirical support has been found for this proposition (see Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2002; Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003);
- *Epistemological beliefs*, arguing that students’ belief in simple and certain knowledge may lead to premature conclusions without considering alternative views and, consequently, limit the possibility of conceptual change, whereas more “constructivist” epistemological beliefs are likely to facilitate conceptual change;
- *Personal and affective characteristics situated in the learning context*, postulating that higher levels of personal importance, value, interest, self-efficacy and perceived control are likely to promote conceptual change. However, the self-efficacy construct is not unproblematic, because if translated into confidence in one’s current knowledge, it can in fact be detrimental to change (for a review of empirical evidence for some of these propositions, see Sinatra, 2005).

Sinatra and Pintrich’s (2003b) edited volume, which specifically focused on intentional conceptual change, gave an explicit ‘hot’ direction to research in this domain by

operationalising intentional conceptual change as “the goal-directed and conscious initiation and regulation of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational processes to bring about a change in knowledge” (Sinatra & Pintrich, 2003a, p. 6) and in this way, conceptual change was explicitly associated with “motivated metacognitive effort” (Hynd, 2003, p. 291) and characterised in terms of three core elements: a goal of conceptual understanding, metacognitive awareness and self-regulation (Linnenbrink & Pintrich, 2003).

An attempt to integrate the ‘hot’ constructs into a unified model of conceptual change was made by Dole and Sinatra (1998, as summarised in Sinatra, 2005) who proposed a Cognitive Reconstruction of Knowledge Model (CRKM), influenced by views from social psychology, cognitive psychology, and science education, particularly the Elaboration Likelihood Model, which is one of the dual-process models of attitude change described earlier in this chapter, Posner et al.’s (1982) model of conceptual change (see above), and motivational research. The model assumes a dynamic interaction between *learner characteristics* (i.e. their background knowledge and motivational factors, such as personal relevance, need for cognition and social context) and *message characteristics* (comprehensible, coherent, plausible, rhetorically compelling). The nature of this interaction determines the *level of learners’ cognitive engagement* with the message, which can range from low (superficial, surface-level processing) to high (deep processing) and the depth of this engagement, in turn, determines the likelihood of conceptual change. However, Gregoire (2003), whose model of conceptual change is described in the next section, refers to this model as a ‘warm’ model of conceptual change, suggesting that affective factors are not sufficiently accounted for.

### **3.5.3 A ‘warming’ trend in teacher conceptual change**

As Patrick and Pintrich (2001) acknowledge, teacher cognition research and the assumption within this strand of research that teacher change may involve theory revision is an “important bridge to the cognitive literature on conceptual change” (p. 130). However, they go on to argue that like students, teachers, too, are motivated in various ways to learn and change their prior theories, yet motivational factors have received far less attention in conceptual or empirical studies on teacher change (for exceptions, see e.g. Abrami, Poulsen, & Chambers, 2004; Gregoire, 2003; Patrick & Pintrich, 2001; Pugh & Bergin, 2006).

One of the models which account in a comprehensive manner for cognitive, motivational and affective factors involved in teacher conceptual change is that of Gregoire (2003), who maintains that her proposed Cognitive-Affective Model of Conceptual Change (CAMCC) is a truly ‘hot’ model of teacher conceptual change in that it addresses the major limitation of the previous conceptual change research, mainly its predominantly cognitive



approach. As Gregoire (2003) notes, despite the recent attempts to integrate motivational and affective factors into conceptual change models, these attempts have not been systematic and have not resulted in a comprehensive theoretical description of how cognitive, affective and motivational factors interact in influencing conceptual change. Because the same concerns have been articulated with regard to language teacher change (see Section 3.2.4), this model is believed to throw light on the processes and mechanisms of language teacher development, which concerns the focus of this thesis.

As Figure 3.1 illustrates, the CAMCC incorporates key aspects from several of the previously reviewed theories. Drawing on the dual-process models of attitude change discussed earlier, the model assumes two routes of belief change resulting in either assimilation or accommodation and identifies *systematic processing as the mediator of conceptual change*. This not only resonates with empirical findings in language teacher cognition research, but clearly supports the assumption of motivational researchers that the adoption of mastery goals, which are associated with higher level of cognitive engagement, leads to conceptual change. However, the CAMCC goes further and explicitly establishes the mediating link between systematic processing and conceptual change.

In contrast with other conceptual change models, the CAMCC assumes an *automatic appraisal of the message*, which ties in with the automatic activation of attitudes theory discussed in Section 3.4.1. Gregoire (2003) argues that when teachers are presented with a reform message, they will automatically evaluate it based on their prior attitudes towards it as well as on their relevant prior knowledge, beliefs and experience, and this appraisal happens automatically even before the message characteristics (such as intelligibility, plausibility, fruitfulness) are considered. The teachers' prior cognitions with regard to the reform message will therefore serve as a filter through which teachers make a decision as to whether or not their *self is implicated* by the reform message and the processing route (systematic or heuristic) will be determined accordingly.

The CAMCC also accounts for the role of *emotions* in the appraisal process and postulates that different types of emotion will lead to different outcomes. The self-implication is believed to be accompanied by *stress appraisal*, which represents discomfort or dissatisfaction with the present state, which then prompts the teacher to assess her *motivation* and *ability* to implement the reform message in the classroom. If the teacher's self-efficacy beliefs are high (i.e. she believes she has the ability to implement the reform) and her abilities (skills, subject-matter knowledge, time, resources, and supportive colleagues) are sufficient, the message will be interpreted as a *challenge* (i.e. the initial stress appraisal will be transformed to a positive emotion). This will, in turn, be an impetus for the teacher's adoption of an approach goal, that is, the specific goal to systematically process the

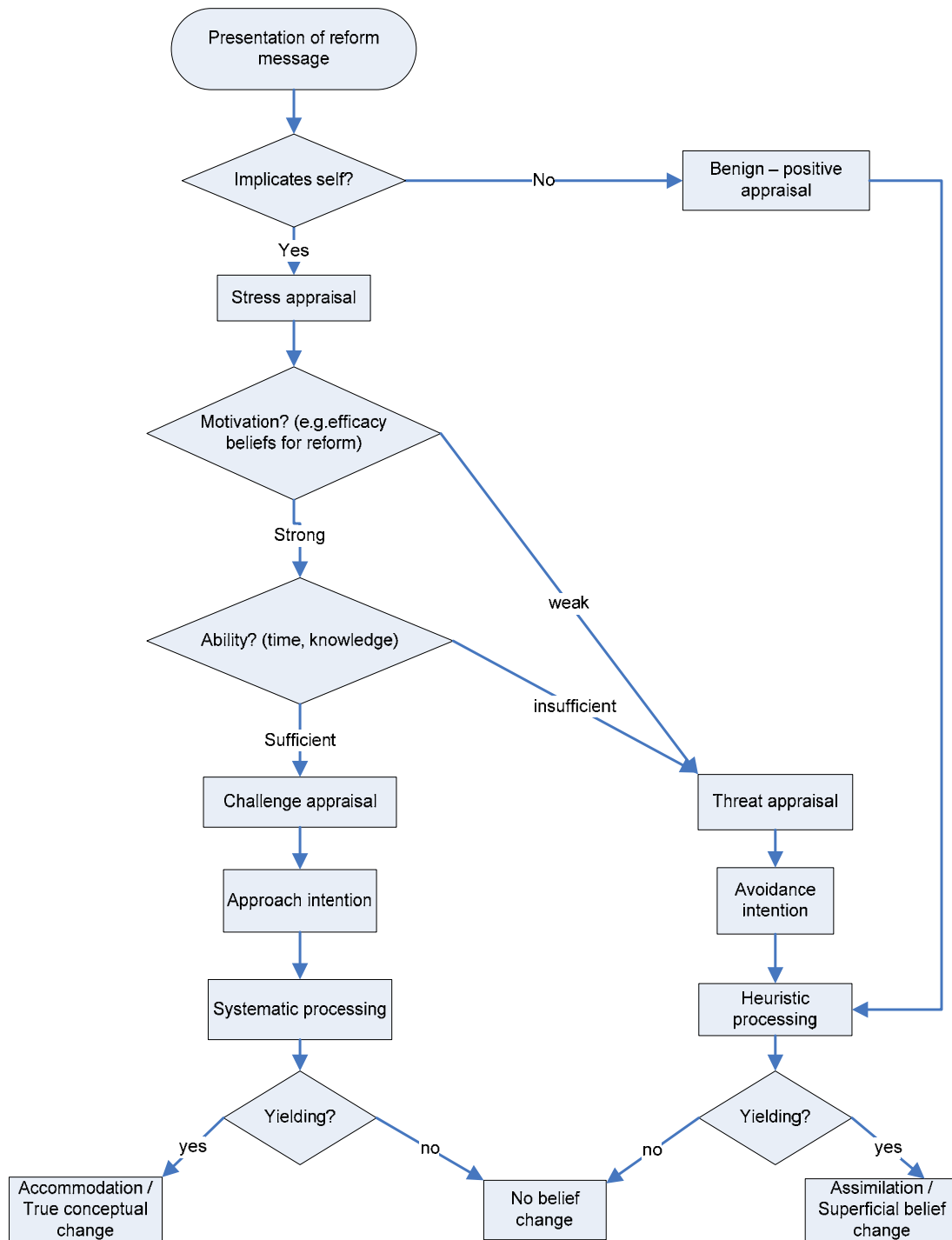


Figure 3.1: Gregoire's (2003, p. 165) Cognitive-Affective Model of Conceptual Change (CAMCC)

reform message. In keeping with the attitude change theory, Gregoire proposes that only this route can lead to teacher conceptual change (though, of course, the teacher may also decide not to change her belief system as a result of the systematic processing).

On the other hand, the teacher may not see her self as implicated by the reform message and this will be accompanied by positive or neutral (benign) emotions when on the one hand, the teacher believes she is already doing what the reform message advocates or on the other, her attitude towards educational reforms in general is negative and she, therefore, dismisses the reform input out of hand. In this case, the teacher will lack the motivation to process the reform message systematically and will instead rely on her heuristics (i.e. her prior knowledge or her momentary emotional response) to process the message. In case she evaluates the message positively, assimilation (i.e. superficial belief change) occurs and if she remains unconvinced, no belief change occurs as a result of the presentation of the reform message. A similar result may occur even if the teacher initially perceived the message as implicating self, but then her self-efficacy and/or ability were appraised as insufficient to implement it in the classroom. Rather than as a challenge, therefore, the teacher interprets the message as a threat and adopts avoidance goals. Instead of systematically processing the message, then, she again relies on her heuristics. As has been argued earlier, this route of processing can only lead to superficial or no belief change.

Although Gregoire's (2003) model of conceptual change is currently the most comprehensive, accounting for both cognitive and affective processes of conceptual change, it remains to be seen whether empirical data yield support to the mechanisms described in it. As the data in my research project revealed, many of its mechanisms seem to be applicable in the current context. This is the reason a substantial portion of the model I am proposing as a result of my empirical investigation is drawn from this model, although not without modifications that have been informed by empirical findings of the current project. I describe the proposed model in the concluding section of this chapter.

#### **3.5.4 Contribution to language teacher cognition research**

Conceptual change models, especially the more recent "warmer" versions, have a lot to offer to language teacher cognition research. While we have come to acknowledge that language teachers' cognitive development involves radical change in their belief systems, we have not yet conceptualised in a comprehensive manner the key dimensions that play a role in language teachers' conceptual change, let alone described the mechanisms by which language teacher conceptual change occurs. As the previous review shows, conceptual change models explain some of these mechanisms and the recent models that integrate findings of other theories and specify the exact role of cognitive, motivational and affective

factors have a great potential to inform our future theory-building efforts that have been called for earlier in this chapter.

The review so far in this chapter serves as evidence for the complexity of human learning and development and the model that, to my view, has possibly come closest to the representation of this complex process is that of Gregoire's (2003). As will be illustrated in Chapters 7 and 8, my data seem to support the various routes of conceptual change outlined in this model. However, the findings of the present project also point towards a significant role of a more general cognitive construct of teachers' self concept, encompassing teachers' cognitive representations of their present and future states, which has not been accounted for in detail in any of the learning models reviewed above. Hence, in the following section I turn to possible selves theory, which has recently been drawn on in the conceptualisation of the L2 motivational self-system (Dörnyei, 2005) and which seems to resonate in my data particularly strongly.

### ***3.6 Possible Selves Theory***

Research on language teacher cognition has made it clear that the likelihood that teacher education programmes impact on teachers' conceptions and practices is significantly limited if these initiatives fail to account for what knowledge the teacher-learner brings to the programme. As the latest trend in the conceptual change research (reviewed above) has suggested, we will also need to equally understand the motivational orientations the teachers bring with them. While the previously discussed research has certainly succeeded in drawing our attention to the various motivational beliefs that may play a role in the process of conceptual change, it has not come up with a comprehensive motivational framework capable of drawing more precise links between particular motivational factors and conceptual change. A further engagement with these issues is therefore warranted.

Although learner motivation to engage in learning tasks has been the subject of the first two chapters of this literature review, the specific construct of 'possible selves', which has been recently introduced to the new framework of L2 motivation, has not yet been considered in this review. Because the construct is believed to represent a bridge between motivational and cognitive factors and uncover the link between specific motives and behaviours (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 961), its further examination can be potentially fruitful in understanding language teacher change.

In L2 motivation, the integrative orientation, that is, the positive attitude towards L2 speakers, has been a key construct, introduced and empirically examined particularly within

the social psychological perspective on L2 motivation (Gardner, 1985). It was this construct and the findings in an increasing number of studies attesting to its broader interpretation than originally suggested such as “world-citizen identity” in the Indonesian setting (Lamb, 2004) or “international posture” in the Japanese context (Yashima, 2002) that primed Dörnyei (2005) to re-examine the exact role of integrativeness and its relationship with motivated behaviour in EFL contexts, where the L2 community is not immediately available for reference. While the salience of a certain psychological identification with people, values or culture associated with a L2 has never been questioned, the findings of recent studies (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005a, 2005b) suggest that both instrumental motives and attitudes towards L2 speakers are integral to this identification with ultimate bearings on the learners’ motivated behaviour. These findings have pointed to the construct of possible selves from personality psychology as potentially capable of accommodating the various types of identification in varied socio-linguistic contexts and further empirical evidence attests to the viability of the new model of L2 motivation within the self system, in which the original integrativeness is reconceptualised as L2 Ideal Self.

Arguably, the integrative motive may not be especially salient in language teacher change. Nevertheless, the cognitive representation of one’s identity and its links with motivation to engage in specific behaviours appears particularly intriguing in relation to language teacher development and change. It was precisely this reframing of L2 motivation in conjunction with the patterns appearing in this project’s data that prompted me to consult the self-literature to see if, similarly to L2 motivation, it offered a viable framework for explaining the processes occurring in my study. The empirically-supported discussion of this issue is the subject of Chapter 8. Here, let me first explain briefly how possible selves are defined in the literature and what their relationship with motivated behaviour is before returning to a more detailed description of the Motivational L2 Self-System.

### **3.6.1 ‘Possible Selves’ as a motivating force**

Possible selves as a potentially powerful bridge between one’s mental representations and actual behaviour were first introduced in personality psychology by Markus and Nurius (1986). The construct, defined as the individual’s “conceptions of the self in future states” (Leondari, Syngollitou, & Kiosseoglou, 1998, p. 219), “identity goals” (Pizzolato, 2006) or “hypothetical images” (Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002, p. 314), refers to individuals’ personalised as well as socially-constructed (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Norman & Aron, 2003) images of who they could potentially become in the future. These highly dynamic imagined selves can be either positive, such as aspirations, hopes and desires, or negative, representing future self-related fears and worries. The example of the former type in

educational settings would be a high-achieving self, whereas the latter could represent the self as failure. Both types of possible selves have been found instrumental to motivating behaviour in that they are associated with the individual's self-regulatory activity directed towards either attaining the positive possible selves or avoiding the negative ones (Higgins, 1996; Markus & Nurius, 1986). Although possible selves are derived from the past (e.g. prior experience and knowledge), their link with the future is particularly important.

One of the specific possible self theories that explains the mechanisms which motivate the self-regulatory activity is Higgins's (1987) self-discrepancy theory, which introduces three distinct constructs: *actual self*, *ideal self* and *ought self*, and it is this theory that has also been embraced by the new L2 motivation framework mentioned earlier. The actual self refers to the individual's current self-concept, or in other words, one's representation of the attributes which he/she believes he/she currently possesses, whereas the other two represent future possible selves that one would either ideally like to become (*ideal self*) or that one believes is his/her duty or responsibility to attain (*ought self*). The principal tenet of self-discrepancy theory is that the perceived discrepancy between one's actual self and one's ideal or ought self is associated with negative affective responses which are distinctive for each type of discrepancy (Higgins, 1987, 1999), and which, in turn, initiate distinctive self-regulatory strategies with the aim to reduce the discrepancy (Higgins, 1996, 1998). According to the theory, the actual vs. ideal self discrepancy is thought to be guided by a promotion focus, that is, the effort to attain the positive attributes of the ideal self, whereas the actual vs. ought self discrepancy is likely to prompt strategies aimed at avoiding the negative consequences if ought self is not attained. Thus, the self-regulatory activity in the latter case has a prevention focus (Higgins, 1998). According to Dörnyei (2005), the motivation to reduce the actual versus ought-to self discrepancy is equivalent to extrinsic, or the less internalised forms of motivation (see also the discussion of the self-determination theory in Chapter 1). Of course, not all types of selves are necessarily available to each individual and self-discrepancy theory posits that persons will be motivated by those images that are personally relevant to them (Higgins, 1987). This explains, for example, why some learners tend to be driven by their desire to master the subject while others are motivated by their vision of negative consequences if they fail to achieve high grades. This theory makes sense also in conjunction with other motivational theories discussed earlier and explains why intrinsic and extrinsic motives result in different outcomes on the one hand (see the discussion of self-determination theory in Chapter 1) and why different types of achievement goals are associated with different forms of engagement (see the discussion of approach vs. avoidance strategies associated with mastery vs. performance goals in Chapter 1).

Translated into an L2 motivational self-system, L2 learners are believed to be motivated by three factors: (1) *Ideal L2 Self*, which constitutes an L2-specific aspect on the learner's ideal self. It is assumed that if an L2 speaking person is part of this L2 Ideal Self, the learner will be motivated to expend effort to master the L2 in order to reduce the actual vs. ideal-self discrepancy. (2) *Ought-to L2 Self*, which represents the L2 learner's representation of their responsibilities and obligations with regard to learning the L2. This self constitutes one's extrinsic motives to learn the L2 and the primary source of this motivation is one's vision of negative consequences if the perceived obligations and responsibilities are not lived up to. (3) *L2 Learning Experience*, which refers to situation-specific factors with bearings on the learner's motivation to engage in specific learning tasks. This last factor has been the subject of extensive examination in the first two chapters of this literature review.

It appears that, similar to L2 learning, understanding the different types of possible selves that L2 teachers adopt in language teacher development contexts and thus their various incentives they bring to these learning situations can be critical for understanding teacher change and therefore a crucial area for data interrogation.

### **3.6.2 Conditions for the self-regulatory effectiveness of 'Possible Selves'**

It has been suggested above that the discrepancy between one's actual self and the personally relevant possible self (ideal or ought to) functions as the motivating force. However, conceptual and empirical work in this area has confirmed that this is not always the case and that the mere existence of possible selves does not necessarily lead to motivated behaviour (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006). A study conducted in an educational setting by Yowell (2002), for example, found that possible selves did not predict academic outcomes and while most of the participating learners had articulated the adaptive images of academic selves in future states, there were considerable differences in their academic results. As Oyserman, Bybee, Terry and Hart-Johnson (2004) maintain, the reason for such differences is that not all learners expended effort to reduce the discrepancy or demonstrated persistence in this effort. It appears that the self-regulatory mechanisms necessary for reducing the actual vs. possible self discrepancy (Higgins, 1996), were not triggered. Therefore, although one of the functions of possible selves is self-enhancing, such as boosting one's self-esteem and generally improving one's well being, this is not sufficient for actually attaining the imagined goals. Instead, self-regulatory action, which is the function of possible selves of primary educational interest, need to be triggered (Oyserman et al., 2004). A consensus is emerging in the literature that possible selves that are likely to impel self-regulatory action must not only be *available* to the learners, that is, stored in their

memory for potential future use and immediately *accessible*, that is, retrieved from memory or activated (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Norman & Aron, 2003), but they also need to be:

- *Central*. Possible selves need to be dominant in one's working self concept (Leondari et al., 1998) and thus render other competing selves less accessible and, consequently, less influential on behaviour. This condition is particularly relevant in educational settings in which learners have a number of competing academic and social possible selves. The learners are more likely to focus their efforts on attaining their adaptive academic selves to the extent to which these are more central in their working self-concept than the maladaptive social ones (e.g. the fear of losing face in front of others). In case the latter become a priority, learners are likely to engage in avoidance strategies (see also Chapters 1 and 2 for further discussion).
- *Elaborated and specific*. The individuals who have a very specific, elaborated picture of their possible self are more likely to attain it (Leondari et al., 1998; Markus & Nurius, 1986);
- *Plausible*. Not only is the elaborated image of possible identity important, but the specific procedural strategies how to achieve the expected selves and action plans for dealing with the social context in which the possible selves are to be attained must also be identified (Higgins, 1996; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman et al., 2006; Oyserman et al., 2004; Pizzolato, 2006).
- *Conceptually grasped*. In order for a possible self to activate appropriate self-regulatory strategies, individuals must understand the meaning and the implications of their commitment to particular future aspirations on the conceptual level (Pizzolato, 2006);
- *Balanced*. When the specific positive self (i.e. the aspiration to become someone) is matched by equally elaborated corresponding negative self (i.e. the fear of becoming someone if the expected aspiration does not come to fruition), the effect on self-regulation is likely to be more powerful (Oyserman et al., 2006). It seems therefore that besides the ideal self one wants to achieve, the negative consequences of not achieving it need to be equally cognitively available, elaborated, conceptually grasped and immediately accessible to individuals.
- *Contextually cued*. The self-regulatory effectiveness is more probable if the learners' possible selves and the specific strategies of attaining them are modelled in the given social context (Oyserman et al., 2006). Conversely, the social context can serve as a constraining factor on the construction of adaptive possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and activating their self-regulatory function if it lacks accessible models of such



possible selves, or if the possible selves cued by the context directly contradict the ones maintained by the individual.

The empirical evidence suggests that possible-self development is a two-part process, involving first the construction of possible selves and second, the self-regulatory activity towards successful achievement or avoidance of such constructed possible selves (Pizzolato, 2006). Therefore, the conditions described above can serve as some kind of a roadmap for the design of educational interventions to enhance possible selves and the empirical results indeed demonstrate the effectiveness of such interventions in terms of both enhancing the academic possible selves and improving the learning engagement of youths from underprivileged backgrounds (Oyserman et al., 2006; Oyserman et al., 2002).

### **3.6.3 The compatibility of possible selves theory with other learning and change theories**

Possible selves theory has been supported not only by the growing empirical evidence in the domain, but its viability is enhanced when parallels are drawn between this and the other theories discussed earlier. In the following section, I summarise several key constructs which are deemed crucial for change to occur across the various theoretical frameworks. I also suggest links between these constructs and the findings in language teacher cognition research.

*Learning engagement.* Behavioural, cognitive and affective forms of engagement as the necessary condition for learning have been discussed in some detail in Chapter 1 and various theories of motivation have been used in support of this premise. Conceptual change theory also posits that conceptual change which is intentional and goal-directed is unlikely to occur without a deep-level cognitive engagement, which includes the systematic processing of the input message and the adoption of self-regulatory strategies to impel action. As has been illustrated above, self-regulatory action has been identified as a necessary condition for possible selves to exert influence on behaviour. Reflection, which represents an in-depth self-regulated cognitive engagement, is also considered critical for language teacher learning (Cabaroğlu & Roberts, 2000; K. E. Johnson, 1999).

*Availability of possible selves (i.e. future goals).* The forethought capability, which is rooted in humans' symbolising capability (i.e. having a vision of future states), is deemed one of the most crucial factors in guiding behaviour in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) and future goals as important regulators of action are elaborated on in the goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990). Without the impulse triggered by the discrepancy between one's actual and possible selves, the individuals would not possess sufficient motivation to

engage in such self-regulated action. It appears, therefore, that without the existence of possible selves, the impetus for change and development would be missing (Markus & Nurius, 1986) and this assumption has also been implied in Gregoire's (2003) 'Cognitive Affective Model of Conceptual Change' described earlier, which incorporates, but does not sufficiently explain, the 'self-implication' aspect. In the general teacher cognition literature, Borko and Putnam (1996) have included the constructs of *images of teaching* (also see Johnson's (1994) study) and *conceptions of self* in their review of the role of teacher beliefs and knowledge in learning to teach, acknowledging them as "important alternative conceptions for thinking about the knowledge and beliefs of teachers" (Borko & Putnam, 1996, p. 679). *Vision* has been recently conceptualised as a necessary feature of an accomplished teacher (Shulman & Shulman, 2004), and past and future components of teachers' identity have been discussed in Smith (2007) and Woolfolk Hoy et al. (2006).

*Centrality (accessibility)*. Possible selves influence self-regulation to the extent to which they are dominant in one's working concept and thus immediately accessible (Leondari et al., 1998; Norman & Aron, 2003). This ties in with Fazio's model of the impact of attitudes on behaviour, which suggests that the individual's behaviour towards an object can be predicted by his/her attitude towards it and the more accessible the attitude, the more attention will be paid to the stimuli related to it. Similarly, the more accessible the possible self, the stronger impact it will have on the individual's self-regulated action. In teacher cognition, a construct of teachers' priorities has been investigated by Rimm-Kaufman, Storm, Sawyer, Pianta and LaParo (2006), and although the study seems to add yet another term to the already diverse and confusing terminological arsenal of teacher cognition research (cf. Borg, 2006), it suggests a characteristics of teachers' cognitions that, according to possible selves theory, needs to be examined in order for us to fully appreciate the relationship between cognition and action and thus understand teacher change.

*Specificity and plausibility*. Possible selves theory suggests that only the elaborated selves which are linked to detailed strategies for attaining them are likely to sustain one's self-regulatory effort for development. This is in keeping with goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) which postulates that specific and elaborated goals are positively associated with the performance level and function as better regulators for action than vague, general and nonquantitative ones. There is also evidence in the language teacher cognition domain of the role that the specificity of possible selves plays in teacher change. All four teachers that participated in K. E. Johnson's (1994) study held images of who they would like to be, which were often based on their previous (often negative) experiences. However, because the participating teachers did not possess specific strategies of how to activate the projected images in their actual teaching practice, they often resorted to the models of teaching gained

from their apprenticeship of observation. In another study by K. E. Johnson (1996b), the teacher's tension between vision versus reality was possible to overcome when the teacher developed specific strategies of "operationalising" her visions while dealing with the contextual constraints.

*Dissonance (conflict) appraisal.* The possible selves and conceptual change theories both consider dissonance appraisal to be a crucial factor for triggering self-regulation. Self-discrepancy theory posits that the discrepancy between the actual and personally relevant self is associated with negative emotions and these are, in turn, believed to be important in triggering self-regulation (Higgins, 1987), whereas conceptual change theory assumes dissonance as one of the basic conditions for conceptual change to occur (Posner et al., 1982). This dissonance has been associated with negative affective appraisal (Gregoire, 2003), which fits in neatly with self-discrepancy theory. Dual-process models of attitude change also postulate that it is the discrepancy between one's actual level of confidence in a judgment with regard to a particular persuasive message and one's desired level of confidence that initiates systematic processing (Visser & Cooper, 2003). Empirical evidence in a number of studies in the language teacher cognition domain has attested to the role emotional or cognitive tensions play in teacher change (Farrell, 2006; Freeman, 1993; Golombek, 1998; Golombek & Johnson, 2004; K. E. Johnson, 1996b).

*The role of context.* In the possible selves domain, the social context has been marked as one of the important determiners of possible selves in that it can either facilitate the construction of possible selves (by contextual 'cuing' as well as direct intervention in educational settings), or, in contrast, constrain it if adequate models of possible selves and strategies for attaining them are not available in it. Similarly, the role of context began to be acknowledged with the start of the "warming" trend in conceptual change research (Gregoire, 2003; Pintrich, 1999; Pintrich et al., 1993) and the power of contextual constraints is clearly acknowledged in the triadic reciprocity tenet in the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). As mentioned in the language teacher cognition section of this chapter, the social context has been identified as a powerful influence on the teacher change process. More specifically, Farrell's (2003, 2006) studies of teacher socialization showed that the context impacted significantly on the development of teacher identity and motivation to pursue the teaching career and K. E. Johnson's (1996b)'s empirical findings demonstrate the impact of classroom experiences on the specification of the teacher's vision.

*Language teachers' actual versus idealised cognitions.* The existence of some kind of idealised teachers' cognitions and thus the relevance of the adoption of Possible Selves construct in language teacher cognition research has also been mentioned by Borg (2006). He draws attention to the ambiguous nature of different data collection methods, suggesting

that certain methods (such as self-reports) may elicit data about teachers' "ideal instructional practices", that is, how teachers want things to be, as opposed to what constitutes "instructional realities" (p. 280). While Borg's explicit acknowledgement of the existence of these distinct cognitions has been primarily motivated by methodological considerations, this review has demonstrated that such distinction has also important conceptual implications.

### **3.6.4 Summary**

The brief cross-theory comparison reveals a considerable amount of convergence between the research on the role of possible selves in facilitating development and the tenets of other theories, including motivational theories, social cognitive perspectives on learning (particularly goal-setting and self-regulation), conceptual change models and attitude change theories. Although language teacher cognition research has not traditionally been grounded in any of these theoretical frameworks, the previous review has revealed that the findings of this domain have a clear resonance in the conceptual frameworks reviewed above. However, choosing a single theory for accounting for the language teacher development process would seem to downplay its complexity as each theory focuses on selected aspects of the change process. It seems sensible, therefore, to look at ways of integrating the various constructs into one whole. The aim of the following section is therefore to propose a comprehensive model that intends to integrate the previously examined variables into a unified framework which is believed to have the power to explicate the process of language teacher conceptual change.

## ***3.7 Pulling it Together: An Integrated Model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC)***

As has been argued earlier in this chapter, despite the recent efforts to consolidate the growing volume of research in the language teacher cognition domain (see Borg, 2006), we have yet to see systematic data-based theory-building attempts which would account comprehensively for the factors and mechanisms of language teacher change. This thesis is believed to contribute to the beginnings of such efforts.

The purpose of this section is to propose a conceptual model that synthesises the theoretical constructs reviewed in the previous sections of this chapter with the aim to specify the mechanisms under which teachers' belief systems are likely (or unlikely) to change as a result of a teacher education intervention. As has been mentioned earlier, the purpose of this project was theory building rather than theory validating and the *Integrated*

*Model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC)* (see Figure 3.2) is a result of the empirical data analysis process, that is, it has been derived from, and is justified by, the data of this project. The data that lend support to the theoretical constructs and mechanisms described in the present integrated model are dealt with in detail in Chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis.

### **3.7.1 Introduction to LTCC**

The integrated model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) is compatible with at least five domains investigating learning and change:

- Language teacher cognition
- Social cognitive perspective of learning
- Dual-process theories of attitude change
- Conceptual change models
- Possible selves theory

It is believed that the compatibility of the proposed model with theoretical paradigms across disciplines, along with its firm grounding in empirical evidence of a mixed-methods longitudinal research project, make this a robust and ecologically valid model, which can not only inform future research programme within the language teacher cognition research domain, but can also point towards clear pedagogical implications for creating language teacher education environments conducive to conceptual change.

As I have noted in Section 3.5.3, Gregoire's (2003) Cognitive-Affective Model of Conceptual Change is the most comprehensive model of teacher change thus far and a substantial proportion of LTCC indeed draws on its constructs. However, LTCC is believed to complement the CAMCC in several ways:

- *The reform message*, that is, the actual content of the reform initiative, is postulated by the CAMCC as central to the model. The LTCC model is in agreement with this and posits, in line with attitude change theory, that the *content* of the reform must be systematically processed by the teachers if conceptual change in their beliefs is to occur. However, by re-wording this segment as *reform input*, LTCC embraces a host of other reform variables, including the reform message source (i.e. *trainer* and his/her attractiveness, credibility, and expertise), *tasks* and *peers*. It is believed that all these reform variables interact with teachers' prior cognitions and, based on the result of this interaction, can either facilitate or distract from the teachers' systematic processing of the reform message.

- The CAMCC's main proposition concerns the automatic processing of the reform message through the teachers' attitudes towards it or their prior experience of reform initiatives. Yet, while implied in the CAMCC, these teacher cognitions are not included graphically in the model and their exact nature and origin are not specified. The LTCC model remedies this by incorporating the *Language Teacher Cognition* segment into the model, which - drawing on the findings of the language teacher cognition domain (Borg, 2006) - specifies the type, content and origins of teachers' cognitions that might interact with the reform input appraisal.
- The *self-implication* mechanism is a vital and particularly valuable aspect of the CAMCC. However, we need a better understanding of *what* this involves, *when* such appraisal becomes salient and *why* it arouses dissonance emotion. The contribution of the LTCC model is in the conceptual explanation of this mechanism by introducing a specific type of teacher cognition, the *Language Teacher Possible Self*. Drawing on possible selves theory, the construct is believed to identify conditions under which teachers perceive their self as implicated by the reform message.
- Even though the CAMCC allows for different developmental routes to be pursued simultaneously, its graphical representation, nevertheless, implies a linear process and a 'once-and-for-all' change outcome. The LTCC model, in contrast, assumes a *dynamic and cyclical nature of the conceptual change process* and makes it clear that what may initially appear to be accommodation or assimilation, may after the teacher's re-appraisal of their internal and external resources turn out to be less or more than that.
- The *motivation* and *ability* components of the CAMCC are combined in the LTCC model into one decision segment labelled *Reality Check Appraisal: Internal/External Resources?* that encompasses personal as well as collective efficacy beliefs, cognitive ability to process the message, subject-matter knowledge, language proficiency and educational context, including supportive colleagues, students' expectations, resources and time. Thus, the characteristics of the message identified in conceptual change research (i.e. intelligibility, plausibility, fruitfulness) and some of the characteristics of language teacher possible selves (conceptual grasping, specificity, plausibility, contextual cuing) come to prominence within this appraisal.
- While being comprehensive and robust, the CAMCC has not been *validated by empirical data*. The particular strength of the LTCC integrated model is in its empirical backing and the exploratory theory-building nature of the current data analysis provides even stronger support for this and also for Gregoire's (2003) model.

### **3.7.2 The main features of LTCC**

#### *Defining teacher education impact: Intentional conceptual change*

Comparing studies that examine the impact of teacher education within the language teacher cognition domain has not been an easy task, with one of the reasons being a general absence of a clear operationalisation of what constitutes such impact. While there are arguably several ways of going about this, the current model assumes the teachers' *intentional conceptual change*, in other words, their "goal-directed and conscious initiation and regulation of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational processes to bring about a change in knowledge" (Sinatra & Pintrich, 2003a, p. 6) as a desired outcome of a teacher education programme. It is important to emphasise at this point that the definition of a 'desired outcome' in no way attempts to determine particular behaviours for teachers to replicate as is typically done in the rational-empirical tradition of teacher change research discussed in Section 3.1.1, but rather refers to the quality of the impact. The LTCC model subscribes to the view that how exactly teachers transform their practices as a result of their conceptual change cannot be a-priori defined.

#### *Deep-level cognitive engagement as a mediator of intentional conceptual change*

In order for intentional conceptual change to occur, it is necessary for teachers to engage with the new concepts at a deeper level. The model assumes intentional systematic processing as a prerequisite for (though not a guarantee of) conceptual change. This involves intentional self-regulatory mechanisms that enable the teacher to evaluate goal satisfaction and adjust their cognitive activity as necessary. For those teachers who are not engaged in such intentional goal-directed systematic processing of the reform message, processing resources are controlled by heuristics, such as prior cognitions, experience, subjective norms or emotional reactions to the message (cf. Sinatra & Pintrich, 2003a). In sum, the model contrasts data-driven (systematic) with theory-driven (heuristic) processing, the former leading to conceptual change whereas the latter resulting in superficial belief change.

#### *Affective and motivational factors as an inherent part of the process of language teachers' cognitive development*

As is clear from the above definition of teacher change, the LTCC model portrays language teachers' cognitive development as primarily a motivated process. In contrast with much research in the language teacher cognition domain, LTCC accommodates motivational factors, such as goals and self-efficacy beliefs, and engages in a theoretical examination of the role that affective appraisals, both positive and negative, play in this process.

*Teacher Possible Selves: A central cognition in teachers' intentional conceptual change*

While the primary purpose of language teacher cognition research has been the inquiry into what teachers think, know and believe, teachers' goals and fears for the future remain largely unexplored. Yet, as has been suggested earlier, not all cognitions that have an impact on peoples' behaviour are rooted in the social reality. Some, on the contrary, constitute an important imagined future dimension that functions as an incentive for development and change.

The proposed model conceptualises this future dimension of language teachers' cognition as Language Teacher Possible Self, which, in accordance with possible selves theory, embraces language teachers' cognitive representations of their ideal, ought-to and feared selves in relation to their work as language teachers. In keeping with the L2 motivation conceptualisation described in Section 3.6.1, Language Teacher Possible Self is operationalised as (1) *Ideal Language Teacher Self*, which constitutes language-teaching-specific identity goals and aspirations of the language teacher; it is assumed that, whatever the content of this Ideal Self, the teacher will be motivated to expend effort in order to reduce the discrepancy between her actual and ideal teaching selves; and (2) *Ought-to Language Teacher Self*, which refers to the language teacher's representation of her responsibilities and obligations with regard to her work. As opposed to the previous type of self, the teacher's activity geared towards reducing the actual versus ought-to self discrepancy is motivated by extrinsic incentives and the primary source of this motivation is believed to be the teacher's vision of negative consequences, in other words, the teacher's *Feared Language Teacher Self* which could materialise if the perceived obligations and responsibilities are not lived up to. The distinction between the *Ideal* and *Ought-to Selves* may not be immediately obvious to empirical researchers particularly if a single method of data elicitation is relied on, but can be inferred from a combination of data sources examining how teachers talk about their work in different contexts, the degree of specificity with which teachers describe their various goals and motivation, and how these seem to be reflected in their classroom discourse and instructional practice (for empirically-supported discussion, see Section 8.1).

The LTCC model posits that the Language Teacher Possible Self is a cognition that is central to language teacher change and that the level of language teachers' systematic engagement with the reform message will depend on the extent to which its content taps into their imagined future identity, ideal or ought-to. It is believed that the construct of Language Teacher Possible Self can offer an explanation for why some teachers change whereas others remain untouched by the reform initiatives despite their similar backgrounds, past schooling



and training experiences, as well as their current knowledge about and attitudes towards the various aspects of their work. Although research on language teachers' cognitive development has concluded that language teachers respond to reform initiatives in variable and individual ways (Borg, 2006), it has not shed light on the factors that are responsible for these differences. The distinction between language teachers' current and future-oriented cognitions (i.e. possible selves) is hoped to contribute to this understanding.

The conditions for self-regulatory effectiveness of possible selves discussed in Section 3.6.2 are equally relevant when language teacher possible selves are considered in relation to the language teacher development course impact. It is postulated by LTCC model that the relevant (i.e. related to the reform message) Language Teacher Possible Self needs to be:

- *Available and accessible.* As has been discussed earlier, the availability of a Language Teacher Possible Self that is relevant to the reform content is crucial for triggering the mechanisms of teacher change in the given direction. In the context of the current teacher development programme, the Language Teacher Possible Self must be envisioned as a person who is deeply committed to students' learning. In other words, creating a motivating learning environment for their L2 students must be part of the teacher's future imagined identity and this Possible Self must be activated by the reform initiative for it to exert influence on the teacher's development. If this is not the case, and the Language Teacher Possible Self with this specific content is not available or accessible, the course content would be considered irrelevant by the participating teacher and her motivation to engage in the deep-level processing of the reform message would be insufficient. Examining whether such a Language Teacher Possible Self has been adopted by the research participants seems therefore critical for understanding the impact of the teacher development initiatives.
- *Elaborated and specific.* Without doubt, most teachers would quote their desire to be effective and motivating in their work as part of their future goals. However, the level of elaboration of this specific goal may differ from teacher to teacher. It is reasonable to expect that the more specific and detailed the conceptions held by the teachers of their reform-related possible selves, the more likely they will be able to assess the level of potential discrepancies between their actual and ideal selves and, consequently, the more likely they will be prompted to address the discrepancies by engaging in self-regulatory behaviour.

- *Central*. In examining the teacher education impact, the question to ask concerns not only whether the relevant Language Teacher Possible Self exists and how specific it is, but also how central it is in the teacher's working self-concept. It is possible that teachers will have constructed a number of competing possible selves and the self-regulatory effectiveness in the direction of change can only be predicted to the extent to which this reform-relevant Language Teacher Possible Self receives priority attention by the teacher.
- *Plausible*. Even if the relevant possible self had been formulated and the level of specificity is fairly high, the effectiveness of possible self to impact on the teacher's development need to be tested against the plausibility criteria. Has the teacher identified specific strategies for attaining the possible self and does he/she have sufficient internal and external resources to engage in such endeavour? Self-efficacy beliefs (both personal and collective) will be of primary concern here as will the teacher's self-regulatory ability to deal with potential environmental constraints, such as the lack of resources, high teaching load, or unsupportive colleagues.
- *Conceptually grasped*. The existence of the relevant possible self may not be sufficient, if the teachers have not clearly conceptualised the implications that arise from their commitment to particular aspirations. It has been recognized that teachers interpret teaching principles and practices in varied and quite distinct ways (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, & Thwaite, 2001) and therefore their conceptual grasping of their articulated possible self deserves further examination. Certainly, the level of this understanding will be dependent on a host of factors, including teachers' educational beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, prior experience as well as cognitive abilities.
- *Balanced*. In keeping with the findings in the possible selves research domain, I propose that when the teacher's Possible Self as a motivating language teacher, however elaborated and plausible, is not accompanied by a vision of possible negative consequences for the self (i.e. Feared Possible Self) if it is not attained, the prospect of employing self-regulatory strategies is reduced because the motivation to pursue one's Language Teacher Possible Self may not be sufficient. The question we therefore need to ask when examining language teacher education impact is whether the consequences of not attaining one's Teacher Ideal Self would have identity implications for the given teacher and whether they have been as clearly visualised and defined as the aspiration itself. A teacher can interpret her not attaining the 'Motivating Teacher' Self as 'my students are not motivated' on the one hand or 'I'm a terrible teacher' on the other. It is proposed here that if the latter negative possible self is available and as central to the

teacher's self concept as the positive possible self (Teacher Ideal Self), the teacher's motivation to engage in deep processing of the course input will be stronger. In short, teachers with clearly visualised images of both positive and corresponding negative selves are more likely to expend effort and demonstrate persistence in reducing the ideal-versus-actual-self discrepancy.

- *Contextually cued.* The possible selves are a product of both individual creativity and the social context (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The social context seems to play a dual role as on the one hand, it can influence the actual content of the Teacher Possible Self, and on the other, it can facilitate or constrain the teacher's self-regulatory activity in attaining her Ideal/Ought-to Self. That is, the lack of priming of the Language Teacher Possible Self that is relevant to the reform content in the given context may mean that such a possible self had not been constructed. If a relevant Language Teacher Possible Self had been formed by the teacher despite the unfavourable context, the teacher's effort and persistence in attaining it may still be negatively affected by the competing images salient in the context, unless the teacher has a strong self-regulatory capacity to deal with these contradictory clues from the environment.

Although all of them important, some of these conditions may come to prominence at different stages of the teachers' processing of the reform message and interrogating these characteristics may illuminate why no change occurred despite the teacher's self being aligned with the teacher development agenda.

The above review has provided an introduction to some of the salient features of the LTCC integrated model. The Language Teacher Possible Self has been looked at in greater depth, given its novelty in teacher change conceptualisations as well as its centrality in the currently proposed model. In the following part, LTCC's mechanisms are analysed in detail.

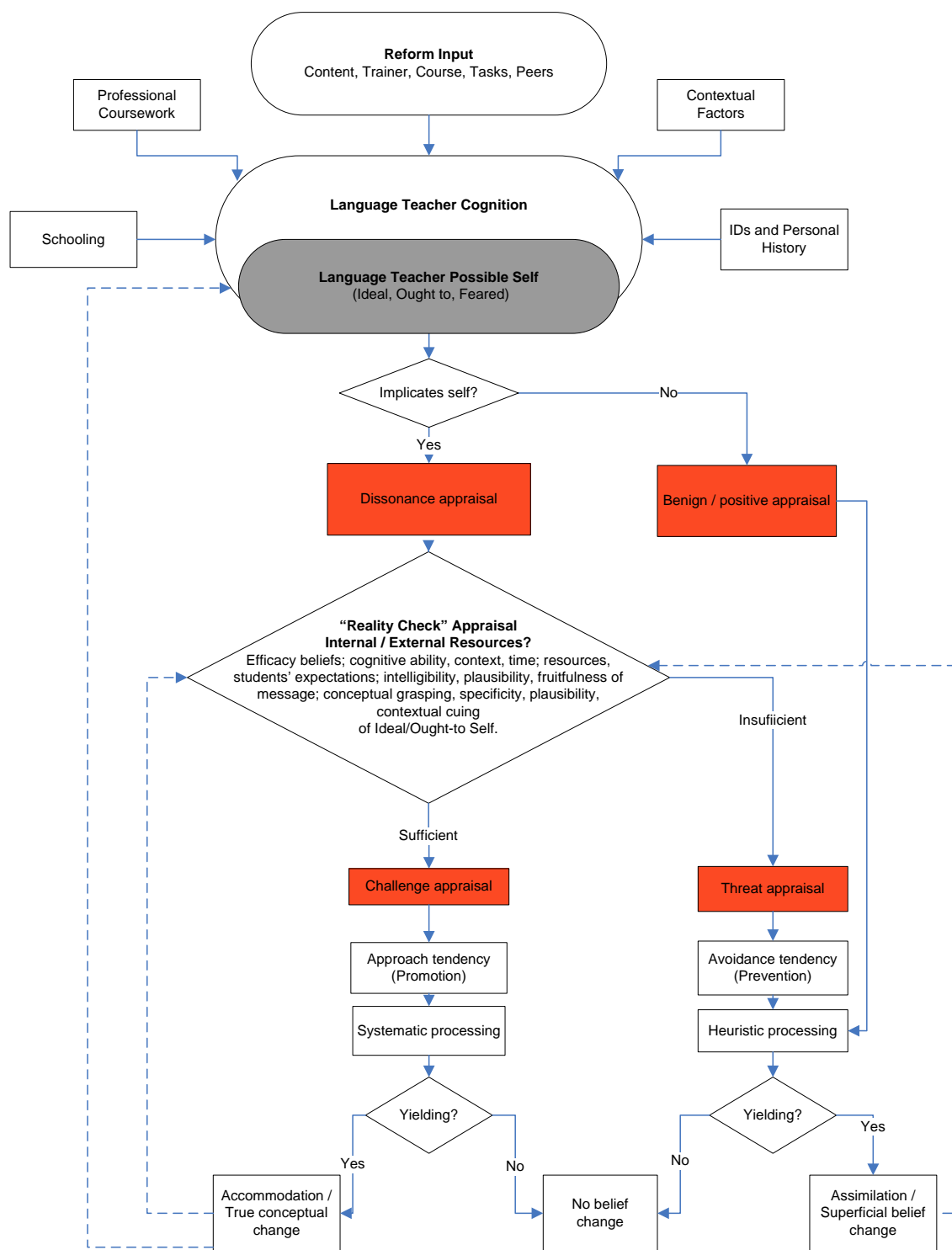


Figure 3.2: An Integrated Model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC)

### 3.7.3 The process of language teacher conceptual change

As can be seen from the flowchart in Figure 3.2, the Integrated Model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) begins with *the reform input* which is at the centre of the change process and embraces all aspects of the reform input microcontext, including the actual content (reform message), but also other variables, such as the trainer, the tasks, the peers and the course. The interaction between the reform input and the possible self dimension of the language teacher cognition will determine whether these variables function as *persuasive cues* (i.e. directing the teacher towards the systematic processing route) or *heuristic cues* (i.e. leading to heuristic processing).

When language teachers are presented with the reform input, it is assumed that rather than systematically analysing its variables they automatically process it through the filter of their existing cognitions. These constitute a sum of what the teachers know, believe, and think about any aspect of their work and are a result of a host of influences, including the teachers' own schooling experience, their professional coursework, contextual factors, individual differences and personal history. Central to these cognitions is the teacher's cognitive representation of her Language Teacher Possible Self, encompassing Ideal, Ought-to and Feared Selves, though not all of them necessarily available to every teacher. In sum, this first part of the flowchart indicates that the reform input is automatically assessed by the language teachers through their cognitions, amongst which particularly prominent in determining how the reform input will be processed is the Language Teacher Possible Self.

The first decision segment in the flowchart - *Implicates Self?* - exemplifies this process further. The LTCC model postulates that in order for the teacher to embark on the more effortful route of systematic processing, she must be motivated to do so and this will only be achieved if her *self* is implicated by the reform message. According to the possible selves theory, this is likely to happen to the extent to which the reform input (1) corresponds with the teacher's available, accessible, and central Possible Self, and (2) propels the teacher to perceive a discrepancy between her actual (as she believes things are) and ideal (as she hopes things ideally will be) or ought-to self (as she perceives things ought to be). Thus, not only does the reform message need to be in accordance with the language teacher possible self as a basic prerequisite for conceptual change to occur, but the teacher must also experience the *dissonance emotions* which are a result of the discrepancy between her actual and ideal/ought-to self and which have been acknowledged across disciplines as the primary trigger of conceptual change.

Teachers whose self is not implicated by the message and therefore experience no discrepancy (i.e. those who either feel they are already doing what the message advocates or

those whose possible self simply does not align with the reform message in any way) will appraise the message positively or in a neutral (benign) manner. This is indicated by the dark-colour emotion segment to the far right of the flow chart. LTCC postulates that positive/neutral emotions are likely to lead to heuristic processing because there is no motivation to engage with the message further. As a result, language teachers' prior cognitions as well as their emotional reactions to the input variables, such as course attractiveness, trainer credibility or peers' approval (or the negative equivalents) will all serve as peripheral cues enabling the teacher to make a decision as to whether or not to yield to the message without having to process it systematically. Paradoxically, therefore, an attractive course, an inspirational trainer or supportive fellow trainees can actually hinder conceptual change if these fail to induce the feelings of dissonance caused by the teacher's realisation of the discrepancy between who she is and who she wants to be. The beliefs formed or changed in this way are thought to be superficial, short-lived and easily changed in the presence of different peripheral cues. Because these beliefs do not tend to influence teachers' classroom behaviour, they are unlikely to make an impact on the learners and are, therefore, not considered to be a desired outcome of a reform initiative in the context of this research project.

Returning to the beginning of the systematic route, the teachers who experience dissonance emotions, do not automatically undergo conceptual change. While dissonance is a prerequisite, conceptual change is unlikely to occur unless the teachers perceive their internal and external resources sufficient to identify specific self-regulatory strategies to (1) systematically process the message and (2) set specific goals for practical implementation. LTCC terms this as a "Reality Check Appraisal" and specifies several factors that are the subject of the teacher's scrutiny, encompassing personal and collective efficacy beliefs, as well as other aspects, such as perceived control, actual cognitive ability, subject-matter knowledge and language proficiency, educational context and collective practice (Breen et al., 2001), supportive colleagues, students' expectations, resources and time. Thus, the characteristics of the message (i.e. intelligibility, plausibility) and the specific features of the relevant language teacher possible self (conceptual grasping, specificity, plausibility, contextual cuing) all come to prominence during this appraisal. That is, the teacher is likely to assess her internal/external resources as sufficient if she has a full rather than a vague conceptual understanding of the implications of her possible self that has just been activated by the intelligible reform message, if she has been able to identify a procedural plan of achieving her possible self, possibly prompted by a plausible reform message or if she finds that her possible self is endorsed by collective practices in her educational context.

LTCC asserts that teachers who have strong efficacy beliefs and generally perceive themselves as being able to control the external factors and who, in addition, have the necessary skills to implement the reform in their classrooms appraise the situation as *challenging*, and adopt an immediate goal to approach the reform message, which directly leads to systematic processing. Depending on the outcome of this processing, the teacher either yields to the reform message and thus undergoes conceptual change or she decides not to endorse it, in which case no belief change occurs.

However, even though the teacher may have perceived her self as implicated by the reform and experienced, as a result, dissonance emotions, she may still revert to heuristic processing and thus assimilation rather than accommodation. This happens when, based on the “Reality Check Appraisal”, the teacher deems her internal and/or external resources insufficient. Therefore, further engaging with the reform message and attempts to implement it in the classroom could threaten her identity. LTCC proposes that threat appraisal activates the teacher’s Feared Self, which, in turn, triggers the teacher’s avoidance goals. This is in keeping with Yowell’s (2002) assertion that the absence of specific and plausible ideal selves in the context of well defined feared selves can lead to students’ adoption of maladaptive patterns of learning engagement (i.e. avoidance strategies). In our case, the teacher’s Feared Self, which may be much more prominent in her self-concept than the reform-related ideal/ought-to self, exerts influence on her further engagement with the reform message. As a result, she deliberately avoids its systematic processing and instead bases her decision on heuristics. The outcome of this route of processing has been described earlier.

It has been mentioned earlier that the distinction between ideal and ought-to teaching selves is not so straightforward and it is not always clear to an outsider whether the future identity goals that the teachers declare to have are the representation of their genuine desires or refer to their perceived obligations arising from their job or their participation in a particular reform initiative. LTCC assumes that teachers who are guided by their Ought-to Self are likely to perceive their internal/external resources as insufficient and interpret them as a threat to that aspect of their language teaching self that is more prominent and central to their self-concept than the reform-related Ought-to Self. Consequently, they are likely to adopt avoidance goals and evaluate the reform message based on their heuristics. This is not to say that all teachers who appraise the situation as threatening as a result of the Reality Check Appraisal have thus far been acting on their Ought-to rather than Ideal Self, and the discussion in the previous paragraph has demonstrated sufficiently that this is not the case. However, LTCC postulates that those whose self-implication has been based on their Ought-to Self are less likely to interpret their internal/external resources as sufficient and thus will

at this stage invest their energy to the prevention rather than promotion focus of their self-regulation.

To complicate matters even further, LTCC also allows for the possibility of internalising teachers' Ought-to Selves and transforming them into guides of promotion behaviour. For example, by experiencing success in their attempts to implement the reform merely out of duty (i.e. acting upon their Ought-to Self), the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs may be strengthened (which is in agreement with the social cognitive theory recognising enactive mastery as the most powerful source of information for self-efficacy beliefs) and they may consequently appraise the situation as challenging, formulate an immediate goal to approach the reform message, and process it systematically. Under such circumstances, therefore, even what was initially an externally motivated possible self (i.e. ought-to self) can transform along the way to an internalised ideal self guiding the teacher's behaviour towards the promotion tendency. After all, self-determination theory discussed in Chapter 1 as well as the recent conceptualisation of L2 motivation introduced in Section 3.6.1 clearly confirm such propositions as plausible. The role of microcontextual variables in bringing about this internationalisation (e.g. by providing vicarious and enactive experiences and thus enhancing the teachers' self-efficacy) is undeniable.

Finally, LTCC assumes a dynamic and cyclical nature of conceptual change. The loop from the 'accommodation /true conceptual change' segment back to the Language Teacher Self component indicates that the cognitive restructuring that is an outcome of true conceptual change not only results in the new knowledge and beliefs, but also alters the teachers' identity, which, in turn, transforms their teaching practice. This is in full agreement with Golombek and Johnson's (2004) conclusion that, owing to the cognitive restructuring of one of their research participants, she was "not the same self as before and her activity [had] been transformed" (Golombek & Johnson, 2004, p. 323). Furthermore, LTCC allows for the transformation of the original outcome of the teacher's reform processing. It is assumed that the teacher may re-evaluate her 'Reality Check Appraisal' in the light of her new circumstances or repeated (negative or positive) implementation experiences, which can ultimately lead to different outcomes as a result of the same reform input. Thus, what initially appeared to be conceptual change may eventually turn out to be assimilation or even no belief change and vice versa. Although it is true that this possibility is acknowledged by the abovementioned CAMCC, the current model also makes a visual provision for such instances.



### **3.7.4 Conclusion**

The proposed integrated model is an attempt to build a theory of language teachers' conceptual change. The integrated model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change not only provides a description of the teacher learning process, but also explains the mechanisms of how language teachers change as a result of a reform input and, most importantly, why they don't. It clarifies the role of some variables already identified in the language teacher cognition research, such as emotional dissonance or reflection and introduces factors which have thus far received scant attention (e.g. motivational beliefs and approach/avoidance goals). By introducing the construct of Language Teacher Possible Self, LTCC also responds to a call for determining central versus peripheral cognitions of language teachers (cf. Borg, 2006). Finally, LTCC is believed to provide a blueprint for designing teacher education programmes conducive to language teacher conceptual change and thus increase the social utility of language teacher cognition research.

## 4 Opportunities and Challenges of Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Slovakia

The present study is embedded in the context of teaching EFL in Slovakia. The country's historical, socio-political and geographical specifics warrant a more detailed description of this context through which this study, its participants and the results can be better understood. The aim of this chapter is therefore to provide a brief background to the past and present situation of foreign language education in Slovakia, and of EFL teaching in particular. I first set the stage of the current general movements in education in Slovakia, which also affect the area of foreign language education. The historical background and the present reform movements and challenges in the area of foreign language education are described in a separate section. Because all but one research participants in this study were involved in teaching in the state sector, considerably more space is devoted to this category. The subsequent sections are devoted to pre-service and in-service English language teacher education, in which I attempt to outline the main challenges that English language teacher education in Slovakia is faced with.

### 4.1 Opportunities and Challenges of Education in Slovakia: A Brief Sketch of the Territory

As can be seen from Figure 4.1 below, there are four levels of schooling in the education system of Slovakia: pre-school, primary (which comprises two stages), secondary and tertiary. *Pre-school level* (kindergarten) takes up to three years and caters for the educational needs of children between the age of three and six. The 10-year compulsory education starts with children entering the *primary school* at the age of six. This level is divided into two stages, the first spanning the first four grades of compulsory education, while the second stage ends in grade 9. At the age of 15, children choose one of the several types of *secondary schools*, depending on their interests and abilities and the options range from “gymnasias” (an equivalent of British grammar schools), technical or vocational secondary schools. Alternatively, high-achieving children can enter a special eight-year grammar school at the beginning of their second stage of primary education. The *tertiary level* encompasses what is termed a post-secondary level (further education) with programmes lasting between one and three years, higher education, which, depending on the type of degree and the subject of study takes between three to six years, and a doctoral level.

# Education System in Slovakia in 2003/2004

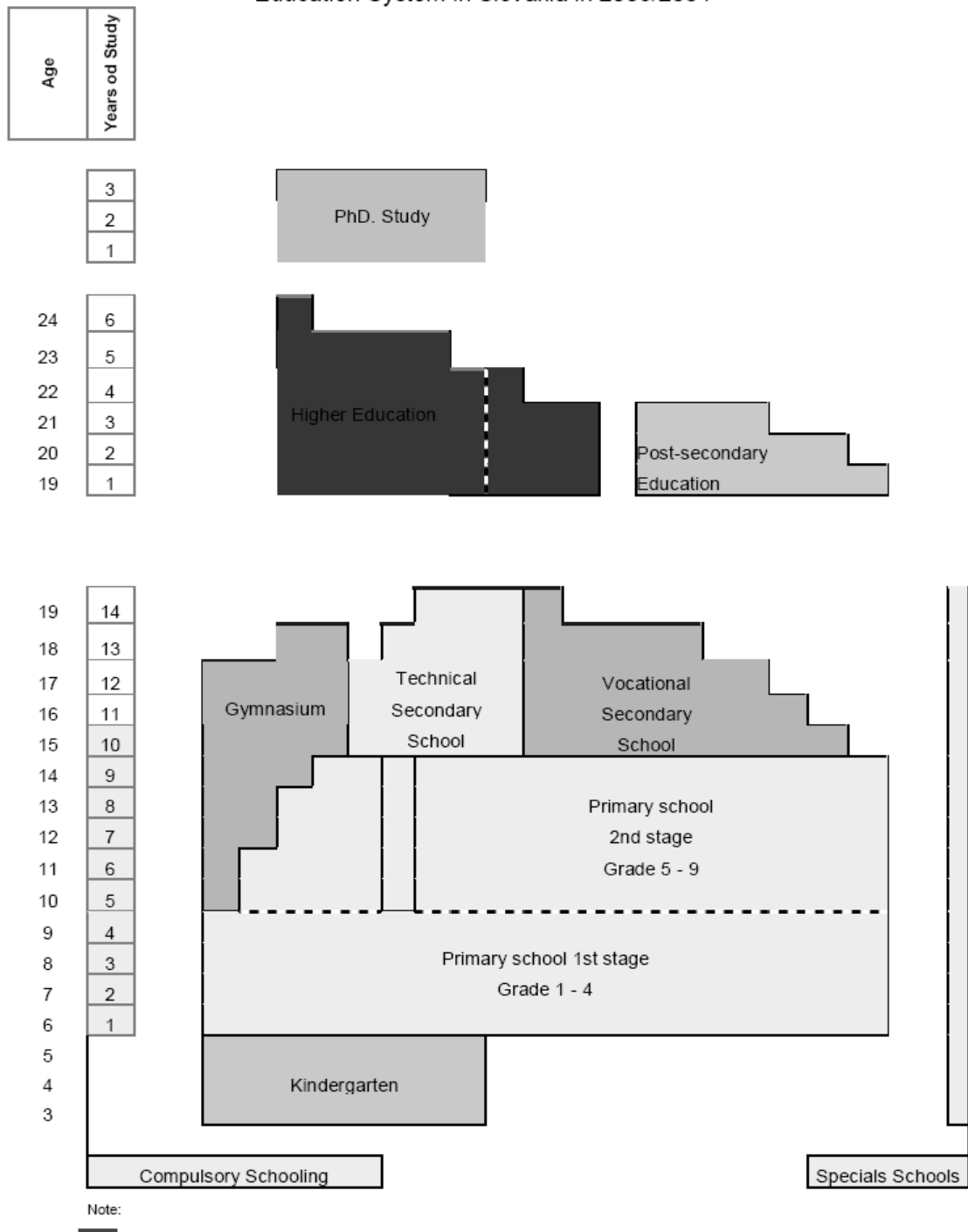


Figure 4.1: Education System in Slovakia in 2003/2004. Source: Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education (2005)

Recent international reports show that education in Slovakia is generally appraised positively, with figures of educational attainment comparable to those of other OECD countries and even surpassing those in most central and east European countries, well-developed education system, a generally high quality of education programmes, and the rapidly rising number of university students with 66,900 in 1994 to 107,022 in 2004 (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2006).

A closer look at the specific aspects of the Slovakian education reveals a number of shortcomings, addressing some of which has been high on the previous as well current governments' agendas. *The teachers' social and economic status* is one of the most frequently cited problems (see e.g. Beňo, 2003; Plavčan, 2005; Švecová, 1994; Thomas, 1999) with the average salary of a school teacher significantly lower than that in other European countries (cf. Porubská & Plavčan, 2004) and remaining well below the national average. This has resulted in the ageing teacher population in general (the average age of teachers being approximately 43) and the lack of qualified teachers, which is particularly obvious in foreign language provision in primary schools (cf. Butášová, 2005). Figure 4.2 provides a further insight into the age structure of teachers in Slovakia. As can be seen from the pie chart, teachers older than 40 years of age account for almost 60% of the overall teacher population in Slovakia, the largest being the group of teachers between the ages 50 and 54 (16%). In contrast, only about 5% of all teachers are up to 25 years old.

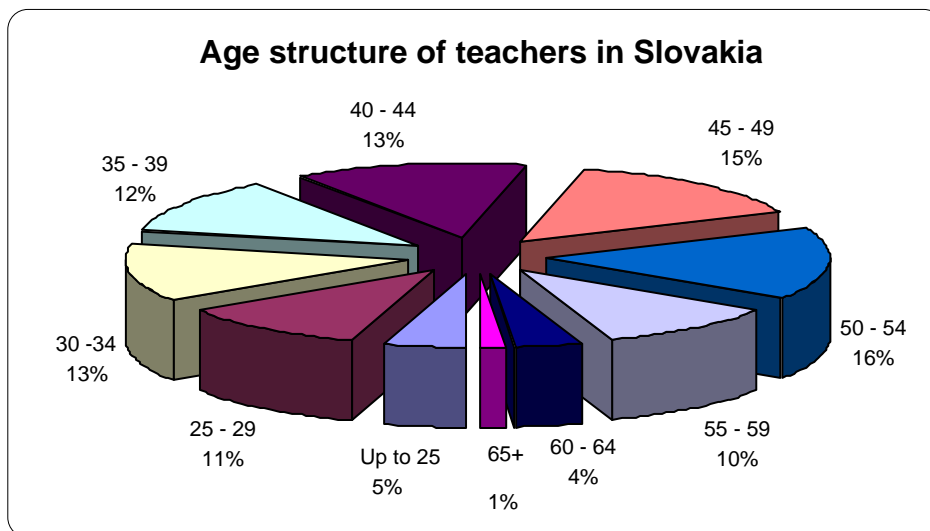


Figure 4.2: The age structure of teachers in the Slovak Republic as of April 2005 (Institute of Information and Prognoses of Education, 2005)

There is also a consensus across different reports about the general *lack of funding available to Slovakian universities* (Beňo, 2003; *Millenium*, 2000; Plavčan, 2005; The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2006), which translates to low salaries of faculty staff and under-resourced departments. This, in turn, leads to the deteriorating quality of the study programmes, virtually non-existing or poor quality research output (see also review in Gavora, 2004), and an exodus of high-quality staff to the private sector. As a recent report on the quality of higher education sadly summarises, “in Slovakia we do not have a compact area of quality higher education but only so-called islands of positive deviation” (ARRA, 2005, p. 147).

Even though some of the problems persist, the current state of education in Slovakia could be characterised as undergoing a subtle and incremental makeover. The most important of these changes are outlined in the following section.

## **4.2 Recent Reform Efforts**

The government document entitled *Millennium* (2000), which represents a blueprint for the government reform agenda, presents a critical analysis of the state of education since 1990s (i.e. since the beginning of the post-communism era) and openly talks about the “crisis” of Slovakian education. In order to address it, the document proposes five priority areas of the forthcoming reform efforts, pertaining to the *why*, *what*, *who* and *how* of education:

- *The philosophy of education.* A move away from the traditional to the creative humanistic notion of education is envisioned.
- *The content of education.* Proposals are made with regard to major revisions of curriculum (e.g. reducing the amount of non-functional information and replacing it with key competencies and skills for life). This also involves designing new syllabi, new textbooks and teaching materials with authentic content.
- *Teacher preparation.* It is suggested that the emphasis shift from the subject matter to the personal development of educators. This should include the preparation of school managers, head teachers, teacher trainers, inspectors, and advisors.
- *Teaching methods.* A move away from deductive and autocratic methods towards more non-directive, democratic, and alternative methods is proposed.
- *School management.* Decentralisation is the key word here with proposals to hand over more responsibility to schools, parents and local communities.

Although not all of these areas have been tackled to date, a number of positive changes are already taking place. For instance, the *management of schools* has recently been handed over to local councils and schools themselves have a bigger say in areas, such as curriculum, extra-curricular activities and overall administration. The new funding system whereby schools are funded by local councils rather than centrally has almost by default secured a tighter collaboration of the local community and the schools, which is a positive step towards ensuring that local educational needs can be met.

Another area that is presently undergoing extensive discussions and planning is *curricular transformation*, that is, the ‘what’ of education. Although this reform initiative organised under the auspices of the National Institute for Education is clearly in the foothills at the time of writing, the current multi-stage plan of preparation holds promises for the future implementation efforts.

Yet another reform initiative concerns a move towards the monitoring of the quality of education by ensuring *standardised assessment*. Currently, two assessment schemes are being implemented, ‘Monitor 9’ and ‘New Maturita’, the former referring to a new centrally administered examination in the mother tongue and mathematics to the final 9<sup>th</sup> grade primary school learners and the latter referring to a new form of the school leaving examination (an equivalent to A-levels) taken by learners at the end of their secondary education (i.e. at the age of 18-19). The latter exam consists of centrally designed external part which, depending on the subject, takes the form of a multiple-choice test and/or an essay and internally designed, administered and assessed oral part. This initiative has been well underway with several subjects, including foreign languages (see e.g. Béréšová, 2004), already being part of the new system, while others (such as science) undergoing a trial phase.

Finally, the year 2005 was the first in which *universities* in Slovakia were subjected to an *external evaluation* by an independent Academic Ranking and Rating Agency (ARRA) against a set of various quality criteria, including measures of institutions’ reputation (quality of graduates as evaluated by employers), research activity (publications, citations, grants, PhD students’ ratio), study programmes and funding (for a detailed description, see ARRA, 2005). Although this exercise, which can be taken as an equivalent of the RAE in higher education in the United Kingdom, is certainly not the answer to all problems, it is believed to serve as an important stimulus for universities to seek their own resources to stand up against the national as well as international competition.

### **4.3 Foreign Language Education in Slovakia**

While foreign language education is very much influenced by the abovementioned general problems and subjected to most of the reform initiatives, there are challenges unique to this area of education in Slovakia. The most obvious is the challenge of the growing demand for foreign language education which the schools are constantly struggling to satisfy. Some of the reasons for this mismatch between demand and offer will be suggested in the following discussion. Before that, however, a brief historical background to the foreign language education in Slovakia will be provided to facilitate a better understanding of the present situation.

#### **4.3.1 Historical background**

Slovakia went through similar sweeping changes in the early 1990s to those in other countries of the former socialist bloc, previously described in the literature (e.g. see the description of the Hungarian context in Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; Medgyes & Malderez, 1996). Russian as the only foreign language that was (and had to be) taught at all levels of education in Slovakia (including tertiary) was almost immediately dropped from the core curriculum in the wake of the “Velvet” revolution in 1989. Although the hunger for modern foreign languages was enormous, the changing climate had caught schools as well as universities totally unprepared to satisfy the new demands. For a start, there were huge numbers of teachers of Russian whose teaching load had almost instantly been reduced to a minimum. At the same time, however, there were practically no teachers of other foreign languages able to fill the resulting gap. Universities, on the other hand, had long before stopped preparing teachers of modern foreign languages with all teacher training departments abolished by the regime in the 1970s, leaving only a handful of modern language programmes in Faculties of Arts which simply could not cope with the sudden pressure (see also Gadušová & Hartánská, 2002). Consequently, the response of both schools and universities had to be prompt and as a result, English (and other foreign languages being no different) has since been taught by several categories of teachers:

- Unqualified teachers who were proficient in English. Native speakers of English who began to arrive in Slovakia in the 1990s under the auspices of British and American organisations and charities would often fall into this category as they were more often than not hired on the grounds of their “native-speakerism”, rather than teaching qualifications, which most of them lacked (cf. Gadušová & Hartánská, 2002; Thomas, 1999).

- Semi-qualified teachers who had a teaching qualification for other subjects or other (typically Russian) foreign languages, but who, at the same time, were proficient in or were learning English. The latter group of teachers were often no more than two or three lessons ahead of the students.
- Fully qualified teachers with a lack of experience in teaching their subject because they simply had not had the opportunity to teach English in schools prior to 1990 and taught instead either Russian or other subjects for which they did not have professional qualification.
- Fully qualified teachers with experience in teaching English, the number of whom began to grow as newly re-opened university teacher training departments started to produce first batches of graduates through three different programmes: re-qualification courses for Russian teachers, fast-track 3-year- PHARE degree programmes or 5-year combined BA/MA degree programmes (also see Gadušová & Hart'anská, 2002).

Although several measures have been taken since the 1990s to increase the number of qualified foreign language teachers (ranging from the abovementioned retraining of Russian teachers, launching the fast-track intensive degree courses, and considerably increasing the number of students admitted to colleges' and universities' teacher training programmes in the early 1990s, to launching special certificate distance courses for in-service teachers by in-service training centres at present), the level of unqualified foreign language teaching force, especially in primary schools is still high. I return to the problem of unqualified teachers in Section 4.3.3.

#### **4.3.2 The current provision of foreign language education**

Foreign languages are now taught at all levels of the education system and are a compulsory subject of the new Maturita (school leaving) exam. Although there are national standards for each stage of education (see e.g. Eurydice, 2001, pp. 363-368), teachers usually design syllabus for each class they teach that is coursebook- rather than standard-driven. However, once the yearly syllabus has been approved, it functions as a prescribed standard that must be closely adhered to. At the time of writing, there are no binding prescriptions from the Ministry of Education with regard to coursebooks, which is in contrast with the situation in other countries, such as Greece (Gheralis-Roussos, 2003), China (Gao, 2004), or Saudi Arabia (Shoaib, 2004) where a uniform textbook at a school level is a norm. However, with the introduction of the new Maturita exam and the calls for standardisation and quality control (Butašová, 2005), some restrictions in the coursebook choice could be expected in



the near future. At present, coursebooks published by all major (mainly British) ELT publishers are readily available, although some are more popular than others (for an earlier review of coursebooks used, see Thomas, 1999).

The basic teaching load of school teachers is currently set to 23 contact lessons per week, although, because of the high demand, it is not uncommon for language teachers to exceed the standard by four or five hours. The size of a foreign language class ranges from 10 to 24 learners per group, though this varies considerably depending on the size of the school and the availability of foreign language teachers. According to the Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education (IIPE, 2005) the average number of pupils per class was 21.4 and 30.2 at primary and secondary schools respectively. However, these figures differ for foreign language lessons, whereby classes of more than 24 pupils are typically split into two groups (for a comprehensive overview of all levels of foreign language education, see also Table 4.1).

In the following sections, I take a brief look at foreign language education at all major levels of the education system in Slovakia, including primary, secondary, and tertiary and the private sector.

#### *Primary and secondary school level*

Foreign language education is not compulsory in Grades 1-4 (i.e. the first stage of primary education), but depends on the curriculum option each school decides to follow.

Accordingly, Slovakian pupils can formally start to learn English in Grade 1 with the provision of 2 hours per week in Grades 1 and 2, followed by an increased load of 3 hours per week in Grades 3 and 4. Alternatively, the pupils can be introduced to a foreign language in Grade 3, having 3 hours per week in both Grade 3 and 4. Approximately 40% of all 1<sup>st</sup>-stage-primary-school pupils were learning a foreign language in 2004, with English being the most popular (30.5 %), followed by German (9.4%) Russian (0.2%) and French (0.1%) (cf. Butašová, 2005). English is also the most popular foreign language at the second stage of primary education (Grades 5-9) in which 57% of pupils opted for English, whereas 37% chose German. Russian and French were only studied by 4.3 and 1.6% of pupils respectively (cf. Butašová, 2005). The word ‘opted’ is perhaps not particularly accurate in the primary school context as the ‘choice’ of a foreign language is more often than not dictated by teacher availability and this is especially the case in smaller schools with typically only one foreign language teacher.

Secondary school students enjoy a wider choice in both the foreign language options and the number of languages they can study (which is, again, determined by the adoption of different types of curricula, meaning that some students in 8-year grammar schools can study

as many as three foreign languages). Again, English is the most widely taught, amounting to approximately 50%, followed by German which is studied by 39% of students. French, Spanish, Russian, and Italian are also offered, but these are far less represented (Butašová, 2005). All secondary school students study at least one foreign language, while grammar school students are required to study at least two foreign languages (a third foreign language is added in later grades in some 8-year- grammar schools) and the combination of English and German seems to be the most popular. In a more recent survey, English, in fact, appeared in almost all two-foreign-language combinations (96.73%) (Butašová, 2006).

### *Tertiary level*

Although university students whose programme of study does not involve a foreign language are usually required to obtain a certain number of credits from a foreign language of their choice (the teaching of which is provided by the university language centres), this provision is far from systematic. The credit-bearing course for undergraduate students would typically comprise one two-hour session per week for the duration of two semesters (variations exist depending on the study programmes' specific requirements). There is no official syllabus for these courses and no standard specifications for required levels. As a result, the language centres typically operate under their internal standards and regulations. While teaching is mostly provided by qualified language teachers, the language centres often employ external, hourly-paid lecturers (typically near-graduates from university language programmes).

### *Private sector*

Private language schools started to mushroom in the new political climate and the present result of this process is a large number of foreign language schools that come in many different shapes and sizes: some of them accredited by the Ministry of Education, many of them not, some focus on a specific foreign language (typically English), while others offer courses in a whole range of languages, some are run by a single individual who provides all or most of the teaching, whereas others represent bigger chain establishments employing large numbers of staff. The process of setting up one's own language school is fairly straightforward, provided a set of easy-to-satisfy criteria are fulfilled. There is a growing tendency, in fact, for state-school teachers to run their own language school or work part-time for one in addition to their full-time employment in the state sector and thus improve their income. Although being a qualified foreign language teacher is one of the requirements for being granted permission to run one's own school, there are no restrictions in terms of the staff employed by these schools, a result of which is, understandably, a considerably high proportion of unqualified teachers (typically teachers in training who use this opportunity to

earn extra income or young people who have spent some time in an English-speaking country).

Table 4.1: Foreign language education in the state sector in Slovakia

Level	Number of foreign languages studied	FL lessons (per week per language)	Lesson Length	Class size (No. of students)	Coursebook	Assessment
Pre-school	0-1	0-2	30 min	Varies	Varies	N/A
Primary 1 <sup>st</sup> stage	1	0-3	45 min	10-24	Varies	Internal
Primary 2 <sup>nd</sup> stage	1	3-4	45 min	10-24	Varies	Internal
Secondary	1-3	2-4	45 min	15-17	Varies	National “Maturita” exam
Tertiary	1	1	90 min	Up to 20	Varies	Internal

### 4.3.3 Remaining challenges

Despite a remarkable progress in the provision of foreign language education since the 1990s, a number of challenges remain and are only partly addressed by the government’s initiatives. These issues primarily concern three broad areas: non-existing government policy, non-existing research into the quality of language education and a shortage and low retention of qualified foreign language educators.

#### *The absence of any government policy*

While the public pressure on schools to provide quality foreign language education remains considerable, the effectiveness of this provision is generally considered low. One reason for this is associated with the rather ambiguous educational documentation with no clear standards of what the students should achieve at which level and the missing definition of links particularly between primary and secondary schools. At present, there is virtually non-

existing government policy on the issue of foreign language provision (cf. Butašová, 2005). While it can be argued that the new assessment initiatives could be a step towards solving this problem, further work needs to be done towards defining the content of foreign language education and probing the effectiveness of language education programmes by measures other than exam results.

#### *The absence of any systematic research programme*

The previous point does not seem surprising in the context of the complete absence of any kind of research into the quality and effectiveness of foreign language education in Slovakian schools. Naturally, then, the links between research, research results, recommendations and the subsequent implementation do not exist (Butašová, 2006) and there is henceforth no base in which to ground potential policy recommendations. This is further corroborated by the fact that universities, traditionally conceived of as primary research centres, grapple with existential problems rather than fulfil their traditional role, producing virtually no research output that would be of significant value to policy makers. The National Institute for Education, one of whose primary aims is conducting and disseminating research, has been entrusted with the major task of preparing and implementing the new Maturita examination as well as the Curricular Transformation project. Thus, even though research remains one of the key declared priorities of the Institute as well as of the universities, current concerns and material provision have led to diminishing the genuine research culture and do not create conditions for establishing a systematic research programme in the area of foreign language pedagogy and policy. Clearly, then, turning attention to the means and tools that promote, encourage, and perhaps even require high quality research should become the government's priority.

#### *The persistent problem of a lack of qualified teachers*

As has been mentioned earlier, the problem of the shortage of qualified language teachers has not been eliminated despite the many initiatives aimed at increasing their number (see Section 4.3.1). The recent survey on foreign language teaching may suggest an improving trend, whereby only one-third of primary school students was taught by unqualified teachers in 2006 (Butašová, 2006) as opposed to almost half of them in 2004 (Butašová, 2005). However, the highest proportion of unqualified foreign language teachers is in the category of teachers with 0-6 years of experience, which implies that despite the mushrooming of teacher training programmes, a significantly lower number of those who graduate from them actually enter the teaching profession. It seems, therefore, that the situation at present is

caused by very different reasons from those in the period closely following the political changes in the 1990s.

Almost all documents outlining the situation in Slovakian education quote teacher salary and the social status of the teaching profession as the main deterring factors. Various policy proposals have been formulated around these problems. For instance, an OECD report on attracting “able teachers” (Beňo, 2003, #165) lists the following action plan suggestions: financial provision, improvement in enrolment and initial teacher training, systematic monitoring, analysis and evaluation of personnel provision in schools, cooperation between higher education institutions and schools, and increasing the attractiveness of the teaching profession by providing benefits in the form of accommodation subsidies, medical care provision, loans and travel levies. While the problem of teacher salaries is undoubtedly a big part of the Slovakian education story and must be urgently tackled, it is highly questionable whether purely extrinsic incentives can in fact ensure the quality of language teaching as opposed to simply satisfying the required quantity of qualified teachers.

#### ***4.4 Pre-service English Language Teacher Education***

The standard avenue into the career of English teaching in Slovakia is a full-time university degree study at Faculties of Arts or Education. Of course, there are other paths leading to a qualified status of an EFL teacher. These, however, mostly cater for unqualified in-service teachers and vary from distance university studies and, recently, certificate programmes organised by in-service teacher training centres. This section, therefore, only provides a brief description of the university degree study.

##### **4.4.1 General description of the qualification**

The five-year BA/MA combined study of English is typically combined with another subject in a joint degree. Although it is now possible to first obtain a BA degree, this is not yet recognised by a majority of employers as a full higher education qualification and, consequently, almost all students go on to an MA programme after fulfilling the requirements for the first degree.

The programme comprises subject-specific modules as well as a teaching component, both in terms of general pedagogy and psychology modules and the teaching practice. After the successful completion of all required modules, the candidates are required to complete an MA thesis and pass the final examination in both subject areas as well as the theoretical pedagogy in order to be awarded the degree. The final state examination in English comprises three major areas, including *theoretical linguistics* (phonology, morphology, syntax, stylistics, etc.), American and English *literature* and *EFL methodology*

(focusing on pedagogical content knowledge, such as teaching skills, testing, materials design, etc.). A random survey of the guidelines for the state oral exam of several university departments responsible for pre-service teacher education reveals that methodology topics account for approximately 20 % of the required tested knowledge, while the rest is divided between theoretical linguistics and literature with the former amounting to more than 50% in some programmes.

#### **4.4.2 A more detailed look at a sample curriculum**

The following is by no means a unified model of English teacher preparation curriculum and considerable variations exist across departments, depending largely on which faculty provides the programme (either Arts or Education) and the faculty staff's interests, which, in turn, determine what modules a particular department is able to offer. Rather, by looking more closely at a typical curriculum, the aim is to demonstrate the wide scope of English departments' programmes and the requirements each teacher candidate must satisfy in order to obtain the teaching qualification.

- *Linguistics*. This is a complex area embracing almost all aspects of theoretical linguistics and includes basics in phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicology, but also more advanced courses in etymology of English, stylistics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis.
- *Communication skills*. Typically, the development of language competence of the students is an integral part of the teacher training programmes and departments offer either general courses or focus on specific skills in separate modules (e.g. conversation, public speaking, reading, listening, creative writing, idioms, etc.). This component is usually part of the earlier stages of the programme and gives way to other theoretical disciplines at the later stages.
- *Literature*. Survey courses of English and American literature as well as children's literature are common and depending on the faculty staff's interests, there can indeed be a wide range of module options, including literary criticism modules and courses focusing on specific authors (e.g. Shakespeare), groups of authors (e.g. Jewish writers in American literature) or even individual works (Romeo and Juliet).
- *Methodology*. The basic compulsory provision typically includes a methods course and specific teaching skills course (the 'how to' topics include teaching reading, listening, speaking, writing, error correction, pair work, group work, lesson planning, etc.). There is also a selection of specialised courses, again, depending on the staff's interests, such as literature in TEFL, ESP, CLIL, drama, or using ICT in TEFL. Second language

acquisition theories only rarely feature the offer in independent modules, although some aspects of SLA may be integrated in the more practical methodology modules.

- *Pedagogical-psychological component.* Students are typically required to obtain a certain number of credits from subjects offered by Departments of Education and Psychology. The courses include areas such as general psychology, history and theory of didactics, educational psychology, developmental psychology and the like.
- *Teaching practice.* The teaching practice component takes place in several phases. Most typically, the students are first required to complete several hours of observation during which they observe lessons taught by an experienced teacher. At a later stage, this is followed by a so called “serial” teaching practice, which consists of individual or team teaching of a fixed number of lessons, not necessarily to the same group of students. Finally, at the end of their studies, the teacher candidates engage in the so called “bloc teaching practice”, involving approximately six weeks of teaching a particular group of learners (cf. Gadušová & Hartánská, 2002).
- *MA thesis.* All students are required to produce an MA thesis in the region of 20,000 - 25,000 words. The topic can be in any of the abovementioned areas, including linguistics, literature, and methodology. In the latter case, the aim of the MA thesis is similar to that described by Shanklin and Thurrell (1996) in the Hungarian context and the students are required to conduct a small-scale action research project, preferably while on the teaching practice, using standard research methods, evaluate the findings and suggest implications in the light of the theoretical concepts outlined in the literature review. However, this type of thesis is only one of the several options and only a limited number of students who eventually exit the programme with a teaching qualification in hand in fact opt for an ELT focus in their MA thesis.

#### **4.5 In-service English Language Teacher Development**

There are several government and non-government bodies that are responsible for in-service teacher development in Slovakia, such as regional in-service teacher training centres, The National Institute for Education (SPU), The Slovak Association for Teachers of English (SAUA/SATE), which is the IATEFL affiliate, or the British Council. However, there is currently no official government policy on systematic in-service training (Butašová, 2006; Gadušová & Hartánská, 2002). In a survey discussed in Porubská and Plavčan (2004), nearly 75 % of teachers could either not comment on the question (30.1%) or maintained

that there is a general lack of opportunities for further professional development of teachers on the one hand and inadequate conditions for pursuing it on the other (44.5%).

Indeed, apart from a very limited number of in-service initiatives that are formally recognised as teachers' further development and rewarded by an increment in salary (e.g. so called 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> qualifying examination and complementary distance education programme for unqualified teachers), the participation in in-service training programmes organised by the abovementioned bodies is purely voluntary and often involves additional demands on teachers' personal time (head teachers are often reluctant to release teachers during their working hours) and even financial loss. This is due to the travel expenses incurred and also because by attending an in-service training programme, teachers lose out on their overtime or private teaching hours (cf. Bérešová, 2004). It comes hardly as a surprise, therefore, that in-service training is generally not sought after in the Slovakian educational context.

The offer to EFL teachers is usually limited to language courses, such as the popular '*summer schools*' with the primary aim to improve teachers' proficiency (see Gill & Medvecký, 1995), which are the only type of INSET for which there is a constantly high demand. Other opportunities include practical one-off workshops (e.g. tips for teaching particular skills) and, less frequently, more general seminars aimed at a particular group of teachers (e.g. a series of seminars for beginning teachers dealing with a range of issues relevant to this target group). However, these are far less popular for the reasons outlined above.

There is a consensus about the need for a regulated systematic in-service professional development of teachers in Slovakia (Beňo, 2003; Butašová, 2006; Gadušová & Hart'anská, 2002; Gill & Medvecký, 1995; *Millenium*, 2000; Porubská & Plavčan, 2004) and a number of possibilities are proposed by Gadušová and Hart'anská (2002) as to the form such in-service development of EFL teachers could take. While there has not been any concrete action in this respect on the part of the government, some proposals are being put forward, though these mostly concern the issue of incentives rather than the actual programmes and their quality.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

Education in Slovakia has been undergoing a subtle makeover over the past years, particularly in the areas of school governance, assessment and curricular transformation. However, a number of problems remain unaddressed and this chapter has looked in more detail at those in foreign language education, including the absence of any government



policy with regard to foreign language teaching and the absence of any systematic research into its effectiveness. The shortage of qualified foreign language educators has remained on the list of challenges since the renewed demand for foreign language provision in the 1990s. It appears, however, that most of the initiatives aimed at addressing this issue are directed towards increasing the numbers. This review points towards areas such as the content, goals and the overall quality of pre-service as well as in-service language teacher education that will need further scrutiny in the future reform efforts to improve foreign language teaching in Slovakia.

## 5 Research Methodology

This research project is a longitudinal classroom-based mixed methods study combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The purpose was to explore the impact of a 20-hour experiential in-service teacher development (TD) course on strategies for creating a motivating learning environment on the development of eight English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Slovakia. A combination of quantitative and qualitative measures were employed to assess the course impact on the teachers' conceptual change and to capture and understand the many influences impacting on the teacher development process.

In the following discussion I first explain why it was important to situate the study on teacher development in the context of the classroom before providing the rationale for a mixed methods approach. This is followed by a theoretical exploration of the methods utilised within the project. The bulk of the chapter concerns the description of the study, which involves introducing the research participants, describing the research process and data collection methods, and, finally, outlining analytical procedures for each data collection method as well as specifying the stage at which the methods were mixed.

### 5.1 *Why Classroom-Based Study*

As has been shown earlier, language teacher cognition research is concerned with the mental lives of language teachers and one particular strand of this domain focuses on the impact of teacher education on their cognitive development. While a number of methods have been used to examine this impact, the review in Section 3.2 has shown that the links between teachers' cognitive development and their classroom practice are not always drawn in research studies (see also Borg, 2006). Yet, if we agree that the basic contexts for assessing teacher development are (1) teacher interactions with students in the classroom, and (2) teacher interactions with colleagues, mentors or researchers (Tittle, 2006), then in order to assess development, we need to elicit data documenting both teachers' *reported cognitions* regarding aspects of their teaching and *objective descriptions* of their *actual* classroom practice. In the present study the requirement to situate teacher development research in the classroom context was even more urgent: because the primary reason for initiating the current research project and therefore its ultimate purpose was to improve conditions for student learning, the learning microcontext of the language classroom was, by default, considered a primary research site for this project.

## 5.2 Why Mixed Methods Approach

A mixed methods research design is a pragmatic approach to research (Creswell, 2003) that lays an emphasis (1) on the understanding of the research problem rather than on the philosophical and/or political commitment to a particular paradigm (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a), (2) on the purposes of the research project (Hammersley, 1992; Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003) and (3) on the practicality and feasibility of strategies employed in the specific circumstances of the inquiry (Creswell, 1999, 2003; Hammersley, 1992). Numerous calls for combining quantitative and qualitative methods (Bryman, 1988; Hammersley, 1992; McCracken, 1988; L. Richards & Morse, 2007; Silverman, 2001) have found a response in the growing literature on what has become termed a ‘mixed methods’ design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003b). In the field of applied linguistics, one of the most pronounced calls for such integration has been made by Dörnyei (2007b) who includes in his research manual a separate discussion of mixed methods research methodology.

A mixed methods design refers to mixing qualitative and quantitative methods within a single study (Creswell, 1999) in one or more of its stages (Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The reasons for mixing methods can vary from attempts to answer multiple research questions arising from projects with complex research purposes (Newman et al., 2003) to the desire to reach multiple audiences (Dörnyei, 2007b). This can be achieved by (1) *triangulating*, *complementing* and/or *expanding* the results of one method using the other; (2) using results from one method for the *development* of the other method; and/or (3) *initiating* a new perspective of frameworks by discovering contradiction between the result of the two methods (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). The precise nature of a mixed methods design will depend on (1) whether the implementation of different methods is *concurrent* (i.e. occurring simultaneously) or *sequential* (the quantitative method preceding the qualitative or vice versa), (2) on *priority* given to each method, (3) on the stage of the *integration* of the methods, which can occur at the data collection, data analysis and/or data interpretation stages and finally, (4) on the *theoretical perspectives* guiding the inquiry. Based on the interplay of the abovementioned factors, mixed methods designs have been organised into several typologies (see e.g. Creswell, 2003; Creswell et al., 2003; Maxwell & Loomis, 2003). While these are certainly useful in raising an awareness of the multiple possibilities available in mixed methods designs, in research practice fewer combinations than those suggested by more abstract typologies have proved useful and the most common types of mixed methods designs have been described in Dörnyei (2007b).

### **5.2.1 Benefits of mixing methods**

As suggested above, mixed methods designs are thought to do justice to projects with multiple purposes by providing a fuller picture of the researched phenomenon and can be a particularly fruitful in investigating complex environments, such as classrooms (Dörnyei, 2007b). The major advantages of this type of research methodology have been summarised by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003a, pp. 14-15) and further reiterated by a number of other researchers.

Firstly, *mixed methods research designs can answer research questions that single-method studies cannot*. This, however, does not involve a liberal mix-and-match approach to research, but rather carefully selecting such supplemental strategies that are believed to obtain data the base method cannot and incorporating them into the main method (Morse, 2003). Second, *mixed methods research provides stronger inferences*. Thus, for instance, supplemental qualitative data may reveal insights which would have otherwise remained uncovered in quantitative survey studies (Creswell et al., 2003) or may provide explanations for unexpected, even contradictory findings (cf. Morse, 2003) and thus increase the interpretability and meaningfulness of the results (Greene et al., 1989). Finally, *mixed methods provide the opportunity for presenting a greater diversity of views*. Put differently, using a combination of various research strategies enables the researcher to broaden the scope and comprehensiveness of the project by bringing in different dimensions (Morse, 2003).

### **5.2.2 Why a mixed methods approach in this study**

The choice of the approach in this study was guided by “methodological purposiveness” (L. Richards & Morse, 2007), that is, a belief that it is the research purposes that dictate the ‘best’ method. The purposes of the current project can be summarised as follows:

- To have an impact (i.e. improve conditions for student learning by promoting teacher change)
- To assess the impact
- To understand the process of language teacher change in a specific context
- To add to the language teacher cognition knowledge base
- To inform constituencies (e.g. teacher educators, policy makers, etc.)

As has been reiterated several times before, the ultimate purpose of initiating the current project was to improve conditions for student learning and the vision of this purpose has

informed the definition of what constitutes impact of the current teacher development course (see Chapter 3 for more details). Clearly, capturing teacher conceptual change, which implies the radical restructuring of the teachers' previous belief systems and manifests in transformed instructional practices, involves examining multiple facets of this process from multiple perspectives. Different methods were thought to provide insights into the different dimensions of the teacher development course impact and by fulfilling complementary, expanding and triangulating functions, a mixed methods design was believed to be the most appropriate to do full justice to the multiple purposes of the current research project based in the highly complex environment of the language classroom.

Qualitative (interviews and observations as a way of combining self-reports and descriptive data) and quantitative (student questionnaires) methods were employed concurrently in the present study and the following discussion considers each method in greater detail. The rationale behind using the particular methods is provided in respective sections along with a more theoretical discussion on both benefits and limitations of each method.

### ***5.3 Rationale for the Research Methods Used in the Study***

As mentioned above, the present study combines multiple methods, including interviews, observations and questionnaires and the following section's aim is to elaborate on the theoretical foundations of each method used in this study and explain why particular methods were chosen and what data each of them was expected to yield.

#### ***5.3.1 Qualitative interviewing***

While the traditional 'structured/semi-structured/unstructured trinity' might be useful for understanding the basic classification of interviews, not only is this classification far from clear-cut conceptually, judging from the varied definitions for each found in the literature, but such typology becomes increasingly irrelevant in the discussions of research (non-directive interviews, as unstructured interviews are sometimes referred to, seem to be largely rejected by researchers) and even more so when the focus is on qualitative research (structured interviews in the strictest sense appear irrelevant). The problem with the former is that although "the research interview is based on the conversations of daily life", it is nevertheless "a professional conversation" and therefore must have a structure and be guided by a purpose (Kvale, 1996, pp. 5-6). While by this description Kvale refers to "semistructured life world interview", some authors describe unstructured (or ethnographic) interviews in a similar fashion, rejecting the notion of non-directiveness without any degree

of control as unhelpful for research purposes (e.g. Burgess, 1982), acknowledging the possibility of using an interview schedule (Bryman, 1988) and generally considering purpose and direction as important in this type of interview (Spradley, 1979). Structured interviews, on the other hand, with a set of predetermined questions eliciting a restricted range of responses provide little scope for “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) that is at the heart of qualitative research, and are therefore of limited value for qualitative interviewing with regard to both data elicitation and the subsequent analysis.

The interview structure in qualitative research could therefore be better conceived of in terms of a continuum with a fairly loose interview schedule on one end and a more detailed one on the other, the purpose(s) of the research project being the major factor guiding this choice. The structure in this sense does not interfere with the salient features of qualitative interviews, such as focus, emphasis on participants’ meaning, openness to new themes outside the interviewer’s categories and a description of specific situations rather than general opinions (cf. Kvale, 1996). Other important factors to consider besides structure include time (one-off versus repeated over time) and the quality of the interviewer-interviewee relationship. These two additional factors are also believed to distinguish qualitative survey interviews from the ethnographic ones (Heyl, 2001).

Another issue to take into account when making methodological decisions pertains to the often implicit assumption that interviews are an obvious choice for qualitative researchers and a fairly straightforward qualitative method aimed at understanding the world from the perspectives of research participants (Kvale, 1996). However, not all research questions that lend themselves to qualitative inquiry can be meaningfully answered by qualitative interviews without critically evaluating the status of such data. It is argued here that the key features of qualitative interviews, including the degree of flexibility, the issue of time and a level of rapport are all considerations that must be accompanied by asking a critical question with regard to the status of interview data.

The positivist tradition, putting an emphasis on objectively measurable data, has come to acknowledge that there is no absolute truth in studies on human behaviour (Creswell, 2003) and that it is important to understand the respondents’ world (Kahn & Cannell, 1957, cited in Fontana & Frey, 1994). Nevertheless, a structured interview, which is very much part of that tradition, operates on the assumption that if previously thoroughly piloted questions are formulated appropriately, the respondents will give truthful answers. What may first appear as radically different views of the emotional tradition, are, in fact, similar claims in a different ‘dress’. Instead of seeking objective truthful facts, emotionalism aims to explore the lived experiences of people, assuming, nevertheless, a similar stance to that of positivism that access into the participants’ authentic worlds will be granted.

However, as Silverman (2001) rightly points out, uncritical assumptions of a ‘humanistic’ researcher about the immediate value of people’s accounts of their emotional experience lead to “analytic laziness in considering the status of interview data” (Silverman, 2001, p. 93).

To illustrate the ambiguous nature of this type of data, let me use an example of a classic sociological study conducted by Gilbert and Mulkay (1984, reported in Freebody, 2003). The researchers found that two contrasting types of discourse were used by the same research participants, depending on who they were talking to and what roles they were expected to hold in different types of interview interactions. This study thus highlights the socially and culturally situated nature of interviews, in which participants provide versions of truth depending on the roles they are expected to assume in the interview situation. Thus, it seems that while contradictions in respondents’ accounts occur, they may not only be a result of miscommunication or mirror the various contradictory realities the respondents find themselves in (Kvale, 1996), but might also arise from the fact that “an interviewee will [consciously] work with a knowledge of ‘what-I-am-for-this-interview’ as a resource for making appropriate sense in the interview setting ... then and there” (Freebody, 2003, p.148). This equally applies to focus group interviews, a method which results in a collective construction of meanings by the participants (Bryman, 2001) and in which “groupthink” is known to be an issue (Fontana & Frey, 1994). It follows that interviews must be viewed in the same way as any other social interaction in which participants build on their experiences, expectations and cultural knowledge of proper behaviour (Murphy & Dingwall, 2003; Silverman, 2001). In the context of this project, this data collection method therefore requires the researcher to carefully assess how the situational properties of the interview setting affect interviewees’ responses and whether these are a reflection of their instructional reality, or, rather, represent what the research participants perceive as ideals or obligations stemming from their roles (cf. Borg, 2006). An awareness of such distinction is important not for the sake of making claims about data validity, but for the sake of better understanding the research problem.

Another factor impacting on the status of interview data concerns the actual interview questions and how research participants relate to them. We can hardly speak about authentic insights into the participants’ worlds if the topics explored in the interview are removed from their lived experiences. This is illustrated by Michael Moerman (reported in Silverman, 2001), whose anthropological study demonstrates that because interview situation is beyond the typical reality lived by the research participants, in Moerman’s case Thai tribespeople he studied, the interview questions may often seem either too abstract, too obvious or completely irrelevant to the respondents in order for them to refer to their normal

categories and other methods, such as observation, may prove far more illuminating. Thus, while the previous illustration highlighted the often conscious and deliberate choices research participants make as to which version of truth to disclose in an interview situation, this example points towards the problematic nature of interviews when the areas under examination are too abstract, distant, or, in contrast, too obvious to elicit meaningful data.

Having carefully considered the issues outlined above, the current study utilised the interview method to assess the teachers' development as a result of the course input in conjunction with classroom observations (see the next section) and course-related data, because while revealing important insights, interview data were believed to make sense only in conjunction with other sources. However, a number of issues that the project set out to explore to understand the research problem (e.g. the teachers' past personal, language learning, learning to teach and everyday classroom experiences) *were* part of the research participants' categories and therefore *could* be best accessed through interviews. This is not to say, however, that even those accounts that refer to teachers' immediate circumstances should not be treated with the awareness of the social reality referred to earlier.

### **5.3.2 Observation**

One of the important characteristics of qualitative research is description (e.g. Bryman, 1988; Geertz, 1973; Kvale, 1996) and ethnographic observation is believed to be a key method in research projects whose aim is to generate descriptions of people's everyday-life routine and ways of working. The primary focus of observation is therefore what may appear to be "mundane detail; the apparently superficial trivia and minutiae of everyday life" (Bryman, 1988, p. 63) rather than what seems peculiar or exciting (Silverman, 2001). Nevertheless, Geertz's (1973) claim about studying culture is equally valid, I believe, in the context of the present study: "Behavior must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behavior – or, more precisely, social action – that cultural forms find articulation" (Geertz, 1973, p. 17). In order to understand the complexity of teacher change, then, the current study made extensive use of observation as a method for generating detailed descriptive data. In this section, I look at theoretical issues surrounding classroom observation, which was one of the primary methods employed in this study. However, as is shown in Section 5.5.3, there were also other contexts besides the classroom in which observation was a key method for generating descriptions of the research participants' behaviour.

Although relatively widely used in educational research, *classroom observation* as a source of descriptive qualitative data is not as frequent in applied linguistics research as its structured counterpart that makes use of carefully developed observational instruments (for a



discussion on those, see e.g. Bailey, 2001; Dörnyei, 2007b; Nunan, 1996), such as schedules (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, in press) and task sheets (Wajnryb, 1992). However, one domain of applied linguistics in which this ethnographic type of classroom observation is common is language teacher cognition where it is typically used in conjunction with other, usually verbal, data sources. As Borg (2006) maintains, this is understandable because while observation offers insights into teachers' cognitions, it does not allow their in-depth exploration. Nevertheless, observation is considered central to the study of language teacher cognition in that it generates "a concrete descriptive basis" (p. 231) for the examination of teachers' mental processes.

Observation has traditionally been considered as non-interventionist (Adler & Adler, 1994, cited in Cohen et al., 2000) with no purpose to deliberately manipulate the observational situation. However, manipulation, though unintentional, often occurs due to the "observer paradox" (Labov 1972, cited in Bailey 2001) when "by observing people's behaviour we often alter the very behavioural patterns we wish to observe" (Bailey, 2001, p. 116) and various measures are usually taken to minimise such a 'risk' (see e.g. Carless, 2004). It would be expected that in a longitudinal research design such as mine the observer paradox is minimised due to the extended on-site presence of the researcher, the number of observed classes and high levels of rapport as a result of intensive personal contact with research participants (course, on-site visits, interviews, correspondence). As has been shown in Section 6.2, this was not quite the case in this study and 'display' classes were even directly proportionate to the level of rapport. However, while the extended field presence and personal contact cannot diminish the phenomenon of the observer paradox, they are crucial in enhancing the researcher's awareness of what is and what is not part of the teacher's normal behaviour (for more concrete examples, see Chapters 7 and 8)

However, as I will illustrate later in the thesis, even the 'display' classes can be equally, if not more so, important as the 'typical' ones. Let me illustrate this point by referring to the present research project. If the purpose of the TD course was to influence teachers' cognitions and instructional practices and thus make the difference for the learners, then it should only be welcomed if 'non-typical' practices are being tried out. As will be shown in Chapters 7 and 8, there were many hints (based on what the teachers said in the classroom, how the activity was introduced, how it was organised, how it was followed up, how much importance and emphasis was put on it, or what rationale was given in the subsequent interview for its inclusion) suggesting whether such attempts were purely behavioural or backed by cognitive shifts. Also, tapping in the nature of the teachers' choice (i.e. *what* they chose to "display") showed to be extremely fruitful in understanding their interpretations of the TD course content. I would therefore like to argue that in longitudinal

research designs instead of presenting a problem, the observer paradox can, paradoxically, yield authentic insights into the teachers' learning processes.

To sum up, the purpose of classroom observations in the present research study was dictated by the purpose of the TD course itself, whose aim was to encourage teachers to adopt the motivational and group-sensitive teaching practice. It follows that in order to explore to what extent (if at all) the course aim was fulfilled, the teachers' practice needed to be observed. Apart from being a rich source of data for my study with regard to both, tracing teachers' cognitive and behavioural development and triangulating the questionnaire data, observations were also useful for data-based training (see Borg, 1998a) as well as interviewing purposes (see discussion on course-based issues in formal interviews in Section 5.5.2).

### **5.3.3 Questionnaire**

While the previous two research methods aimed at eliciting data about and from the teachers (with the exception of focus group interviews), the purpose of the questionnaires was to trace change in the *students'* perceptions of their classroom environment. In the spirit of the saying, 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating', students' evaluations were believed to be a meaningful and desirable indicator of teacher change. In fact, without linking teacher learning to its impact on the students, this research project would not be true to its purpose. As mentioned earlier, the link between teacher learning and how the students experience it has traditionally not been focused on in research on teacher cognition and by combining the teacher and student perspectives, this project is believed to contribute to the beginnings of addressing this gap.

Admittedly, there are a number of methodological options available for measuring students' perceptions of the classroom environment (e.g. interviews, structured observation instruments, etc.). Given the scale of an already complex research project, the questionnaire seemed to be the most convenient data collection instrument. Although its construction was possibly more demanding than the design of interview or observation schedules would have been, the efficiency in terms of researcher time and effort in both subsequent stages (i.e. administration and analysis; Dörnyei 2003b), far outweighed the effort invested in the initial construction stage.

Naturally, as with all other methods, there are disadvantages that need to be considered. Several in Dörnyei's (2003b, pp. 10-14) list were of particular relevance to my specific research context, namely 'self-deception' (i.e. participants' answers may, largely unconsciously, reflect a desired, rather than the actual classroom situation and thus the desire to belong to a cohesive group may overshadow the actual level of group cohesiveness, to

give but one example), ‘acquiescence bias’ (i.e. participants’ tendency to agree even if they are not sure), and the ‘halo effect’ (participants’ tendency to overgeneralise, which was particularly obvious in groups of younger students whose answers tended to overuse the extreme values of the response spectrum). However, even if there is no reason to believe that the questionnaire responses could not have been affected by the abovementioned problems despite the careful measures taken (layout and organisation of the questionnaire, wording of the items, assurance of anonymity, and the like), the fact that they were so influenced in both the pre- and post-tests meant that the chance of capturing developmental trends remained realistic. What had to be treated with caution, however, were comparisons between classes, especially if the groups differed in age and overall maturity. Overall, however, this data collection method was believed to serve the purposes of the project well.

## **5.4 Research Participants**

In the following section the research participants of this study are introduced. I start with an explanation of how the research participants were recruited for this research study before introducing the eight EFL teachers who volunteered to participate in this project. I also briefly describe the non-participating informants who served as additional sources of complementary data and the student participants who took part in the survey and focus group interviews.

### **5.4.1 Recruiting research participants for the current project**

The sampling plan for this project involved two stages. In the first, I adopted a ‘criterion sampling strategy’ (Dörnyei, 2007b), the purpose of which was to target a group of in-service teachers of English as a foreign language, teaching in the state-school system in Slovakia in a specific region. This last criterion was dictated by feasibility concerns. That is, I was looking for a group of research participants whose teaching sites would be accessible within the time frame of each data collection stage that was available to me (i.e. approximately two weeks). The conference described below targeted precisely this group of teachers. The second stage of the recruitment process could be characterised as ‘convenience sampling’ (Dörnyei, 2007b), as it relied on teachers who *volunteered* to take part in the research project after it was introduced at the initial conference. However, these volunteers all came from the item pool that was created by the first stage of the sampling plan after some meticulous and both time- and resources-demanding preparation, which I will now describe.

### *Preliminary phase: Getting in touch*

Although being from Slovakia myself, prior to embarking on this research project I had lived and worked abroad for several years. It was therefore essential for me to get re-acquainted with the Slovakian EFL context and map the terrain with regard to EFL teacher development opportunities. The purpose was to either identify teacher development projects of a similar nature already going on in Slovakia which could be used as my initial point of contact with teachers - prospective research participants, or to approach relevant institutions as potential hosts of a one-off educational event for EFL teachers organised by myself with the same aim - the first contact. This proved to be an overlong process of contacting a number of educational institutions and teacher associations with less than satisfactory results. Finally, however, a contact with my former university proved to be extremely useful. I approached the Dean, the Department Head and the principal Teacher Trainer with the offer of the School of English Studies to organise a conference for the English teachers and their former graduates on their premises. The purpose and the research nature of the project were explained to them in an email. They readily accepted the offer and agreed to assist in advertising the event on the Department's web site and by sending invitation letters to their graduates, making use of their database as well as to provide rooms and equipment not only for the one-off event, but also for the duration of the whole research project. Thus, an important partnership was established.

### *Preliminary phase: Securing funding*

A further difficult and time-consuming (and what in the end also showed to be extremely frustrating) task was to obtain funding for such project. Different versions of project proposal bids (either requesting funding for the whole project or just the one-off event) were submitted to several funding agencies for evaluation before the first-contact conference as well as during the research project itself. The conference bid was considered by the Research Unit of the University of Nottingham and approved. This research grant coupled with the material support of the Slovakian university meant that the conference received a go-ahead and the process of advertising and distributing invitations could start (for a sample invitation, see Appendix A). Because of various reasons (e.g. shifting priorities in fund allocation or too small a scale of the project) the bids (four in total) for external funding of the teacher development project itself were unsuccessful. However, in the end I managed to obtain two further smaller grants from the School of English Studies which helped to cover some of my travel expenses.

*The conference: Initial contact with potential project participants*

This event was a result of the efforts and the good will of all parties involved in the previously described preliminary phase and I was fortunate to receive support from my supervisor, which, without doubt, contributed to this event's success. The conference entitled '*Revitalising Your Classroom*', was attended by approximately 50 participants, including novice as well as experienced school teachers, university lecturers and teacher trainers, and was clearly perceived as beneficial to all participants, thus fulfilling other than just research purposes (for participant feedback on the conference, see Appendix B). Before embarking on the preliminary phase, my supervisor had kindly agreed to be a plenary speaker. His being a leading scholar in the field of applied linguistics was undoubtedly a factor that contributed to the initial enthusiasm of the University staff to host the conference and to its eventual success.

In addition to Prof. Zoltán Dörnyei, there were two other conference speakers: another part-time PhD student, who was an experienced teacher trainer with an international reputation and myself. All conference talks and workshops related to the topics of the planned teacher development course (the programme of the conference can be found in Appendix A as part of the invitation letter mentioned earlier). After the final workshop I introduced the research project in more detail (this was thus a third mention of the project, the first, very general one in the invitation letter and the second at the beginning of the conference), explaining the rationale and the content of the planned teacher development course and the nature of interested teachers' involvement, and gave my contact details to those who wished to take part. As was suggested by the conference participants, a list of email addresses of all participants was collated to facilitate further contact and an impressive number of participants expressed their interest informally at this point.

At the very end of the conference Prof. Dörnyei asked the participants to answer two questions by indicating a percentage. The first related to their intention to experiment, while the second probed into how realistic they thought the ideas presented were. Participants were also asked to write anything else they wished to add in their feedback on the conference. This event, thus, marked the beginning of my data collection, the conference feedback being my first quantitative and qualitative data on the teaching and teacher development context in Slovakia (for details of feedback and a compact graphical analysis of the two quantitative questions, see Appendix B).

There was a formal dinner, funded by the grant I obtained from the University of Nottingham, to which all lecturers of the host university (including the Dean and the Head of the Department) present at the conference were invited. This was thus an invaluable opportunity to express our gratitude and strengthen the partnership.

### *The conference follow-up*

Shortly after the conference an email was circulated to all participants. This contained a feedback summary, additional materials supplied by Prof. Dörnyei, photographs taken at the conference, and, most importantly, a repeated call for research project participation. This is where things stopped going smoothly, because despite very enthusiastic feedback at the conference, more than three weeks after the email was sent, I had only got two replies (see also Section 6.1). As was advised by my supervisor (and what, indeed, turned out to be a very realistic explanation), it may have been that the teachers felt overwhelmed by the amount of information given to them. I, therefore, sent another, much more succinct email written in Slovakian (as opposed to the first, which was in English). Within a week I had got about ten replies with several more coming later. After several weeks of email exchanges and clarifying information about the nature of the training sessions, observed classes and interviews, the final number of participants who decided to take part decreased to eight.

#### **5.4.2 Research participants' profiles**

It took a little less than a year of laborious preparation to reach the point of having enlisted the research participants for this study. Having described this long process, I can now go on to introduce the research participants.

As has been mentioned above, the eight EFL teachers, seven females and one male<sup>1</sup>, who volunteered to participate in this longitudinal research project had originally gone through two stages of self-selection. In the first stage, they were among some 50 EFL teachers who responded to a call for participation in the conference described above. Having become familiar with the research project and the nature of participation, eight teachers volunteered to commit their participation for the duration of the project, ready to embrace all responsibilities and risks associated with it.

The research participants can be considered typical in terms of their entry to the ELT profession in Slovakia in that they had followed or were still following a standard pathway involving studying English at a university, which is typically combined with another subject in a joint degree. This combined BA/MA degree is a 5-year-long study, comprising subject-specific modules (including linguistics, literature and English teaching methodology) as well as a substantial teaching component, both in terms of general pedagogy and psychology modules and teaching practice. An alternative qualification was a similar degree, however,

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<sup>1</sup> To avoid easy identification and thus secure anonymity, all research participants are referred to by female pseudonyms in this study. To the same end, the demographic information provided in Table 5.1 is not matched with pseudonyms but instead presented as a summary

without the teaching component, which was obtained by one research participant (for a more detailed description of the qualification, see Chapter 4).

While most secondary EFL teachers in Slovakia will have been awarded either type of degree before embarking on a full-time teaching career, about 50% of primary EFL teachers are still unqualified (Butašová, 2005, see also Chapter 4), many of them studying towards this degree by distance while being full-time English teachers, as was, indeed, the case for one of the research participants. Another research participant's case reflects a common situation in Slovakia when near-graduates often have part-time teaching jobs at schools and language centres.

Table 5.1: A summary of the eight research participants' demographic details

<b>Sex</b>	Female	<b>7</b>
	Male	<b>1</b>
<b>Pre-/In-service</b>	Pre-service	<b>1</b>
	In-service	<b>7</b>
<b>Teaching Experience</b>	1-28 years	<b>3</b>
	(Median in years)	
<b>Education <sup>a</sup></b>	MA in English teaching <sup>b</sup>	<b>7</b>
	MA in English	<b>1</b>
	State Primary	<b>1</b>
<b>Type of Institution</b>	State Secondary	<b>4</b>
	State Tertiary	<b>2</b>
	Private Language School	<b>1</b>

<sup>a</sup> 3 research participants were enrolled on doctoral programmes, all of them in other than the English/English teaching subject

<sup>b</sup> At the time of the project, 2 of the 7 participants were studying towards the qualification

Most research participants taught in the state school system, four of them in secondary schools (all four in the same type of eight-year grammar school mentioned in Chapter 4; two worked in the same school), one in a primary school, two participants were teaching at the tertiary level (the same university language centre) and one teacher taught in

the private sector. The teaching experience of the research participants spanned from 1 to 28 years (median = 3 years; for a summary of research participants' details, see Table 5.1). Before I proceed with the profiles of the research participants, I would like to make two important comments, the first relating to my personal ties with some of the research participants and the second concerning the ethical dilemma of presenting detailed personal profiles of each research participant.

Regarding the first issue, it is important to note that two research participants had attended the same grammar school where they were teaching at the time of the research project. Because I had also studied at the same school at around the same time, I had known both teachers personally for a long time in various roles: I was in the same year as one of them at the grammar school, though not in the same class, and we only got to know each other better towards the end of our university studies. She is now a personal friend of mine. I remember the other one as my senior at the grammar school -she was in the final year when I started, although I had not been in personal contact with her then. When she was a university student, she taught part time at the school where I was still studying and so at one point she was briefly even my supply English teacher. We were also in a collegial relationship later on when I was in a similar position – i.e. teaching there part-time as a university student by which time she had been appointed as a full-time English teacher.

Having made my personal ties, which may present potential bias, explicit, I need to emphasise, however, that the nature of these two teachers' participation is not dissimilar to that of the rest of participants. Both *volunteered* to take part in the project, which is also underlined by the fact that I had not discussed the nature of the project with either of them prior to the initial conference. This conference was, in fact, my first contact with one of the teachers after several years. While I made every effort to ensure that both data collection and analysis were conducted with the same rigour as those of the other participants, I was still presented with ethical dilemmas that were, contrary to my expectations, even greater precisely because of the nature of my relationship with the two participants. I dealt with some of those challenges in Section 6.2. On the other hand, the knowledge and experience I shared with these two participants proved extremely beneficial in terms of access and the understanding of the context.

The second point pertains to the presentation of personal details of the research participants. This research study with its limited number of participants is precisely that type of project which presents challenges with regard to the ethical issue of securing anonymity (Duff, 2007; L. Richards, 2005, see also Section 6.2) and simply changing participants' names does not resolve the problem. Easy identification is a particularly relevant ethical threat especially because of idiosyncrasies in the participants' background details. On the



other hand, I am well aware that a qualitative research report has to provide as much contextualised information as possible for the research findings to make sense and I had originally planned to provide a detailed profile for each of the eight research participants. The only way of resolving this dilemma in this thesis seemed to be the following: to provide a contextualised description of each participant's background without matching these with the assigned pseudonyms that will be used when analysing the data in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. In this way, a risk of breaching anonymity is believed to be reduced, though, admittedly, not completely eliminated. What follows, then, are individual profiles of EFL teachers participating in this project.

*Teacher 1* was 27 years old at the outset of the study and this was the beginning of her fourth year in the current job. After she got her MA degree in teaching English language and literature, she left the country and lived as an au-pair in the United States for a year. Upon her return, she started her professional career in a cosmetics industry, a lucrative job which she quit after the first six months. She then taught for a private language school before taking on an English teaching job in a local grammar school, a job she had been doing since. Teacher 1 was also a class teacher and apart from her regular duties she was also engaged in various projects, EU funded school collaboration and student email exchange, being two such examples, most of which had been initiated by her. In the past, she did a lot of private teaching, but gave it up altogether because she felt overloaded at work. She was married with no kids.

*Teacher 2* was Teacher 1's colleague, coming from a family with a strong teaching background. She was 29 at the start of the project, with 7 years of teaching experience all gained at the same grammar school. Although her Master's thesis was on the topic of English literature rather than English teaching methodology, Teacher 2 had never considered career other than teaching. At the time of the study she was the head of the foreign languages section of the school. In addition to her school teaching, she provided several hours of private tuition in her personal time. Apart from a couple of short trips to England with her students, she had never lived in an English-speaking country. Teacher 2 had always been very active in various fields of social life, which included being a presenter at various cultural events organised by the city council, reciting at weddings, and the like. She also worked as a sales representative of a world-known cosmetic company. Teacher 1 was married and expecting her first baby, which was due just a month after the end of the project.

*Teacher 3* was an experienced teacher in her late forties with a 28-year span in her teaching career. She was bilingual (Hungarian being her mother tongue and Slovakian her second language) and apart from English she also spoke Russian. She studied English at a teacher training institute in Russia. Teacher 3, like Teacher 2, came from a family of teachers. In fact, most of her own family were English teachers (her husband being a primary school English teacher and her daughter training to be an English teacher). In addition to her regular, already considerably increased, teaching load, she was running a small language school where she taught about 14 hours per week. Teacher 3 was fond of literature and music.

*Teacher 4* was a 25-year-old teacher and embarked on the project with a year's teaching experience gained at a grammar school of the same type as Teachers 1, 2 and 3. After obtaining her MA degree in English and Journalism, she spent a 4-month working holiday in the United States of America. At the time of the project she was enrolled in the part-time doctoral programme and was at the initial stage of writing up her dissertation in the journalism subject. Teacher 4 was quite active outside her school teaching hours, with translating for a documentary film producer and compiling material for a magazine on geography being two examples of such activities.

*Teacher 5*, a 26-year-old female teacher, was on a part-time contract for a private language school, teaching English to young learners at the time of the project. However, halfway-through the project she decided to move house, which was beyond the region and thus impossible for me to access for class observations in her new job. At the time of the study, she was a full-time PhD student, in the process of writing up her dissertation in ethnology (which was the other subject of her joint MA degree besides English teaching). As part of her PhD scholarship she was lecturing on two university courses, namely ethnology and gender studies. She occasionally did some translating for various private companies. In her free time she was an active senior member of a university folk dance group.

*Teacher 6*, with four years of teaching experience at the outset of the project, was the only primary school teacher in the research sample and the only in-service teacher without a formal qualification as yet. However, she was studying part-time towards her joint MA in Teaching English language and literature and Ethics. At her school, she also held responsibilities of a class teacher and was a regular enthusiastic participant in various educational projects, especially ELT drama workshops. Prior to teaching at the primary school, she lived in England and Germany for several months. At the time of the project, she

was expecting a baby and took a maternity leave from March on. She, however, still attended all the four sessions of the course.

*Teacher 7*, a final-year BA/MA student (i.e. participating in pre-service teacher education) specialising in teaching English and German, had been teaching several hours for the University Language Centre for a year. She originally attended the initial conference as a student assistant, helping with the organisation of the conference, but participated in most of the conference sessions and expressed her desire to take part in the project despite the call for in-service teachers. She also gave several hours per week of private tuition in both English and German. In her free time, she enjoyed drawing.

*Teacher 8*, a 28-year-old teacher, worked as an administrative staff for one of the departments at the University of X. Apart from that, she also taught two courses at the University Language Centre. Teacher 8 got her MA in English and German at a University of Y in Slovakia and was the only research participant who did not have a pedagogic qualification (although even this degree is considered a teaching qualification in Slovakia). Instead, her specialisation was in translating and interpreting and she, indeed, was an extremely active and busy translator and interpreter in her free time. At the end of the project, she applied and was being considered for a full-time teaching position in the translating / interpreting programme at the university of X.

#### **5.4.3 Non-participating informants**

To gain a fuller picture of the research context, I approached several *teachers* (of English and of other subjects, including Slovak and Science), *head teachers* and *teacher trainers*, who did not participate in the project. A summary of the type of data gained from the non-participating informants can be found in Table 5.8, while more information on the interview schedule is provided in Section 5.5.2, particularly the Tables 5.4 and 5.5.

#### **5.4.4 Student participants**

Students of both participating and non-participating English teachers were recruited for this study. A total of 16 different class groups of students (N=204) participated in the questionnaire study. The age of the survey students spanned from 13 to 19 years old with the vast majority being 17-18 years old. Five smaller groups of 4-5 students each were also recruited for the focus group interviews and they all were between 17 and 18 years of age (for further details, please refer to Tables 5.6 and 5.7).

## 5.5 Research Process and Data Collection Methods

The previous sections have provided a detailed description of an important preliminary phase of recruiting research participants for the present study. Although demanding in terms of time and planning, it was, nevertheless, crucial in securing the base for my fieldwork, which is the subject of this section.

Apart from the *interviews* with the research participants, the key data collection methods included student *questionnaires* and *classroom observations*, and therefore access to schools had to be negotiated. An official letter signed by my supervisor was sent to the head teachers/directors of all institutions in question detailing the research project their teachers volunteered to take part in and asking permission for the researcher's on-site presence. This permission, which was mediated by the research participants, was granted in all cases and confirmed in person on most sites at the time of my first visit and over the telephone prior to my visit where in doubt.

A general fieldwork structure of this longitudinal study could be summarised as follows (see also Table 5.2): There were five data collection phases spread over the course of the Slovak school year 2004/05, the first starting in September and the last taking place in May (with follow-up newsletters stretching to June), which means that I made five separate trips from Nottingham to Slovakia (about six weeks apart). Prior to each field visit, arrangements were made with teachers regarding the suitable course date (which, except for the date of the first session, was always negotiated and agreed on during the previous session) and the dates of the observations and the interviews, and these were either confirmed or revised over the telephone when in Slovakia.

Each phase lasted approximately two weeks and involved delivering a five-hour session of the TD course followed by field visits. These entailed spending a day with each of the participating teachers on their teaching sites, conducting classroom observations, having informal conversations and conducting a more formal in-depth qualitative interview with the teachers. In addition to this basic structure, the additional data obtained and the data collection methods employed in each phase were varied and flexible. For example, questionnaires were distributed to research participants' students in the first and the last phase. Interviews with two head teachers were added in the second and third phase and interviews with non-participating teachers in the fourth. Also, as the data collection progressed, it seemed useful to add more unstructured insights regarding students' perceptions to the dataset (i.e. focus group interviews), which was done in the final phase. In the next part, I look at the procedures and individual data collection methods in more detail.

Table 5.2: Data collection timeframe (November 2003 – June 2005)

<b>PRELIMINARY PHASE (November 2003- May 2004)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting in touch</li> <li>• Securing funding</li> <li>• Conference organisation</li> </ul>	
<b>IDENTIFICATION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS (May – September 2004)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conference for EFL teachers: “Revitalising Your Classroom”</li> <li>• Conference follow-up: Calling for research project participation</li> <li>• Finalising the number of participants: 8 volunteers</li> <li>• Keeping in touch</li> </ul>	
<b>FIELDWORK (September 2004 – June 2005)</b>	
PHASE 1 September 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire to students (pre-course)</li> <li>• <b>Input Session 1 (5hrs)</b> <b>(Creating the basic motivational conditions)</b></li> <li>• Teacher Interview</li> <li>• Class observations</li> </ul>
PHASE 2 November 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input Session 2 (5hrs)</b> <b>(Group cohesiveness and goal-orientedness)</b></li> <li>• Teacher Interview</li> <li>• Class observation</li> </ul>
PHASE 3 January 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input Session 3 (5hrs)</b> <b>(Motivation in Social Contexts)</b></li> <li>• Teacher Interview</li> <li>• Class observation</li> <li>• Headteacher interview</li> </ul>
PHASE 4 March 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Interview</li> <li>• Class observation</li> <li>• Non-participant Teacher Interview</li> </ul>
PHASE 5 May 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Input Session 4 (5hrs)</b> <b>(Group Responsibility and Learner Autonomy)</b></li> <li>• Questionnaire to students (post-course)</li> <li>• Focus group interviews with students of selected classes</li> <li>• Teacher Interview</li> <li>• Class observation</li> <li>• Teacher Trainer Interview</li> <li>• Round-up (June 2005)</li> </ul>

### **5.5.1 *The teacher development course: Content, processes and course-related data***

The basic underlying assumption behind the course was that individual learner motivation is shaped by the social psychological processes inherent in the learning microcontext. By attending to those processes, teachers can significantly influence the motivating properties of the classroom environment and thus enhance learners' motivation to engage in learning tasks. Hence the teacher development (TD) course 'Creating a Motivating Learning Environment' was designed with a twofold aim in mind: (1) to help EFL teachers to understand those processes, and (2) to enable them to transform their practice as a result of their new understanding and create a classroom environment conducive to student learning. The theoretical basis of both the course content and its processes was provided in the first three chapters of the Literature Review part, while sample course materials can be found in Appendices C – L.

#### *Course procedures and content*

The course was originally planned for 30 hours. However, this plan soon proved to be over-ambitious, mainly for practical reasons, and it had to be reduced to 20 hours (see Section 6.1 for further discussion of the reasons). A typical procedure prior to each session would include confirming room availability with the Dean of the Faculty for the date previously negotiated with the participants and sending out invitation letters indicating date, time and venue as well as topics to be covered. This letter was always (except, of course, the one prior to the first session) accompanied by a newsletter based on the previous session and some additional readings and/or practical materials (a sample invitation letter and all newsletters can be found in Appendices C-G). The e-mail after the last session included, apart from a follow-up newsletter with pictures taken in the session, a formal certificate of attendance signed by my supervisor (see Appendix H).

The input was varied and included interactive mini-lectures, experiential activities, case studies, and data-based activities followed-up by reflections and discussions (see sample handouts in Appendices I-L). The syllabus content was informed by the theoretical perspectives discussed in the first two chapters of the Literature Review, while the rationale for the training processes used in the present TD course is described in Chapter 3. In addition, a number of practical resource books for teaching and training were used as sources for designing individual sessions of the course (e.g. Brandes & Ginnis, 2001; Eitington, 2002; Hadfield, 1992; Malderez & Bodóczy, 1999; Meier, 2000; Revell & Norman, 1997; Stanford, 1980; Woodward, 2004), and observational and interview data generated during

the fieldwork were integrated into some of the TD course tasks, especially in the later sessions (for examples of such tasks, see Appendices J-L). Apart from the focus on a motivational teaching practice (which included topics on creating basic motivational conditions, motivation in the social context, building cohesive groups and establishing productive group norms, fostering group responsibility and learner autonomy), an emphasis was also laid on promoting continuing professional development, which was done through various activities in the course sessions, but also through on-site mentoring and attempts (though not always successful) at creating channels for professional discussion among the participants between the individual sessions (e-mails, newsletters, on-line forum).

#### *Course-related data: Participant output*

Participants were encouraged to work with the session input in various ways. In the first session, for example, they devised their own specific motivational strategies related to the first unit of Dörnyei's (2001a) motivational framework ('Creating the Basic Motivational Conditions') or they did some artwork illustrating their professional development based on the story 'In Your Hands' (Revell & Norman, 1997) and a version of the 'Butterflies' activity found in Malderez and Bodóczy (1999, pp. 85-87). Such *documents* representing participant output comprised one type of the course-related data, which was used as supplementary to the core data sources (i.e. interviews, observations and questionnaires).

Another type of participant output involved *audiovisual records*. One teacher, for instance, brought her video camera to the first session and videorecorded some activities. In the third session, to give another example of audiovisual data, the course participants worked in groups and planned and presented their own chosen activities. These presentations were audiorecorded by myself as were a couple of group discussions. Just as the course documents mentioned above, these data sources were used as secondary data, their main purpose being the source for the construction of field notes on the course sessions (see Section 5.5.3) as well as for my reflections recorded in the research journal (see Section 5.6).

#### *Course-related data: Participant reflections*

Exploring participants' understandings and interpretations of the course input was crucial to the understanding of the change process. Apart from the abovementioned methods of eliciting such data (see also the discussion of participant observation below), participants' written records of their thought processes seemed useful. Originally, I hoped to get the participants to write regular reflections in the form of a reflective teaching journal as well as action plans outlining their decisions to change particular aspects of their teaching practice as a response to the course input. Thanks to my growing understanding of the context, I very

soon came to realise how implausible, unrealistic and even unethical such plans were (see Chapter 6) and therefore had to make changes to my research methodology. Nevertheless, I still tried to incorporate the reflective element into the course, a result of which are *activity reflection sheets* that the participants wrote after some activities in the sessions during the quiet time. However, because of the issues discussed in Chapter 6 (mainly the absence of the reflective culture in the given context), these were of limited value for the overall purposes of the project and were therefore used as useful insights, rather than systematically analysed. Moreover, *feedback* on each session was elicited (although not always submitted – see Table 5.7 for details), which illuminates some of the participants’ understanding and interpretation of the course content. The deadline was typically negotiated in the session and submissions made via email. Session 3 was an exception where feedback was written at the end of the session. Again, because there were considerable differences in the depth and breadth of issues tackled by individual teachers, rather than treating them as a core data sources, I use them to supplement the data generated through interviews and observations.

**Table 5.3: An extract from my field notes on Session 4 of the TD course**

From two experiential activities (Appendix I), which were introduced and processed by the research participants, we moved to the lecture on Responsibility and Learner Autonomy. The lecture was done in an interactive way, with course participants being invited to comment on the content with their own opinions and experiences. Before the lecture started, I let them mingle and discuss the situations on the slips (Appendix J). The aim was to introduce typical classroom situations and how teachers usually respond to them and to link these to the content of the lecture.

**The main ingredients of an autonomy-supporting teaching practice (from Dörnyei, 2001)**

1. Allow learners choices about as many aspects of the learning process as possible

The participants were divided into two groups and I asked them to brainstorm their concerns, problems, choices and decisions they have to make, etc. in their teaching. Afterwards I asked them to think about how many of these could actually be made by their learners.

2. Give learners positions of genuine authority

Jana asked: “And what if they don’t want authority? What if they don’t want responsibility?”

To this, Monika replied that she had a similar problem with her organizing a class ball. She wanted to put as much responsibility on the students’ shoulders as possible, but the students didn’t like it. Even their parents were not quite happy about that. So she felt that responsibility was something the students didn’t want to have.

3. Encourage student contributions and peer teaching
4. Encourage project work
5. Allow learners to use self-assessment procedures

Monika said that she found it so clear now, but was sure that after a couple of days she would just go back to the old way. She said that whenever she thought about her own students, she just could not picture them doing that (e.g. self-evaluation). Others joined in and I provided examples from my own experience working with Asian students who were often believed to be too dependent on the teacher and I told them how they were able at the end of the course to write final self-evaluation essays, how they initiated homework, etc. I thought, judging from their reactions, that this was a very valuable part when I spoke about my own experience in connection with the theoretical input. During the lecture I also told them a story (Sir Gawain and the Loathly Lady from Revell & Norman, 1997), which I divided into several parts in order to deliver the punch line (“You Choose!”) at the end of the lecture. I used this strategy to reinforce the message of the lecture and also as a motivational tool to provide some suspense and raise expectations. They all were very eager to know the ending.



### *Course-related data: Observational fieldnotes*

As will be further explained in Section 5.5.3 below, apart from that of teacher trainer, I also adopted a role of participant observer during the TD course. Of the course-related data outlined above, my detailed observational fieldnotes provide probably the most useful insights into the participants' processing of the course input. A sample extract can be found in Table 5.3.

Having described the content and the processes of the TD course as well as the course-related data, I will now discuss the three major data collection methods, namely interviewing, observation and questionnaires.

### **5.5.2 Qualitative interviews in the study**

The purpose of the interviews in this study was to generate data about the research participants' ways of thinking and their origins, to capture the changing nature of those as a result of the TD course, and to understand other influences either facilitating or inhibiting the change process. Although a number of areas for exploration had been identified as a result of the literature review on teacher cognition prior to the interviewing, the categories were flexible and often shaped by the interviewees in agreement with the basic features of qualitative interviewing. The interview meetings were repeated over time and were characterised by much higher levels of rapport than one-off survey interviews would qualify for.

Although one of the characteristics of the qualitative interview is believed to be its informality as opposed to formality in a highly standardised interview, for the purposes of this discussion I will use the 'formal/informal' dichotomy to distinguish the planned and pre-arranged interviews (formal) from those that were conducted on an ad-hoc basis as a result of my presence on the research site (informal). I wish to emphasise, however, that informality and the elements of a friendly conversation (see Spradley, 1979) were a marked feature of both the formal and the informal interviews. I next describe the various types of interviews conducted during the fieldwork (for a typology, see Table 5.4.).

*Formal qualitative interviews with research participants.* As indicated in Table 5.2 outlining the fieldwork phases, a formal interview with each research participant was originally planned for each fieldwork phase. However, due to a number of constraints, including personal and professional commitments of the participants throughout the project and my illness in the fourth phase, such an arrangement was not possible (see also Section 6.1). As a result, the number of interviews conducted with each participant (for details, refer

to 5.6) and thus, inevitably, the depth with which some themes could be tackled differed across the research sample.

Table 5.4: A summary of types and content of interviews in the study

<i>Type of Interview</i>	<i>Focus</i>
Formal interview with participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher Profile (see Fig. 6.1)</li> <li>• Post-observational issues</li> <li>• Course-related issues</li> <li>• Other emerging issues</li> </ul>
Formal interview with non-participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher motivation</li> <li>• Teaching style</li> <li>• School/working conditions</li> <li>• Involvement in / opportunities for CPD*</li> </ul>
Informal interview with participants, non-participant teachers, and head teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyday classroom/staffroom/school realities</li> </ul>
Formal interview with teacher educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current students</li> <li>• Current teacher education programme</li> <li>• Teacher educators</li> </ul>
Informal interview with teacher educator/in-service trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current students</li> <li>• CPD Opportunities</li> <li>• In-service training challenges</li> </ul>
Focus Group interview with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English classes in general</li> <li>• Perceived changes in teacher instruction over the past year</li> <li>• Questionnaire results</li> </ul>

\*CPD = Continuing professional development

Interviews of this type were generally conducted on the day of an on-site visit after the class observation, either on site, provided the school facilities allowed for privacy, or, where such provisions could not be made, in a local café. Occasionally, a special appointment was made just for these purposes where time or circumstances did not allow conducting interviews after the observations. As mentioned before, the nature of this research project meant that the researcher-participants relationship was far from being distant and neutral. That is why the interview transcripts often lack formal opening and

closing stages that are typical in survey interviews. In this study, the transitions between a friendly conversation and a research interview were natural and the recorder was simply switched on at the apt moment marking the start of a formal interview, always asking the participant for permission in the manner – ‘Oh, you know what, I think this is actually something I wanted to ask you about in the interview, do you mind repeating it on record?’ There were three broad areas that were covered by the formal interviews: issues related to *teacher profile*, *observed lessons* and *course-related issues*. Because each teacher required an individual approach to interviewing, I did not follow a scripted interview schedule, but used instead other tools as a guiding framework (see below). I will now return to the thematic areas of formal interviews and describe each in more detail.

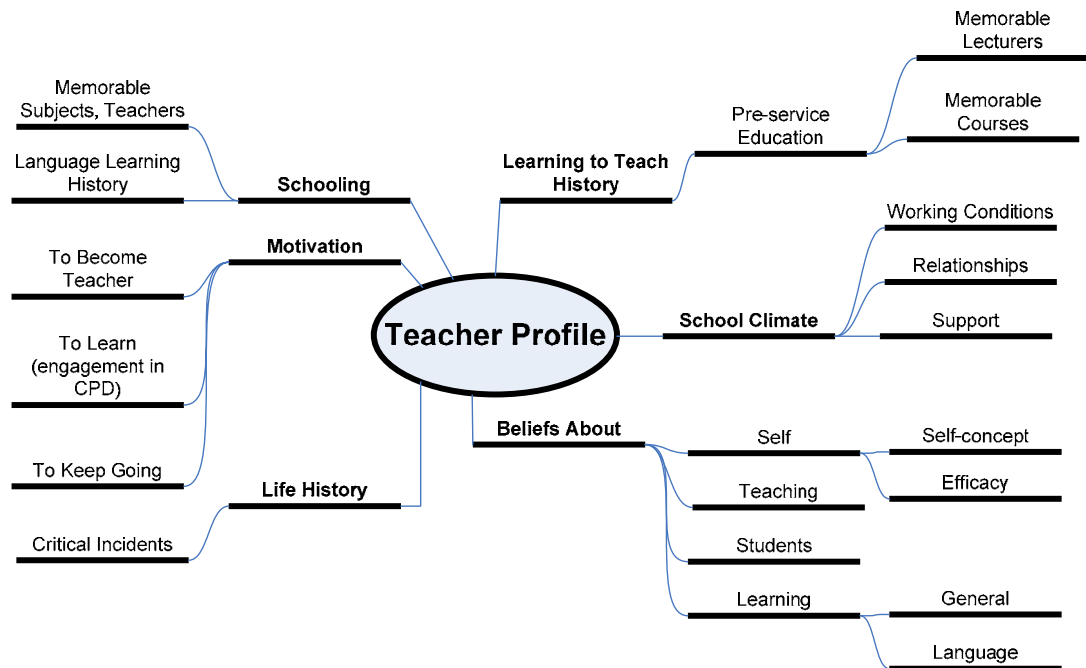
First, the issues that had been identified in the literature prior to fieldwork as potential influences on teachers’ existing cognitions were explored. The purpose was to create a profile of each research participant and to understand where she came from, where she was at the time of the research and, possibly, where she was heading in her professional career. Instead of a scripted schedule, I used a guide in the form of a mind map with all possible areas of interest and their interconnectedness identified (see Figure 5.1). Many of the topics in the mind map guide did not, in fact, need to be elicited by a specific question, but were tackled by participants as they were reflecting on other issues. Naturally, this guide served precisely the purpose its name suggests and a number of topics acquired new subtopics and dimensions during the interviews that were followed up as they emerged. Thus, while the major themes were covered with all participants, many themes were participant-specific. However, towards the end of the fieldwork, the interviews tended to get much more structured than initially and they also tended to be similar across the research participants. This was due to the fact that at a certain point of the data collection I experienced ‘data saturation’, which meant that all the main issues believed to have the potential to illuminate the research problem had been covered. Therefore towards the end I only needed to ask some very specific questions.

The second thematic area tackled in the interviews included discussions of the observed lessons. Despite having discarded the originally planned stimulated recall technique as inappropriate on practical as well as ethical grounds in the specific context of my fieldwork (also see Chapter 5), I was still able to follow up the issues that arose during the observed lessons. This included eliciting teachers’ general feelings about the lessons as well as clarifying contextual background that was not obvious from the observation alone. Several times, the observed lesson became the major focus of the interview and the data elicited in this way showed to be particularly illuminating. Overall, however, mostly due to

the reasons suggested in Chapter 5, discussions on this topic area were brief and not marked by the same depth as the previous one.

Course-related issues were the third thematic focus of the formal interviews with research participants. Here, the participants' opinions on the course topics and activities of their interest were probed and feedback received from them between the phases was followed up. Although these discussions did reveal some important issues, the most valuable course-related data come from observational field notes describing in detail the nature of the participants' involvement in the actual sessions (see also the next section). An exception was the last interview in which I elicited the participants' opinions on a list of transcribed lesson snippets which related to the topic of the last session and were, in fact, originally designed as the course task (see Appendix L). Since the time did not allow in-session discussion, I decided to use this course task as part of the final interview. Indeed, the choice proved to be valuable in terms of the insights it generated. Related to this broader theme were also questions with regard to the teachers' perceived impact of the course (or lack thereof) on their thinking and teaching practice.

Although it is often advised to make notes during the interview, I found it hard to maintain the friendly, collegial tone of the interviews when following this suggestion. In the effort to minimise unequal power relationships (see also Section 6.1), instead of making notes, I simply put a tick on the mind map next to each topic covered immediately after the interview. When I returned from the site, I wrote up a short summary of the key issues that emerged during the interview, using the mind-map as a reminder.



**Figure 5.1: Formal interviews with participants – a mind map guide**

*Formal qualitative interviews with non-participating teachers.* These interviews were not part of the original research design. However, in the course of the fieldwork, some broader issues which appeared to have a significant impact on the participants' change processes emerged (e.g. motivation to become teachers, motivation to engage in professional development, school culture, etc.). Because they were believed not to be exclusively relevant to the research participants, but to be part of the broader context of Slovak education, I decided to add non-participant interview data to the dataset. Thus, it was partly triangulating of the research participant data by obtaining insights from different sources, but primarily an attempt to get a deeper understanding of the broader educational context.

Because of my frequent on-site presence (i.e. mostly in the English language teachers' staff rooms) I had the chance to develop rapport with the research participants' colleagues and was therefore able to recruit non-participating English teachers for this type of interviews myself. In order to be able to interview teachers of other subjects, I asked the research participants for assistance who helped first to identify potential candidates who would be willing to respond to interview questions and, second, introduced me to them and thus initiated the first contact.

The *content* of this type of interviews was identified as a result of an on-going preliminary analysis of the research participants' data, as will be described in Section 5.6.

Although a slightly more structured guide had been developed for this type of interviews, the questions were, nevertheless, open-ended with a scope for expansion and follow-up.

Table 5.5: Interview Guide for Formal Interviews with Non-Participants

<p><i>Interview Guide:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General information (teaching experience / education / subject /teaching hours)</li> <li>• Motivation (to become teachers, motivation to keep going - major joys/obstacles in the current job)</li> <li>• Attitudes towards the subject matter</li> <li>• Teaching (How would you describe your teaching style? How would you describe your relationship with students?)</li> <li>• School-related issues (Perception of working conditions, resources, work relationships, management, opportunities for CPD*)</li> <li>• Motivation to learn (Willing to engage in CPD? Why? What type? How frequently?)</li> </ul>
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\*CPD = *Continuing professional development*

Apart from the interviews with non-participating teachers, it became clear to me that I needed to get a better picture of the pre-service preparation of English teachers. I therefore decided to add a formal interview with a teacher educator to my dataset. Again, while broad topics were identified in advance (see Table 5.4), this interview, like others, was open-ended with a scope for a follow-up of emerging themes and as such served as secondary data (as all interviews of this type did).

Before moving on to a description of the informal interviews, I wish to add that as Fontana and Frey (1994) point out, the interview techniques will inevitably differ depending on the group being interviewed. If the researcher wants to learn anything at all, he/she “must adapt to the world of the individuals studied and try to share their concerns and outlooks” (p. 371). While some interviewees were quite comfortable with a quasi formal character of scheduled and recorded interviews, others were not (for information on which interviews were not recorded, see Tables 6.7) In the interest of obtaining meaningful data, therefore, I had to adjust the interview techniques accordingly.

*Informal interviews.* Informal interviews, or, in other words, informal conversations occurring in the teachers' natural environments, were inevitable due to my frequent on-site presence. Apart from conversations with research participants, I got to know their colleagues and so, naturally, I interacted with them whenever I was visiting the school. This interaction covered a range of activities the teachers were involved in on a daily basis, ranging from marking and discussing new 'maturita' exams, selecting materials for their classes, solving dilemmas of which coursebooks to choose, writing new 'maturita' exam questions to having lunch with them in the school canteen. I had the chance to talk to two head teachers (of Site 1 and Site 5) and I also got to meet a university teacher trainer who was at the same time in charge of in-service training of English language teachers in Slovakia. For obvious reasons, these conversations were not recorded, but important issues that were raised in them were subsequently written up as field notes or memos (rather than analysed systematically in the way described in Section 5.6).

I found that it was precisely during these informal conversations when the tape recorder was off that the participants "lived" their real experiences in an authentic environment and their cognitions, very much shaped by their environment, came through. Judging from the depth of illuminating insights I gained on some sites, I believe ethnography and participant observation in particular, of which these informal conversations are an inherent part, has a lot to offer to research on language teachers' cognitions. The advantage of the ethnographic approach is that it ties the data not just to the individual lessons taught, but also to the broader educational context and hence, the potential for a deeper understanding of the teacher change processes is far greater. Indeed, it was precisely the insights from these informal interviews that forced me to constantly revise not only the content and the processes of the TD course and my research methodology (see, for example, my choice to drop stimulated recall interviews in this chapter and other changes made discussed in Chapter 5), but also helped me to understand that research on teacher development cannot be separated from a deep understanding of their teaching context and that, in turn, can be achieved by employing a more holistic research approach.

*Focus group interviews with students.* The idea to conduct focus group interviews with students of selected classes sprang up in the course of the fieldwork with three purposes in mind: (1) to triangulate the questionnaire results, that is, to see whether the changes (if any) indicated in the questionnaire data rang true in the students' perceptions, (2) to seek parallels between teachers' perceptions expressed in the interviews and those of the students; and finally, (3) to *extend* the questionnaire data and elicit issues that were not captured in the questionnaires (for while the questionnaire sought to measure students' perceptions of their

actual classroom environment, it did not tap into their attitudes towards the ideals encompassed by the questionnaire. The latter was believed to be important in understanding the processes that facilitated or inhibited teacher change).

Because this method did not belong to the core research methodology, but was only selected for illustrative purposes, I only interviewed five smaller groups of students out of those who completed the questionnaires and the selection was simply done on the basis of availability (four groups of participants and one of a non-participating teacher; also see Tables 6.6 and 6.7). In the final phase, the teachers of these groups agreed that I could have volunteers during their lesson and conduct the interviews in the classrooms that were not being used at that time (the teachers arranged those in advance). So after I explained the purpose and the nature of the group interviews to the students in each class, the volunteers (between four to six students) came with me to the allocated room. There, I, again, explained the purpose in more detail and also the process of the interview itself. Each group interview lasted approximately thirty minutes, as that was the maximum time we had at our disposal, and the areas covered are outlined in Table 5.4.

### **5.5.3 Three types of observation in the study**

There were three different contexts in which I assumed a role of observer. First, I was a *participant observer of the TD course sessions*. While leading the course and interacting with the participants in the teacher trainer role, I was also, as a researcher, observing research participants' involvement, contributions and interactions with a twofold purpose: first, to obtain descriptive data of their participation and second, to document my own professional development. I believe it is important to outline these two angles in the focus of my observation even though there was obviously a considerable overlap between them. The TD course observation thus helped me not only to trace the impact of the course on the participants in the actual training context, but also to reflect on my own training approach and outline suggestions and amendments for future courses. Hence, the observational field notes, written up on the same day immediately after the TD course session (except once when the field notes were written up on the day following the session), include both descriptions of participants' involvement and reflections on my teaching.

The second type of observation I was involved in was *on-site or field observation*. Although this was not as systematic as I would, with hindsight, wish it had been in terms of data recording, I believe that the insights obtained in field were extremely illuminating. (I described this context of participant observation in the previous section).

The major type of observation in this study concerned *classroom observations*. The time of most observations in the first and last phases was shortened due to questionnaire



administration. Apart from this, the procedure was fairly uniform, with me entering the classroom with the teacher and getting a seat usually at the back of the classroom. The observed groups were not necessarily the same in every phase, although I made every effort to arrange the visits in such a way as to be able to observe the questionnaire groups on as many occasions as possible to ensure continuity. This was not critical for my purposes, but was certainly useful in establishing rapport with the students. Although I often interacted with the students informally (mainly before or after the class), I rarely participated in classroom activities, except on a couple of occasions (e.g. in one teacher's classes I occasionally walked around and interacted with students working in groups, participated in one or two of the activities or assisted the teacher by reading a script when her tape recorder was broken; in another teacher's class, I co-presented one activity with her and I also helped her with preparation by displaying activity cards on the walls while she was finishing the previous activity; in the classes of other teachers, I was occasionally called upon mainly for language clarification purposes, but did not participate otherwise).

As noted earlier, the focus of the classroom observations was to track the possible impact of the TD course on the research participants' teaching practice. However, since it was not clear just how the impact would (if at all) get manifested in the classroom context, pre-established observational instruments would clearly not have had the capacity to yield useful data. However, while, in addition to audiorecording the class, I made every effort to note down indiscriminately events as they transpired in the class (including those aspects which could not be captured in the recording, such as the physical description of the classroom, seating arrangements, non-verbal communication, etc.), the research focus inevitably dictated the areas my attention was particularly attuned to. I was guided by learner-centred attitudes in general, which included aspects of motivational and group-sensitive teaching practice already identified in the questionnaire (see the next section) and the literature review (see Chapters 1 and 2). Apart from those, my observation was informed by the guiding questions regarding classroom environments adapted from Schmuck and Schmuck (2001, pp. 40-41), by a useful discussion of supportive and nonsupportive forms of instructional, motivational and organisational discourse in Turner et al. (2002), summarised in Table 2.1, and by a typology of teacher interpersonal behaviour in the classroom described in Wubbels, Brekelmans and Hooymayers (1991). However, rather than restricting my attention to predefined categories, these were used to frame the focus of observations and, thus, in no way interfered with the openness characteristic of qualitative inquiry.

I am quite aware that not every single detail could possibly have been captured either by the recorder or in my notes and it could, after all, never have been the purpose of class observations. Nevertheless, I made every effort to document as much as I could and,

therefore, it was precisely this data collection method that I found the most demanding and extremely exhausting. I need to emphasise that, although a typical day on the research site would include two observed classes and a subsequent in-depth interview, there were days during which I had to observe as many as six classes (e.g. when on Site 1). This, coupled with my role of participant observer on the site and during the TD course, can perhaps illustrate the intensity of my involvement during each fieldwork phase (see also Section 6.1.3).

#### **5.5.4 Questionnaire development and administration**

##### *Initial item pool*

To identify the items for this study's questionnaire, I consulted scales of existing instruments whose items have proven to be reliable in numerous studies (Clément et al., 1994; Kormos & Dörnyei, 2004; Moos, 1979) as well as the literature on L2 motivation and group dynamics in general and L2 education (Dörnyei, 1997, 2001a; Dörnyei & Malderez, 1999; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003; D. W. Johnson & Johnson, 1997; Schmuck & Schmuck, 2001; Stanford, 1980). Drawing on these, I generated a total of 128 items. This original item pool was carefully scrutinised with the guidance of my supervisor and items that appeared to be ambiguous, duplicated, or did not fit the identified scales were removed. This process reduced the original 128-item pool to a more manageable set of 96 items.

##### *Questionnaire structure*

The items of the questionnaire were mixed up in a random order, while still maintaining an underlying organisation, which was achieved by dividing the questionnaire booklet into three thematic parts as follows: "Me and my classmates", "Me and My English Class", and "The way we do things around here" and mixing up the items of those scales that related to the topic in question.

The last pre-pilot phase included translating the questionnaire into Slovak, the first language of most respondents (apart from two groups, whose L1 was Hungarian and Slovak their second language). I enlisted assistance of one of the research participants and asked her to go through the items and assess whether the Slovak equivalents were part of the students' natural vocabulary. We discussed possible alternatives where it was not so and together decided on the best options.

### *Piloting*

The pilot version was administered in early September 2004 to two groups (that did not participate in the questionnaire survey of the research, although I observed their classes on two occasions) of Teacher 1 and one group of her colleague who did not participate in the project. The teachers were given detailed instructions as to the administration procedure. Since this was a pilot, the students were, in addition, asked to comment on any problematic issues, including (a) the layout and organisation of the questionnaire, (b) clarity and relevance of the questions, (c) suggestions for more appropriate wording of the questions, and (d) anything else they thought would help to improve the questionnaire. The teacher was also requested to (a) note down the time it took the students to complete the questionnaire, and (b) any problems that occurred during the administration. At the end, the teacher collected the questionnaires, put them in a marked envelope (indicating date and group) and sealed it in front of the students. The completed questionnaires of all three groups with a total sample size of 45 were sent to me by post.

A reliability assessment of the questionnaire was carried out, measuring the internal consistency of the scales and computing Cronbach alpha coefficients to provide statistical base for item deletion. Interestingly, it was precisely those items that students indicated as either inappropriate or unclear that showed low consistency. These were eliminated and the final number of questionnaire items was reduced to 73.

### *Final version*

Table 5.6 presents a summary of the scales identified for the instrument indicating both pre- and post-test values of Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. (A complete list of items in each scale can be found in Appendix M, while a copy of the Slovak version of the questionnaire booklet is provided in Appendix N).

Table 5.6: A summary of the instrument scales

<i>Scale Characteristics with pre-/post-test Cronbach <math>\alpha</math></i>	<i>Description and Sample Items</i>
<p><b>Group cohesiveness</b> (<math>\alpha = .81 / .84</math>)</p> <p>10 items</p> <p>Items adapted from Clément et al.'s (1994) scale of 'Perceived Group Cohesion' and Moos's (1979) scale of 'Affiliation'</p>	<p>Students' perception of the 'we' feeling of the class group. Examples of items include "<i>A lot of friendships have been made in this class</i>" and "<i>Compared to other groups like mine, I feel my group is better than most.</i>"</p>
<p><b>Group goal-oriented norms</b> (<math>\alpha = .86 / .87</math>)</p> <p>13 items</p> <p>Items combined from Moos's (1979) scales of 'Involvement', 'Task Orientation' and 'Order and Organisation'</p>	<p>Group's orientation towards task-related goals and the group's tendency to engage in classroom tasks in an autonomous manner.</p> <p>Sample items include "<i>Students put a lot of energy into what they do here</i>" and "<i>This class is more a social hour than a place to learn something.</i>"</p>
<p><b>Attitudes towards teacher: Competence and Teaching Style</b> (<math>\alpha = .73 / .77</math>)</p> <p>13 items</p> <p>Some items from the Moos's (1979) scale <i>Innovation</i>.</p>	<p>Student perception of teacher competence as well as of supportive aspects of the teaching style (Turner et al., 2002).</p> <p>Sample items include "<i>Students have very little to say about how class time is spent</i>".</p>
<p><b>Attitudes towards teacher: Commitment and Rapport</b> (<math>\alpha = .69 / .79</math>)</p> <p>8 items</p> <p>Items adopted from Moos's (1979) <i>Teacher Support</i> scale.</p>	<p>Perceived teacher commitment and rapport. An example of this scale's items include "<i>The teacher takes a personal interest in students.</i>"</p>
<p><b>Attitudes towards class/course: Useful/Attractive</b> (<math>\alpha = .84 / .84</math>)</p> <p>9 items</p> <p>Items combined from the instruments used in Clément et al. (1994) and Kormos &amp; Dörnyei (2004).</p>	<p>Student perceptions of the usefulness of the class as well as the extent to which they find it enjoyable. Sample items include "<i>We learn things in the English classes that will be useful in the future</i>" and "<i>Learning English is an exciting activity</i>".</p>

<b><i>Attitudes towards class/course: Difficult</i></b> $(\alpha = .76 / .79)$ 2 items	Student perceptions of the English course difficulty, e.g. <i>“Sometimes I feel I can hardly cope with the materials in this course.”</i>
<b><i>Linguistic self-confidence</i></b> $(\alpha = .78 / .81)$ 6 items Items adapted from the <i>Linguistic Self-Confidence</i> scale in Kormos & Dörnyei (2004).	Students’ belief to perform competently and the degree of anxiety inhibiting them from doing so. Sample items include <i>“I am sure that I’ll be able to learn English”</i> .
<b><i>The Norms of Acceptance and Cooperation</i></b> $(\alpha = .67/ .76)$ 12 items Some items adopted from Moos’s (1979) <i>Competition</i>	Classroom social norms that facilitate productive groups, such as <i>“Students in this class don’t laugh when somebody makes a mistake in English”</i> or <i>“Students don’t feel pressured to compete here”</i> .

### *Questionnaire administration*

Two groups of students of each teacher (for exceptions, see Table 5.7) were chosen randomly, the only criteria being the age of students in order for them to understand the questionnaire statements (which was why Teacher 5 did not participate in the questionnaire study as she only taught young learners) and the ability to match all participants’ schedules so I could cover all sites within the two weeks available. Because two teachers taught part time and their teaching schedules often changed, I only obtained data from one group each. Teacher 4, in contrast, made three groups available for the questionnaire survey. I also recruited several student groups of non-participating teachers serving as control groups (see table 5.8 for details).

Most students completed the questionnaire during Phase 1 of the fieldwork in late September 2004 (i.e. at the beginning of the school year 2004/05), with the exception of Teacher 8’s group (as she was not teaching at the time of Phase 1), both non-participating teachers’ groups and Teacher 4’s group 3 (all in November - Phase 2). In each class I was first introduced to the students by the teacher and was then invited to explain the nature of the research project and the purpose of students’ involvement (this included brief information on the TD course their teacher was undertaking and the observations I was to conduct in their classes). Students were then given the questionnaire booklets and asked to go through the introduction with all necessary instructions, after which a promise of absolute anonymity and a request for honest answers were reemphasised. A trial was then conducted with me giving them an example of a classroom situation and eliciting the appropriate

response within the 5-point Likert-type scales (1-strongly disagree - 5-strongly agree). In a few cases, students asked some clarifying questions which were answered and after ensuring everyone understood the instructions, the students filled out the questionnaires.

I made sure that their teacher and I kept a low profile (we usually stayed at the front of the classroom) and when the students finished giving their answers, I collected the questionnaires in a prepared envelope marked with date, class, and the teacher's name for identification purposes. I then sealed the envelope in front of the class, thanked them for their kind cooperation and in most cases, moved to the back of the classroom to observe the rest of the lesson conducted by the teacher. The whole procedure lasted between 20-25 minutes and was considerably shorter (approximately 15 minutes) at the end of the school year in late May/early June – Phase 5, possibly because of the students' familiarity with the questionnaire procedure. Each questionnaire was then assigned a unique code and the data were entered into an SPSS data file for analysis purposes (see also Section 5.6).

#### **5.5.5 Data summary**

Table 5.7 presents a summary of the data gathered during this research project. As has been mentioned before, there was a variety in the basic structure of the data collection during each phase and this also pertains to individual variation since not all teachers were available for interviews or their classes for observation in every single phase. Examples of the reasons include situations when one of the phases coincided with the university midterm break, Teacher 8 only got a teaching job at the time of Phase 2, Teacher 3's classes that were scheduled for observation got cancelled because of a bus company strike, several teachers got ill or had to travel out of town, and the like. Also, the training session was missing in phase 4 because of my illness. Still, as can be seen in Table 5.7, the data gained represent a rich volume.

Table 5.7: A summary of research participants' data gained during the fieldwork (see notes below)

	Visits	Course sessions	Feed-back	Interviews* (total time)	Observ	Questionnaire pre/post (no. of groups)	Extras
<b>Teacher 1 Site 1</b>	6	4 (20 hrs)	4	5 07:17:52	14	33/32 (2/2)	Teaching journal E-mails 2 Focus groups Student feedback
<b>Teacher 2 Site 1</b>		2 (10 hrs)	1	4 03:50:33	8	30/26 (2/2)	E-mails
<b>Teacher 3 Site 2</b>	3	3 (15 hrs)	1	3 02:18:36	7	28/29 (2/2)	Teaching materials Sample "maturita" exam questions
<b>Teacher 4 Site 3</b>	5	4 (17 hrs)	3	5 03:10:13	8	33/31 (3/3)	2 focus groups
<b>Teacher 5 Site 4</b>	3	4 (20 hrs)	5	4 05:07:58	6		Sample teaching materials used in her school E-mails
<b>Teacher 6 Site 5</b>	3	4 (14 hrs)	1	2 01:28:35	6	21/22 (2/2)	
<b>Teacher 7 Site 6</b>	3	4 (20 hrs)	3	4 03:02:04	3	11/22 (1/1)	Lesson plans with reflective comments
<b>Teacher 8 Site 6</b>	3	4 (18 hrs)	3	4 02:46:36	3	11/14 (1/1)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>4 (20 hrs)</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>31 29:03:07</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>167/176 (13/13)</b>	

*\*Only formal recorded interviews are included*

- *Visits.* The number of on-site visits refers to the number of different days of school visits (in some cases, two separate visits to the same site were made during one phase, whereas there were phases for some participants during which no on-site visit was made). Also note that since Teachers 1 and 2 were from the same site, six instead of twelve are counted in the total number of site visits. While Teachers 7 and 8 were also from the

same site, the visits were made separately because these participants were teaching on different days.

- *Course Sessions.* The total number of sessions was four, each lasting five hours and the individual figures refer to the number of course sessions that each participant attended. Occasionally, some participants did not stay for the duration of the whole session, hence the total number of hours attended is given in parentheses.
- *Feedback.* This refers to course feedback elicited after each session and the figure represents the number of sessions each participant wrote a feedback on. Because there were four sessions, the maximum number was four, although note that Teacher 5 volunteered an extra submission.
- *Interviews.* The figure refers to the number of different occasions on which the interviews were recorded. The total length of recorded interviews is given in hours, minutes and seconds. Apart from these, there were many occasions for informal interviews, summaries of which were recorded as field notes.
- *Observations.* This figure refers to the number of classes observed. In primary and secondary schools as well as the language school (i.e. classes of Teachers 1 to 6) the length of each lesson was 45 minutes whereas in the tertiary education institution (Teachers 7 and 8) the classes lasted 90 minutes.
- *Questionnaires.* The number of questionnaires refers to the total number of students who completed the questionnaire before and after the course. The number in parentheses refers to the number of different groups of students who completed the questionnaire (e.g. 2/1 means that two groups of students responded before the course, whereas only one of them responded after the course). Of course, the pre- and post- groups were the same.
- *Extras.* This segment of the table includes documents that were not part of regular data sources. For example, I exchanged several emails with some teachers on the teaching issues. Furthermore, as a response to our discussion of one of her lessons, Teacher 1 asked her students for feedback and made an additional copy for me. She also kept a journal for a couple of weeks, which she let me have a copy of. Teacher 3 gave me numerous materials that she enjoyed using with her students and also let me have copies of the new “maturita” exam questions that she wrote. Teacher 5 gave me copies of teaching materials her director compiled for use in grammar lessons in the language school where she taught. After the first course session, Teacher 7 decided, as part of her lesson preparation, to write lesson plans and add reflective comments after each class -



she let me have copies of those. Teachers 1 and 4 also made it possible for me to conduct focus group interviews with their students.

As indicated earlier, I was also able to obtain various data from non-participants that included teachers, head teachers and teacher trainers. A summary of these data is provided in Table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8: A summary of non-participants' data gained during the fieldwork

	Questionnaires	Interviews	Focus groups
<b>Site 1</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English teacher (00:20:50)</li> <li>Science teacher (00:34:46)</li> <li>Slovak teacher*</li> <li>Headteacher*</li> </ul>	
<b>Site 3</b>	English teacher 1-22/10(2/1) English teacher 2-15/18 (1/1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English teacher 1 (00:20:24)</li> </ul>	English teacher 1's group of 5 students
<b>Site 5</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Civics teacher*</li> <li>Headteacher*</li> </ul>	
<b>Other</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher trainer (University of X) (00:47:27)</li> <li>Teacher trainer (in charge of INSET of English teachers in Slovakia)*</li> </ul>	

\*unrecorded

## 5.6 Data Analysis

One of the most important analytical tools used in this study was a *research journal*, which was a space for recording my ongoing reflections throughout the project on the growing data as well as on the research process. The analysis of this project possibly started with the day of the initial conference and since then I was constantly involved in an analytical process of both direct interpretation and categorical aggregation (Stake, 1995), which was, naturally, at its most intensive during the actual fieldwork (see Table 5.2). I recorded the outcomes of this ongoing reflection in the journal and the writing process itself as well as frequent revisiting of individual entries resulted in a number of *annotations* and *analytical* as well as *methodological memos* linked to particular data records as they were becoming available. This, in turn, assisted me in the process of coding and constructing coding trees in the later

phases of the analysis and finally building the theoretical model of language teacher conceptual change.

### 5.6.1 *Data storage and transcription*

Both interviews and observations were digitally recorded and stored electronically as sound files under the file name which included the date and other relevant information for easy identification purposes in separate document folders allocated to individual participants (for illustration, see Figure 5.2). Interviews were either transcribed verbatim or partial transcriptions and/or summaries were typed up as word documents. Similarly, observed lessons were transcribed and fieldnotes made during the classroom observations were word-processed and integrated with the transcripts of the audio-recorded lessons into a single document describing a particular lesson. In some instances, word-processed observation fieldnotes were the main observational data records.

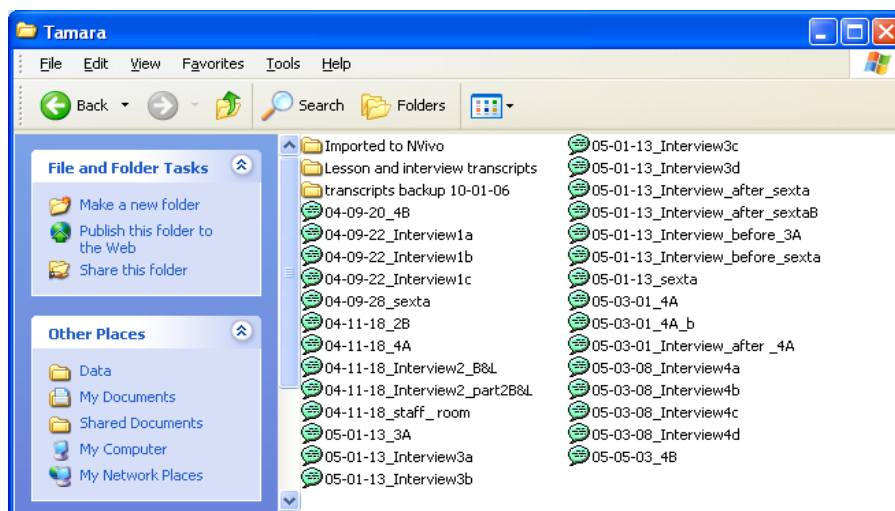


Figure 5.2: A computer screen shot displaying the storage of sound files of an individual participant.

### 5.6.2 *Pre-coding of qualitative data*

The process of the initial analysis, or what Dörnyei (2007b) terms the “pre-coding” stage of qualitative analysis, was simultaneous with the transcription process. As I was transcribing the recordings in a word processor, I highlighted important segments in the transcript, inserted my own commentaries as annotations in different font colour and continued the reflective process on the data by expanding my thoughts in my research journal. At the same time, I kept track of categories emerging from the data with brief descriptions and possible relationships.

This type of initial analysis was not restricted to the phase after the fieldwork, but also occurred between its individual phases as part of the basic preparation procedure before returning to the site in the subsequent data collection phase. It involved going through the observation field notes and listening to the previously recorded interviews and either loosely transcribing them or writing summaries if time did not allow full transcription. I highlighted and wrote memos on potentially important emerging themes that I felt needed to be followed up in the next phase of the fieldwork.

As the description of this process reveals, by the time I finalised my transcripts I had familiarised myself with the data to such an extent that I had developed a list of emerging themes and their possible relationships, which, in turn, provided a guiding framework for a more systematic coding procedure conducted in NVivo software.

### 5.6.3 NVivo analysis: Coding, annotating, memoing, and linking ideas

I conducted the initial analysis of the qualitative data in Word files (mainly because of my initial lack of knowledge and skill in using the NVivo package), before importing the transcribed documents into NVivo 7 software (for an illustration of how the data records were organised in NVivo, see Figure 5.3).

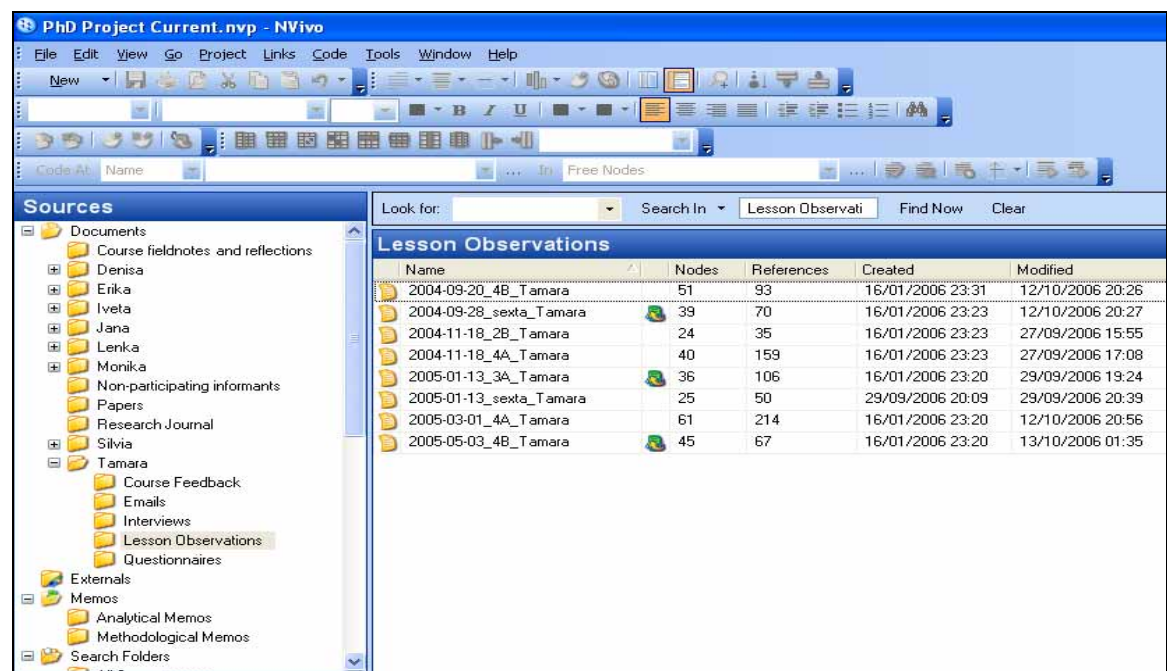


Figure 5.3: A computer screen shot illustrating the way data records were stored and organised in NVivo.

Although the preceding phase could have been seen as a waste of time, having to start the coding from scratch in NVivo, this is only true in the technical sense of manually having to create nodes (as codes in NVivo are called) that had already been identified in the previous phase. However, the ‘outside-NVivo phase’ was undoubtedly instrumental in pre-empting the problems of “coding traps” (L. Richards, 2005) when researchers inexperienced in using the software are tempted to create vast numbers of codes indiscriminately (see, e.g. Shoaib, 2004). By the time I reached my ‘NVivo phase’, I had developed a clear picture of my data and could start exploring purposefully the emerging relationships.

On numerous re-readings of the transcribed data new interpretative and analytical nodes (Miles & Huberman, 1994; L. Richards, 2005; L. Richards & Morse, 2007) were added to my list and new ideas were explored through a number of analytical tools available in NVivo, each of them fulfilling a different function:

- *Methodological memos*, whose main purpose was to record ideas regarding the methodological process, such as why certain nodes were created (for an illustration of such memo, see Figure 5.4).

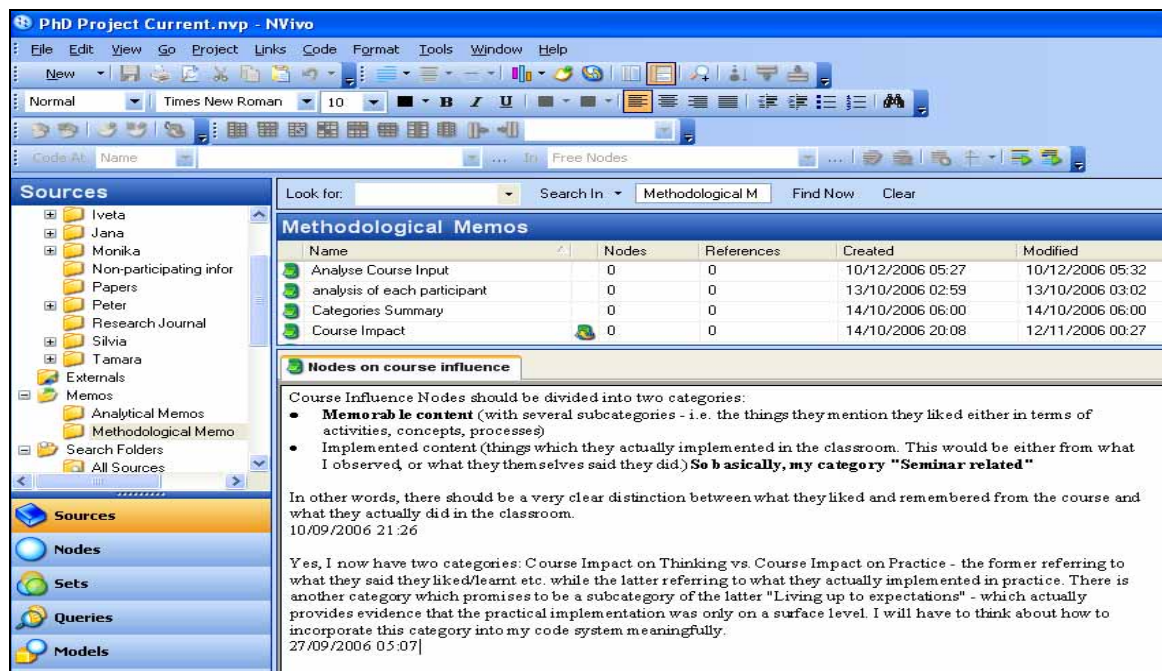


Figure 5.4: Sample NVivo output of a methodological memo

- *Analytical memos*, that is, reflections about emerging ideas, which are rightly considered to be the documents where real analysis takes place (cf. Dörnyei, 2007b). Insights in the initial research journal mentioned in Section 5.6.2 served as impetus for a more thorough

engagement with the topics in analytical memos in NVivo. For a sample of this type of memo, see Figure 5.5.

Analytical Memos					
Name	Nodes	References	Created	Modified	
Learning engagement	2	2	29/09/2006 19:26	09/11/2006 21:52	
Model of Change through talk	1	1	14/10/2006 06:24	09/11/2006 21:58	
Monika 3A vs 3B class	1	1	14/10/2006 06:24	09/11/2006 22:01	
Monika as Company Owner	1	1	05/03/2006 04:59	26/08/2007 02:19	

Monika as Company Owner					
05/03/2006 - 05:00:36					
<p>See interview 1 - Monika as a Company Owner - this metaphor is her own, she uses this as a metaphor for the management of her class. There are various roles occupied by students in their company (i.e. class) and she is the owner.</p> <p>This may indicate potential problems that I detected in Monika's approach - mainly the inability to let go, especially when it comes to managerial tasks which she seems to really enjoy. In fact, now that she is in a real "ownership" of her company she probably doesn't have a further need of management and organisation in her approach to teaching. I'll need to look into this.</p> <p>19/10/2006 02:28  In her interview 3, there is a very interesting moment. She talks about her beliefs about student motivation and student learning which seem to be based on her experiential knowledge and so seem to be genuine representation of what she believes. However, the episode that follows in that interview points to the Company Owner being still more dominant and therefore perhaps preventing her from fully engaging in motivational teaching practice. She does not want to give up her control, test marking is the arena of her control which she does not intend to relinquish.</p> <p>19/10/2006 04:11  I really think this category will be one of those responsible for the lack of change in Monika. Similar categories also point to the absence of genuine change (e.g. desire to project positive image of changed teacher, perceived superiority) and the reason why she adopted such an approach may again have the common denominator. Monika's image of her as a Superior Company Owner.</p>					

Figure 5.5: Sample NVivo output of an analytical memo

- *Annotations*, fulfilling the function of brief notes, provided a further detail or an interpretative comment about a particular event described in the data record. The scribbled notes in the margins of my observation field notes which were initially integrated into observation documents and distinguished from the 'raw' data by different font colour were transformed into annotations once the documents have been imported to NVivo. For an illustration of this type of tool in NVivo, see Figure 5.6 where two annotations can be seen, each relating to the different data segment highlighted in the observation document.

01-04-09-24_Erika_Bright Heads	
T: OK. Very good. So now, stand up everybody and come here. (they do, some comments, some disciplining. Juraj has hit Lenka while he was jumping.)	
T: So you know what implications there are? That when you come here next time? You will not?	
Juraj: Jump.	
T: That's it. Now, we're looking at the picture and we'll say the words loudly and then quietly. We're looking at the picture. Can we speak loudly and quietly?	
Ss: (in chorus, quietly) Yes.	
T: OK. So try to repeat after me. We'll always say it loudly? And then very quietly. OK? (2) Potato!	
Ss: (shout, in chorus) Potato!	
T: (whispers) Potato.	
Ss: (whisper) Potato.	
Annotations	
Item	Content
9	This is one of those rare moments when she actually praises the students. And when it is done, this is usually how. In a neutral way.
10	This disciplining is done in a very different way. The student is actually led to understand the implications of his behaviour.

Figure 5.6: Sample NVivo output of an annotated observation transcript

- ‘See also’ links, which were invaluable in enabling me to cross-reference relevant data records, memos, nodes or data segments; this proved particularly useful when constructing summaries of individual research participants and preparing the final presentation of the project results. Figure 5.7 illustrates an analytical memo with its ideas linked to the original data records. These links, marked by a wavy line under the text that is cross-referenced, are ‘live’, i.e. instantly accessible.

Analytical Memos					
Name	Nodes	References	Created	Modified	
iveta Summary	2	2	27/09/2006 02:20	18/12/2006 22:59	
Learning engagement	2	2	29/09/2006 19:26	09/11/2006 21:52	
Model of Change through talk	1	1	14/10/2006 06:24	09/11/2006 21:58	

Learning engagement
---------------------

However, what is striking (and this is not only in Tamara's class, but also in Monika's and I'm sure I'd find many other examples) is that the students don't have any opportunity to think about stuff, to critically examine, to really discuss in a meaningful way. It's all about language, about form, etc. but meaning is somehow not important, and often trivial. Also see my comments in Monika's interview especially in her 3A class.

It is clear from the observations that students are actually not given any opportunities to think. They are even robbed of the little chance they have to explain their decisions, the teacher does it all for them.

13/10/2006 02:30  
Looking at Tamara's lessons, I think opportunities for learning are killed whenever students make the effort to come up with something new, when they start to critically examine or when they start thinking about their own personal experience or when they are creative. This is usually halted by the teacher and there might be many reasons for that. (e.g. desire to control, perceived threat, inability to critically examine, etc.)

Figure 5.7: Sample NVivo output of a memo cross-referenced through ‘see also’ links



- *Models and category maps.* This facility enabled me to create visual displays of what was happening in the data, for example, by creating category maps, an early version of which can be found in Figure 5.8.

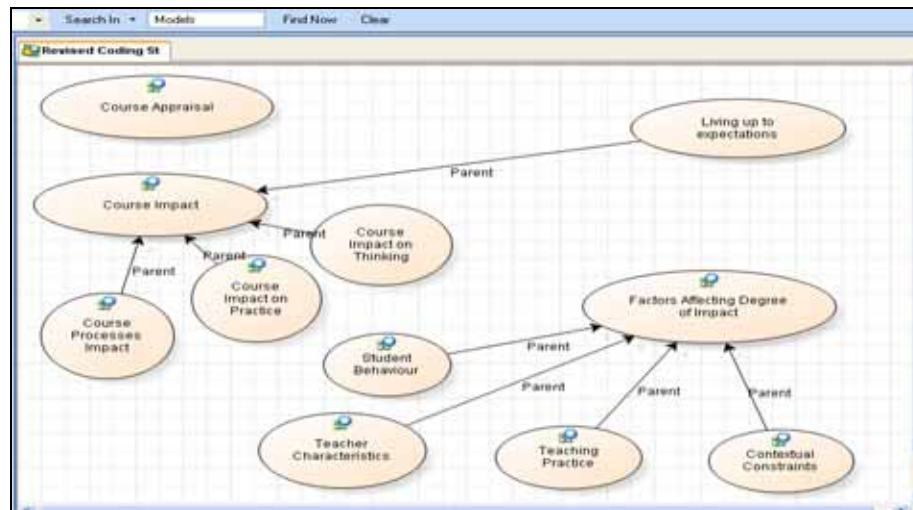


Figure 5.8: NVivo sample of an early category catalogue displayed as a map

The major advantage of conducting the analysis in the NVivo software was being able to work “live” with the data segments (L. Richards, 2005), that is, browse the data coded at individual nodes, split, merge and/or re-name nodes, re-sort coding trees, and re-code the content as data were interrogated and ideas explored, without altering data records in any way or losing the context of the coded segments. Through this iterative in-depth interrogation process, its rigorous recording in annotations and memos, by cross-referencing these through ‘see also’ links and displaying the resulting ideas in models and category maps, a theory of the language teacher conceptual change began to emerge.

Let me just reiterate at this point that because the function of the supplementary types of data (i.e. non-participants’ data, focus groups, or course-relevant data) was to complement the picture and to either illustrate, question or confirm the findings from the primary data sources, their analysis was not as rigorous and as systematic as described here. Rather, the insights gained from these types of data sources served as food for reflection on the project recorded in the journal and analytical as well as methodological memos that significantly facilitated data analysis.

#### 5.6.4 Theory building

The emerging results of the in-depth analytical process described above prompted me to further investigate the literature on human learning/change to see whether the findings and constructs that appeared salient in this project resonated in any way with established theories in social sciences. The interactive process of interrogating the data as well as existing theories provided me with a conceptual basis in which the theoretical model derived from the data could be grounded. Figure 5.9 represents a finalised coding structure, the result of repeated re-sorting, through which language teacher change is explained in this thesis.

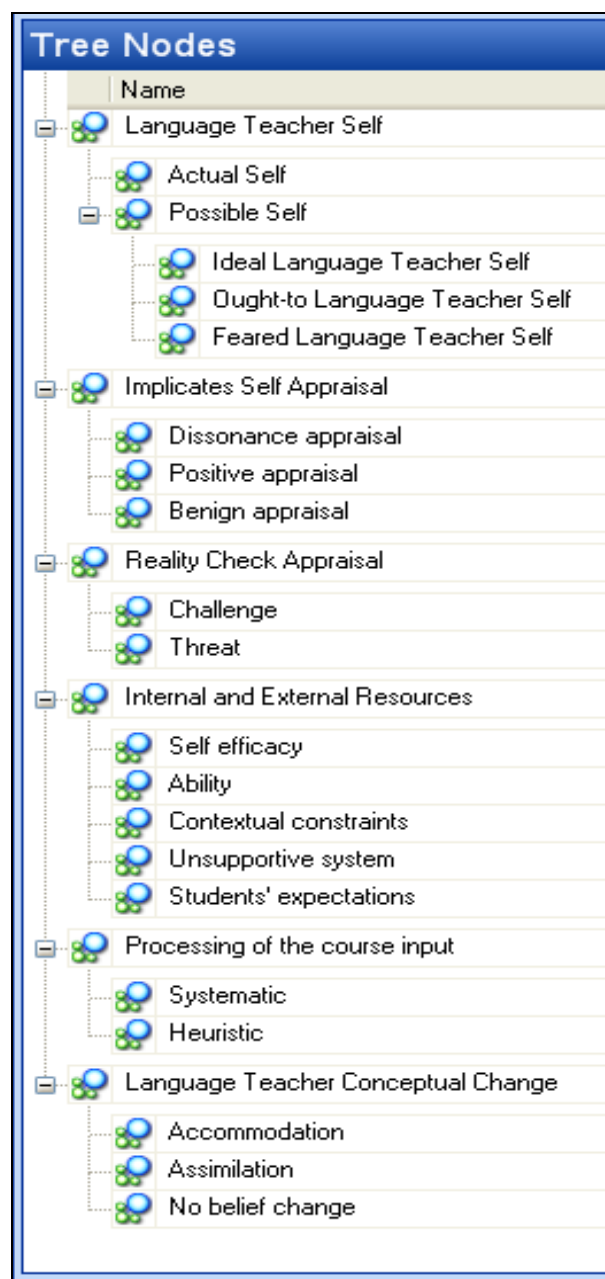


Figure 5.9: NVivo output of a finalised coding tree structure



### **5.6.5 On the issue of validity and reliability of the qualitative analysis**

The issues of validity (i.e. the degree to which the research results are founded in the data) and reliability (i.e. the degree of consistency) in qualitative research have been the subject of heated debates (L. Richards, 2005). While some researchers have adopted ‘parallel’ quality criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) as an alternative to the ones adopted in quantitative research, there is a general consensus that qualitative researchers must demonstrate that their work is “solid, stable, and correct” (L. Richards & Morse, 2007, p. 190). Dörnyei (2007b) summarises several strategies that have been proposed to this end, including:

- *Building up an image of researcher integrity* through audit trails, contextualisation, identifying potential researcher bias or examining alternatives, exceptions and contradictions.
- *Validity/reliability checks* by incorporating member and/or peer checking into research designs.
- *Research design-based strategies*, such as method and data triangulation, prolonged engagement and persistent observation or longitudinal research designs.

Because coding reliability would not necessarily be secured by having independent researchers code a section of the data set (L. Richards, 2005), I adopted a different procedure to the same end. I revisited and re-coded the data segments after some elapsed time to assess differences between earlier and later coding. Of course, the evolving nature of the codes precluded from reaching identical results, however, this process facilitated the adjustment of coding in the earlier data records in the view of the new codes established. By (1) documenting the practical, methodological and ethical choices I made (see the next chapter), (2) providing an ‘audit trail’, that is, a detailed and transparent description of how codes were generally arrived at and how they evolved into concepts identified in the present theoretical model (see e.g. the discussion of the Ideal and Ought-to Language Teacher Selves in Chapter 8 and (3) offering a detailed description of research methodology in this chapter, I believe I have demonstrated the reliability of the analytical process and the validity of the claims made in this thesis.

### **5.6.6 Questionnaire and mixed methods analysis**

A statistical procedure of T-tests was performed to assess the changes in each group’s appraisal of their classroom environment. Admittedly, the developmental trends in these perceptions can be a result of a number of complex issues. Therefore, any change between

pre- and post-test data could not have been easily ascribed to the impact of the TD course. That was the reason I recruited several student groups of non-participating teachers serving as control groups, thereby achieving a quasi-experimental design. To assess the differences between the two data sets, I used the statistical procedure two-way ANOVA and followed the standard procedures to code and process the data as described in Dörnyei (2007b).

The mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods occurred in the interpretation stage of my project in which I interrogated how the findings generated by the different methods corroborate or contradict each other. Further analytical procedures (described in the next chapter) were adopted to find explanations for initially contradicting results.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has described in detail why the current project was conducted, who the research participants were and how they were recruited for the study and what methodological procedures were followed. In the effort to provide as transparent picture of the procedures as possible and thus to demonstrate reliability and validity, I provided a detailed account of the procedures involved in each method and a reflection on the status of the data each of them was believed to yield. Finally, this chapter has also explained and illustrated the analytical procedures adopted with the purpose to build a theoretical model of language teacher conceptual change.

## **6 Methodological, Practical and Ethical Challenges**

The text of this chapter combines edited versions of two papers which have been accepted for publication (Hobbs & Kubanyiova, in press; Kubanyiova, in press). Because methodological, practical and ethical challenges inherent in situated research are almost always omitted from research reports, I decided to discuss these issues in a separate chapter to emphasise their importance, even though they represent an integral part of research methodology. As the chapter is based on journal articles, the material to be presented contains extracts of the dataset that will be introduced in the next chapter. The first of the two papers I will draw on (Section 6.1) was co-written with a fellow researcher, Valerie Hobbs, and while I attempted to edit the text and only include examples relating to my own research wherever possible, it must be acknowledged that the study was a joint venture. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Valerie for agreeing for the text to appear in this thesis.

### ***6.1 Methodological and Practical Issues***

Researching language teachers requires intensive involvement of both the researcher and the researched. Yet, the available methodological literature in the field often paints a blurred picture of the nature of such involvement and provides little advice on dealing with challenges inherent in this type of research. The first half of this chapter will therefore explore the specific obstacles and issues that the particular context of researching teachers often presents. In addition to examining what the literature proposes in regards to each issue, specific examples from the data will be presented and concrete advice will be offered to fill the gap present in the literature. The strategies concern three crucial issues: how to gain access to research participants, how to sustain their motivation to remain involved in the research project, and finally, how to handle the physical and emotional strain on the researcher.

#### **6.1.1 Recruiting research participants**

Recruiting teachers as participants for a research study is often a non-issue in the area of teacher education primarily because of the context such research has traditionally been conducted in. Typically, researchers working as teacher educators on pre-service teacher preparation programmes elicit data as part of the required coursework, such as reflective journals, autobiographies and lesson observations. However, researchers who are not

involved in teacher education are not in a position to gather data in such ways. Naturally, therefore, their research interests must often yield to projects that are feasible in terms of available programmes, access, willingness of potential research participants to take part and their good will to disclose information.

The available research literature provides only limited advice on how to recruit one's teacher sample. Most research manuals acknowledge the problematic nature of gaining access to a research site (see e.g. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Denscombe, 2003; Mackey & Gass, 2005) and the importance of skilful negotiation with the gatekeepers and/or research participants (Brewer, 2000). We are advised by McKay (2006) to contact key administrators for permission to work in a particular teaching context, and only then to approach individual teachers to ask for their cooperation. However, little is said about the fact that, unlike some enviable exceptions (see Spada, Ranta, & Lightbown, 1996), teachers are not often involved in the initiation of research projects (Rossiter, 2001) and thus do not readily accept them once the gatekeepers' permission has been granted. On the contrary, most teachers and teachers in training more often than not do not wish to have their teaching scrutinised by outsiders, are overburdened with heavy workloads and have their own personal and professional agendas, such as completion of teacher education coursework, that are often incompatible with those of the researcher's (Dörnyei, 2007b; Mackey & Gass, 2005).

In teacher education research, therefore, opportunities must be created, social networks established and/or thoroughly scrutinised, and recommended potential cases sensitively approached, all of which requires meticulous planning and preparation. My study, for example, would not have been possible without a year's intensive work involving networking and writing grant proposals which enabled me to organise a promotion conference for the target group of teachers. And even when the potential research participant teachers had experienced the value of the project for themselves, the task to convince overworked teachers that the time they would have to sacrifice and the risks they would have to take would be well worth the effort still proved challenging. The following journal entry describes my disappointment after what appeared a highly successful promotion of the research project.

*I am really puzzled. The conference participants seemed genuinely interested and enthusiastic, many of them, in fact, told me about their desire to join the research... Now I'm sitting here almost three weeks later with replies from 2(!) teachers who MIGHT be interested... Did I scare them off somehow? Or what did I do wrong?*  
(Personal journal)

In the light of the difficulties associated with acquiring research participants by non-teacher educator researchers, we offer the following suggestions for recruiting teachers.

- *Be creative in identifying your research site.* Start researching and networking early on to explore the availability of research contexts that would be of relevance to your research focus. Assess possibilities that are open to you. Would you get valuable data if you were in the role of a course assistant? (Contact the institution to see if this is a viable option.) If it is more of an insider perspective you are after, you may need to consider joining as a course participant, as Valerie did. If there are no existing programmes appropriate for your study, you may need to develop one and offer it to potential research participants, as I did.
- *Develop ways of 'selling' your research project.* Teachers must see clearly why they should trust you and what they can get from the programme. My project, for example, was promoted at a professional conference organised for this purpose (with two additional invited speakers) on the topics of my TD course for the target group of teachers, who thus had the chance to experience the content for themselves and make an informed decision with regard to participation in the subsequent longitudinal study. Institutional backing plays a crucial role and must not be underestimated.
- *Win the trust of potential participants before requesting participation.* Spend time with the teachers and show genuine interest in their concerns and problems. The initial conference I organised was invaluable in this respect.
- *Familiarise yourself with the context and adopt an 'unassuming' approach.* With my growing understanding of the specific context, I found that my post-conference email calling for participation may have been too intimidating in that it assumed too high a level of commitment to professional development and L2 linguistic confidence and thus received limited response. After sending a more succinct e-mail in the teachers' native language of Slovakian, I was able to recruit the number of participants I needed.
- *Be sensitive to participants' anxieties and adopt a flexible approach.*
- *Be open about required responsibilities, but hurry to emphasise benefits.* Some requirements, such as lesson observations often put teachers off engaging in research projects. Ensure, therefore, that you emphasise a supportive and developmental

rather than judgmental approach. Be prepared to stress the value of the project in terms of teachers' own personal and professional gains.

### **6.1.2 Sustaining teachers' commitment**

Securing teachers' consent to participate may not guarantee that their commitment will be sustained for its duration. In fact, it is one of the primary tenets of research ethics that the research participants' right to withdraw from the research at any time must always be safeguarded. And so, as McKay (2006) and Mackey and Gass (2005) point out, attrition must be expected. Indeed, there will inevitably be disruptions because, however hard it is to accept, the smooth progress of a research project is never a number one priority on the participating teachers' and teacher trainees' agenda. Getting pregnant, moving house, quitting their job, or being sacked are just some examples of what can happen to research participants in teacher education research, and something unpredicted does indeed happen in almost all longitudinal projects, however detailed and thought-through the research plan might be. Regrettably, no pre-emptive measures can be taken in this respect other than ensuring that the number of research participants allows for such attrition. There is nothing more disheartening than investing all the time and energy to a project with one research participant teacher who, in the middle of the study, decides to make a major career change.

However, there can be other, more specific and research-related reasons why research participants withdraw their participation, and a number of strategies can be employed by the researcher to sustain commitment. In the following section we discuss two issues that may affect the research participants' commitment negatively: *too large a commitment in terms of time and energy* and *the perceived power relations gap*. We then offer a number of strategies that can help to minimise these.

#### *Demanding a large commitment*

Most research requires some sacrifice and commitment from its participants, particularly their time, effort, and often mental and physical energy, commonly referred to as the 'cost' component of the 'cost/benefits ratio'. Teacher education research is certainly no exception, requiring perhaps an even greater sacrifice because teachers and teachers-in-training already have their own work load to which researchers will inevitably add. Negotiating this addition of stress and workload is difficult and fraught with challenges and, if not handled with care, may lead to eventual withdrawal of participation. The literature does not adequately prepare the teacher-researcher for this but tends to offer general advice instead that is not always suited for the specific context of teacher-based research. As Marshall and Rossman (2006) write, "When people adjust their priorities and routines to help the researcher, or even just

tolerate the researcher's presence, they are giving of themselves. The researcher is indebted and should be sensitive to this" (p. 81). In the specific context of researching teachers, ethical issues arise surrounding the placing of unreasonable demands on individuals already steeped in work and responsibility, rendering typical suggestions offered in the literature, such as sending a letter of thanks (Cohen et al., 2000), inadequate or insufficient.

The nature of the demands placed on teachers as research participants may require extraordinary creativity, flexibility, and insight on the part of the researchers. For example, initially, my research design employed data collection methods recommended in the literature on studying teacher change, including regular reflective journal writing, interviews, and stimulated recall technique. However, it soon became clear that some of these were simply not suitable for the context under study because of the research participants' heavy work commitments and administrative responsibilities. Interviews, for instance, proved difficult to schedule outside the normal working day of the participants, and those that were done on site were marked by endless interruptions when teachers had to deal with their own priorities (e.g. dealing with colleagues' inquires, signing class books that students brought to the staff room, fixing a CD player, or remembering that materials for the following class had not been photocopied and making alternative arrangements) even though they were supposed to have time off. Such is the reality teachers face, and therefore flexibility is a particularly salient requirement in classroom research. Qualitative research is well-known for its emergent nature in terms of research questions, participant sampling and analytical outcomes, but with some aspects of teacher research we can add that even the most suitable data collection method might be specified only during the course of the investigation.

In addition to maintaining a flexible approach to data collection methodology in the face of the high level of teachers' stress and responsibilities, a strategy of reciprocity can be useful, defined by Davis (1995) as an exchange of goods or services for the time and effort participants contribute to the study. However, as previously discussed, reciprocity techniques specific to the context of researching teachers are not offered in the current literature, and sustaining commitment despite the pressures of normal working life that the teachers face is an issue that the literature seems to be quiet about.

In the light of the above considerations, the following strategies are offered to help to sustain the teacher-participants' commitment to the project:

- *Ensure your research plan is aligned with what is workable in the particular context.* Certain data collection methods may be simply incompatible with the demands placed on the research participants by their own teaching contexts. As a

result, some data collection methods will probably have to be revised (e.g. making field notes of the hurried conversations about the previously taught class instead of using stimulated recall technique), while some may need abandoning altogether (e.g. regular reflective journals).

- *Be sensitive to the teachers' needs.* If it is revealed that there may be other reasons for teachers' joining a research programme in addition to professional development, make the effort to satisfy those as well. For example, I found out that the opportunity to practise English and learn about English culture was an invaluable 'side-benefit' for most participants. I therefore made sure I supplied materials to meet those diverse needs (e.g. sent handouts with ready-made activities which were not part of the course but which the teachers expressed interest in; brought second-hand books for those who enjoyed reading English-language fiction, etc.) It is also important to keep in mind that the teachers still have their own personal joys and problems. Be sensitive to those as well and make it clear that they have priority over the project.
- *Keep in touch* with the participants, particularly if the programme is part of a longitudinal study. Short and friendly e-mails to the participants throughout and beyond the project can be a means of maintaining an ongoing personal dialogue and thus sustaining commitment. However, we must also make sure that we do not overwhelm the participants with e-mails or letters and that our communication with them takes account of their specific contexts.
- *Ensure the teachers constantly experience the benefits of their participation.* Although mentioned in the section on recruiting research participants, this strategy must be maintained throughout the research project. If a training programme has been developed specifically for research purposes, the pay-off for the participants must be clear.
- *Adopt the position of 'teacher's aide'.* Think of ways of lightening their work load in compensation for additional responsibilities. This can mean preparing materials for the teachers, distributing handouts in their classes, discussing new marking procedures, offering non-threatening suggestions, and assisting in lesson preparation.
- *Show consistent appreciation of the research participants' commitment.* Snacks and little treats are always appreciated. Thank-you letters and end-of-course certificates are important end-of-project strategies to reassure the participants that their participation has been valuable despite the increased workload and/or stress level that the project may have placed on them.



### *Reducing the power distance*

In qualitative research, building trusting and positive relationships is deemed to be a basic essential (see Russell, 2005). However, as I discovered in the course of data collection, relationships with research participants in teacher education research are neither easy to build, nor do they necessarily warrant more authentic data. Although some advice is offered on power distance between researchers and second language students (see McKay, 2006, pp. 54-55), this usually involves techniques to employ in data reporting rather than during data collection (see e.g. Polio, 1996).

During the data collection, the issue of power difference was an ongoing one, revealing that teachers, in particular, often feel that observation of their teaching or even interviews inevitably involve some sort of assessment, creating a hierarchy of power that can lead to problems in the relationship between teacher and researcher. Certainly, the researcher, frequently seen as an ‘evaluator’ or ‘assessor’, can seem to occupy a position of authority over the research participants, who may, in some situations, feel intimidated, nervous, or even angry at the thought of their actions and conversations being recorded and analysed. This can easily lead to withdrawal from participation.

The perceived gap between researchers and teachers is well documented in the literature. As Borg (2003a) notes, “The relationship in TESOL between researchers and teachers is definitely not one made in heaven; it has been described as a static disjunction, characterized by an awkward silence, and seen as the subject of extensive agonizing within our field” (p. 1). What is not dealt with is how researchers can go about reducing this gap, although currently, some researchers are investigating ways in which to involve teachers in conducting their own classroom-based research (see Borg, 2003a, 2003d). That being said, works like Barrie Thorne’s (1993) groundbreaking research on the significance of gender in the social lives of schoolchildren offers techniques for negotiating shorter power distance, albeit between researchers and children, including spending more time with them than with the teachers and avoiding manager-like interventions and positions of authority. These suggestions proved useful when modified to suit the context of researching teachers, and we offer the following advice based on her insights:

- *Avoid long conversations and alignment with individuals in positions of authority* (teacher trainers, supervisors, etc.) in the presence of research participants. In this

way, the researcher can visibly align him/herself with the participants and reduce power distance.

- *Avoid showcasing knowledge, particularly about teaching, and thus being seen as a 'know-it-all'.* This applies specifically to contexts in which the researcher is a participant observer. During interviews and post-observation conferences, the researcher needs to adopt as unassuming and accepting approach as possible and only provide non-threatening suggestions when solicited.
- *Spend 'down time' in locations where research participants typically gather, again, aligning yourself with the participants.*
- *Conduct visible actions like note-taking and audio recording as inconspicuously as possible* so as to avoid placing emphasis on your position as a researcher. It may, for example, be inappropriate to take notes during interviews. When notes must be taken visibly, the teachers should be informed of the nature and purpose of such activity. For example, I realised that my ongoing note-taking during observations caused one of my research participants great anxiety. After my assurance that it was not the purpose to note down things the teacher did wrong, but rather describe in detail what transpired in class, the research participant started to feel much more at ease, beginning to talk more openly about her classes.
- *Avoid evaluating the teachers' teaching, even when judgmental comments are solicited.* This applies specifically to post-observation conferences, which generally tend to be perceived as evaluative.
- *Talk openly about your own failures in teaching* to show the research participants that you, too, struggle with everyday teaching problems despite your researcher status.
- *Speak the language of the research participants.* Do not overwhelm the participants with information or technical and academic language, which can be highly intimidating.
- *Acknowledge their expertise.* Ask them for their suggestions and implement them. Show them that you are learning from them.
- *Accept the fact that however hard you try, you might never be able to close the gap.* After all, they may have agreed to participate because they saw you as an expert. Or the very fact that you are researching the programme may inherently imply power difference. However, the researcher must be aware of this and the possible desire to please the researcher, which has implications for data analysis.

### 6.1.3 Keeping sane: Handling physical and emotional strain

As Schachter and Gass (1996) point out, “reading the journal reports is much like going to the professional theater – it all looks so easy, so professional” (p. viii). Similarly, the impression one has from reading research manuals is that research is a fairly straightforward exercise provided all suggested steps are observed and plans are realistic (K. Richards, 2003). What one does not read very much about is how physically and emotionally taxing social research can be for the seasoned, not to mention the novice researcher, who faces stress stemming from a rigorous timetable and the subsequent heavy work load as well as the demands of ongoing data analysis and unpredictable but inevitable complications like illness or pregnancy. As Pasquero, Schmitt and Beaulieu (2001) point out, “personal and psychological factors can be just as demanding as methodological ones, sometimes to the point of undermining a researcher’s motivation to pursue” (p. 29). While it may seem enough simply to warn the researcher of the stress to come, as the current literature does, providing practical and specific suggestions may go further in preparing the teacher-researcher for the realities of conducting qualitative research.

As my own experience showed, attending to various events on the research site, arranging interviews, observing teaching practice, and maintaining meticulous field notes throughout requires a great deal from the researcher, who often has to put aside fatigue and stress whilst the data can still be collected. For example, due to a combination of reasons, I only had approximately two weeks for each of the five phases of the data collection in which to accommodate the teaching schedules of the eight research participants and arrange observations and interviews with each of them. As a result, the timetable was often tight and the non-stop data collection I faced gave me little time to jot down ideas while on site. Often there was too little energy left to write elaborate reflections after I arrived home typically no earlier than 7 pm each evening, and rough notes of crucial things to remember had to suffice before time for more systematic reflections was available. The following journal entry serves as evidence of the high stress level I faced:

*I am frustrated and exhausted and the doubts are again creeping in whether it has any sense at all, this project. I spent ages preparing for this session and haven't slept for two nights. If I survive tomorrow, it'll be a miracle.*

My research project faced further, perhaps even more unpredictable problems, which are quite classic examples of what can go wrong in classroom-based research and which are, as Dörnyei (2007b) points out with wit, too reminiscent of Murphy’s Laws. For example, two

of my research participants became pregnant in the middle of the project and although they remained involved in the project, their participation was affected. Yet another of the participants moved house and set up her own language school, giving me no access to her classes because of the great travel distance involved. She, however, continued to attend the course. To further complicate matters, I became sick (most probably due to the heavy load discussed above) during one of the data collection phases and while I was still able to organise for interviews and lesson observations, rescheduling of the input session proved impossible. Thus, the originally intended length of the course as well as the number of the planned visits to Slovakia had to be reduced. Certainly, unpredictable and unavoidable twists such as these in the course of the data collection are often a great source of anxiety. Even the best laid plans can go astray, and there are moments when the researcher simply *cannot* win.

Admittedly, every researcher faces difficulties, yet the realities of the stress and fatigue faced by researchers in a researching-teaching context cannot and should not be simply waved away or dismissed as just part of the process. Whilst, as Marshall and Rossman (2006) note, adequate planning can help to prepare the researcher for eventual dilemmas, issues can and will arise in the context of researching teachers that require great fortitude of the researcher. At present, the literature is largely limited to offering general warnings regarding the potential stress researchers may experience, for example noting that “researchers’ plans for role management have to include self-care strategies to deal with fatigue, with ‘compassion stress’ and other powerful emotions” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 92). On the whole, however, more focus is placed in the literature on the stress that research participants rather than researchers experience (Cohen et al., 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The following practical suggestions are therefore offered for dealing with the researcher’s physical and emotional strain in the context of researching teachers:

- *Schedule a specific time each day to relax and collect your thoughts.* This may seem like a luxury when faced with the necessity of collecting all available data in the time frame given, but removing yourself from the research context will provide valuable perspective and keep your sanity intact.
- *Prepare additional data collection methods to employ should holes in the data emerge after the primary data collection has been completed.* Such fall-back strategies will reduce the stress of having only limited time for ongoing data analysis. For example, asking participants’ permission to contact them for more information or clarification after the course will prove valuable when more information is needed.

- *Keep a research journal.* Thinking about what transpired on site is as important (if not more so) as working with the actual data records and it also has considerable therapeutic value. You should therefore develop efficient ways of recording and storing these thoughts. If the time does not allow for elaborate reflections, learn to note down key incidents that will be developed into more elaborate descriptions and reflections as soon as you are outside the field. It is also possible to record immediate insights on the tape recorder and work with them as soon as the pressure is less intense.
- *Be aware that the stresses and physical demands of researching teachers can help you to identify with the lives of teachers.* By experiencing similar heavy responsibilities, you will gain insight into the experience of your participants.
- *However conscientious you are and however involved in your project, remember it is still just a project.* As K. Richards (2003) notes, “Always remember that you’re not trying to change the whole world – just come to a better understanding of some small aspect of it” (p. 236). Your health, both mental and physical can suffer if you push it too hard. I was given a rather bitter reminder of this when I, despite my illness, decided to go ahead with the data collection and then on my way home ended up unconscious in the middle of a motorway (luckily, I still had time to pull out onto the hard shoulder).

#### **6.1.4 Summary**

Consulting research manuals, the impression a novice researcher may get is that, provided suitable methods are selected and a set of guidelines observed, research is a fairly straightforward exercise. However, as Russell (2005) notes and our research projects revealed, the notion of following a logical sequence of pre-planned procedures is far from being the reality in L2 teacher education research and, undoubtedly, in other qualitative research contexts. While the unpredictable and problematic nature of researching teachers has recently been acknowledged in several research manuals in the field of applied linguistics (e.g. Dörnyei, 2007b; Mackey & Gass, 2005; McKay, 2006), the advice on overcoming the obstacles is still scarce and understandably generalised to suit a wider audience and may thus not be relevant to a specific vein of research like second language teachers. Certainly, it is impossible to learn research from books and the value of ‘learning by doing’ should not be downplayed. Nevertheless, an open dialogue about the ‘learning-by-doing’ experience among researchers who share a specific research focus can greatly

facilitate novice researchers' understanding of the complex nature of qualitative research and prepare them better for the inevitable challenges.

Attempting to contribute to this dialogue, this section has explored both the challenges faced whilst conducting this research and the solutions implemented. First, it has been concluded that recruiting teachers for one's research is far from being easy and may involve meticulous, long-term planning and creativity in finding ways of 'selling' the project (see Section 5.4.1 for more details). Second, even if the teachers' consent to participate is secured, there are often multitudes of reasons why their initial motivation may peter out. Sustaining research participants' commitment requires constant effort, sensitivity and reflection on the part of the researcher and the issues of large commitment and perceived power relations gap need to be addressed. Last, working with language teachers requires high emotional involvement, and intensive field work can cause a great deal of both mental and physical strain. Employing strategies that help the researcher to handle the pressures is not a luxury, but a must – the good news is that we have survived our field work, which offers some validation to the strategies shared above.

Finally, let me emphasise that although L2 teacher education research brings with itself its own peculiar dilemmas, frustrations, and issues, there is also a deep sense of purpose and satisfaction from conducting it. As we (Valerie and I) were reflecting upon our new experience and the endless hurdles we met along the way, we paused to think whether we would have set out to do it if we had anticipated all the challenges. The answer we both gave without much hesitation was: yes, we would have. The inconveniences we suffered in order to pursue the topic of our deepest interests paid off enormously, and we have also acquired a new and deep understanding of working with teachers and conducting responsible research that seeks to accept, appreciate, and celebrate the people who are at its very heart.

## **6.2 Ethical Challenges**

The prominent current tendency in applied linguistics to situate its theory and research has seen parallel shifts in the type of research methodologies being employed. Increasingly, de-contextualised laboratory methodologies are giving way to more holistic approaches and these in turn involve a significant shift in the researchers' roles, relationships and ethical responsibilities. By providing examples of specific ethical dilemmas that arose in the process of a longitudinal classroom-based research project, I aim to illustrate that adherence to general 'macroethical' principles established in professional codes of ethics may be inadequate for ensuring ethical research in the situated era, which warrants the expansion of

the ethical lenses and consideration of alternative microethical models. I conclude with a call for developing a more contextualised code of practice that would integrate both perspectives and recognise the ability to reflect upon the ethical consequences of research practice as a core competence of applied linguists.

### **6.2.1 Situated applied linguistics research**

The field of applied linguistics has seen a growing tendency to situate its research in the sociocultural context, triggered by attempts to account for the social aspects of knowledge construction in an integrated manner. This trend is obvious in almost all areas of investigation, particularly in the SLA domain where the traditionally cognitivist approach is being increasingly complemented by situated perspectives of learning, such as sociocultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Swain, Brooks, & Tocalli-Beller, 2002), sociocognitive perspective (Atkinson, 2002; Ohta, 2001) or poststructuralism (Pavlenko, 2002) (see also reviews in Block, 2003; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). Language socialization has been suggested as a new paradigm for SLA that embraces the situated perspective (Watson-Gegeo, 2004), and socially informed approaches have been employed in testing and assessment (McNamara & Roever, 2006; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005), in the study of tasks (Mondada & Pekarek Doehler, 2004; Platt & Brooks, 2002; Swain & Lapkin, 2000) and classroom discourse in general (Kasper, 2006; Markee & Kasper, 2004; Zuengler & Mori, 2002). A focus on situated constructs has become the norm in research on individual differences, including language aptitude and L2 motivation (Dörnyei, 2005), and the social perspective is inherent in the expanding body of research on L2 identity (Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2002). In L2 teacher cognition research, the sociocultural perspective has played a major role in the reconceptualization of the L2 teacher education knowledge-base (K. E. Johnson, 2006).

Methodological shifts have been inevitable in response to this expanding range of more ‘ecological’ (van Lier, 1997, 2000) research interests within the field of applied linguistics. As a result, qualitative approaches, including longitudinal ethnographies, case studies, narratives, and diary studies have become more prominent than ever before (Duff, 2002) and a substantial volume of quantitative and experimental research has moved from laboratories to schools and classrooms, which have been recognised as important research environments for exploration of theoretical questions (Pica, 2005; Spada, 2005).

However, greater contextualisation or ‘situatedness’ of research involves a marked shift in the researchers’ roles and relationships regardless of the actual method pursued, which inevitably increases the likelihood of ethics-related challenges. This is in stark contrast, however, with the fact that discussions of ethical issues in applied linguistics have

until very recently rarely made it to research methods manuals (see review in Duff, 2007) and have often been left implicit or avoided altogether in research reports (Dörnyei, 2007b; Ortega, 2005b). One possible reason for the low prominence of research ethics may have been that applied linguistics research does not generally pose as serious ethical threats as some sociological or clinical research may do and therefore adhering to well established ethical codes of conduct may have been seen more as a matter of routine than a conscious decision-making process that is worthy of elaborate reflection. Whether or not this has been an adequate view, it is my belief that the expanding landscape of situated applied linguistics research has resulted in an altogether new situation in this respect and has created an unquestionable need for a well-defined ethical framework to help to deal with ethically critical episodes. The following section examines various aspects of this framework from both a macro- and micro-perspective.

## **6.2.2 The landscape of research ethics**

In mapping the terrain of research ethics, I first examine this landscape from the ‘bird’s-eye’ perspective of *macroethics*, that is, the general ethical guidelines incorporated into ethical codes of practice and IRB protocols. I then take a more fine-grained approach and explore the micro-perspective of ethical decision-making, which is in this paper referred to as *microethics*. Finally, an alternative ethical framework is presented in which both macro- and microethical perspectives meet.

### *Macroethics of principles*

As has been indicated earlier, the term macroethics embraces two aspects of research ethics: (1) *procedural ethics* (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004), which is the process of seeking approval from a relevant ethics committee (e.g. IRBs) to undertake the proposed research project, and (2) ethical principles articulated in *professional codes of conduct* (e.g. AERA, 1992; APA, 2002). Clearance from one’s institutional ethics committee is an essential step in conducting research particularly in North America, but it has also been increasingly adopted in British and other European institutions, especially where research is funded through external funding bodies (e.g. ESRC and AHRC in the UK). A closer look at this macroethical territory is therefore warranted.

The general macroethical criteria are typically derived from three core principles that serve as moral standards for research involving humans: *respect for persons*, which binds researchers to protect the well-being of the research participants and avoid harm and/or potential risks; *beneficence*, that is, ensuring that the research project yields substantial benefits while minimising harm; and *justice*, or in other words, a fair distribution of research



benefits (Christians, 2000). Complying with the first macroethical principle, the respect for persons, has generally been a matter of routine practice in applied linguistics research. This is, for instance, clear from the *TESOL Quarterly Research Guidelines* which require researchers to produce evidence of informed consent, of measures taken to protect the participants' privacy and maintain anonymity, and, “ideally”, that participants benefited in some way from taking part in the study. As the final requirement suggests and a glance at standard IRB application forms confirms, far less attention has been paid to the principles of beneficence (see also Rounds, 1996; van Lier, 1994). Indeed, the explicit documentation of how the proposed research is believed to benefit the society in general and research participants in particular does not seem to be required by most IRB applications and if so, it is usually only to offset potential risks, in other words to establish the so called ‘risk/benefit ratio’ (see sample documents in Mackey & Gass, 2005). Similarly, the principle of justice has been consistently overlooked in SLA research, which is manifested in the persistent neglect of certain type of L2 populations with research produced, as a result, with the aim of serving only a privileged minority of L2 speakers (Ortega, 2005a).

Recently, there has been a welcome and long-due discussion of this neglected side of ethics in applied linguistics, SLA research in particular. In a special issue of *The Modern Language Journal*, Ortega (2005a) considers the social utility of SLA research to the communities being served as being no less important than maintaining methodological rigour and examining epistemological assumptions. The calls for considering social value as criteria of quality of both quantitative and qualitative research resonate across the special issue papers (e.g. Chapelle, 2005; Crookes, 2005; Spada, 2005).

These recent attempts to open up the debate of ethical research in applied linguistics must be applauded and further engagement with the topic should be encouraged. Even with the best intentions, however, satisfying the general principles of respect for persons, justice, and beneficence does not automatically guarantee that the researcher will be able to ‘sleep well at night’ (Esterberg, 2002). In a highly contextualised case study, for example, how does one secure confidentiality and anonymity of research participants (principle of respect for persons), without compromising the responsibility to produce accurate knowledge (principle of beneficence)? Conversely, can the researcher’s integrity always be exercised without causing psychological harm to the research participants? Or, to give another example, whose definition of social utility should we pursue in our research enterprise when what is believed as socially desirable by the research community may neither be valued nor desired in the researched context? More specifically, what if by the best intentions to serve the researched community (principle of beneficence) we actually violate the participants’ right for self-determination (principle of respect for persons)?

Indeed, there are emerging voices in applied linguistics research that have started to draw attention to some of these ethical tensions in situated research practice (Dörnyei, 2007b; Duff, 2007; Duff & Early, 1996; Polio, 1996; K. Richards, 2003; Rounds, 1996). It has been pointed out that there might be issues of relevance and limits in consent depending on the specific context, that the matter of privacy is not resolved after access has been negotiated, that the principle of confidentiality presents challenges particularly in contextualised case studies, that even the best-meaning practices could lead to coercion or that data might not fully belong to the researcher.

It appears therefore that although the principles of macroethics are necessary, functioning as important signposts in the researcher's practice, they are by no means sufficient (and unambiguous) guides in making ethical choices in the actual practice of conducting research (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Haverkamp, 2005; Helgeland, 2005). The tensions arise because 'big' principles are grounded in the utilitarian tradition of 'greater good' (Haverkamp, 2005) and the attempts of review boards to regulate research practices by imposing an a-priori, context-independent definition of what constitutes 'greater good' largely ignore the relational character of situated research. As a result, relying on the majority-friendly abstract definitions of macroethical principles in ethical codes of conduct does not ensure that harm is not done to individuals. Hence, the next discussion will consider a more contextualised approach to research ethics that acknowledges the value of macroethical guides, yet, does not rigidly cling to them, but recognises instead the particularity of each research context and accordingly, of each ethical decision.

### *Microethics of research practice*

The examples of tensions I suggested earlier are associated with what Guillemin and Gillam (2004) term "ethically important moments", which arise in the course of a situated research project and for which macroethical principles may hold ambiguous, contradictory, or no answers at all. It is precisely this context of particular on-the-spot decisions and actions of the researcher in relation to the research participants that warrants a consideration of ethics that is situated rather than general and abstract. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) suggest the term *microethics* as a useful discursive tool in this respect, originally coined in clinical practice by Komesaroff (1995, cited in Guillemin & Gillam, 2004) in the attempt to highlight the need to distinguish between the 'big' ethical issues in bioethics such as euthanasia or cloning and ethics involved in everyday doctor-patient interactions in clinical practice. In order to propose a microethical framework for the ethical decision-making process in applied linguistics research, I wish to borrow two theories that have been

suggested in the literature as alternatives to the ethics of principle (i.e. macroethics): *ethics of care* and *virtue ethics*.

The ethics of care model's underlying premise is that research is primarily a relational activity demanding the researcher's sensitivity to, emotional identification and solidarity with the people under study (Helgeland, 2005). Rather than being given labels, such as 'vulnerable persons' who require the kind of protection set out in the macroethical principles, the research participants are seen as "specific individuals, located in specific situations that require actions based in care, responsibility, and responsiveness to context" (Haverkamp, 2005, pp. 149-150). If, for example, it emerges that despite what is generally considered the 'standard' practice of obtaining informed consent, the previously agreed upon research methods cause a particular individual significant discomfort, alternative action must be taken to respond to this ethically significant situation appropriately. Thus, ethical practice that recognises the relational character of the research endeavour does not involve sticking labels and ticking boxes, but is, instead, concerned with the particular decisions and how these affect the specific people being studied.

To carry on the previous example, becoming aware of this particular research participant's discomfort (even if it is not verbalised) represents virtue ethics in action. This model of ethical theory originates in Aristotelian ethics and stresses the researcher's ability to recognise the microethical dilemmas as they arise in the concrete research practice (Haverkamp, 2005). Virtue ethics, then, does not place emphasis on following principles but rather on the development of the moral character of the researcher, his/her ability and willingness to discern situations with potential ethical ramifications as they arise in the research practice and his/her ability to make decisions that are informed by both macroethics of principles and microethics of care. The researcher's reflexivity is considered to be an important tool in pursuing ethical decisions, which facilitates the understanding of both the nature of research ethics and how ethical practice can be achieved (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

#### *An alternative ethical framework: Symbiotic relationship of macro- and microethics*

While some major ethical codes of practice (such as AERA, 1992; APA, 2002) have started to recognise the situated nature of ethics, few provide specific guidance for situations in which macro- and microethical practice seems to clash. The most successful attempt by far to deal with the tensions has been the *Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* developed by the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA, 2000). It is my belief that a modified version of this framework could work equally well in the situated research of applied linguistics. While requiring consideration of the discipline's formal principles and standards,

the CPA Code at the same time acknowledges the relational and contextual dimension of ethical dilemmas and the role subjectivity as well as conscience play in the ethical decision-making process. The following is a summary of the salient, and for the purposes of this paper particularly relevant, features of this Code of Ethics:

- *Integration of macro- and micro-perspectives of ethical research practice.* Four core principles are formulated, including the principle of ‘Respect for the dignity of persons’, ‘Responsible caring’, ‘Integrity in relationships’, and ‘Responsibility to society’. Ethics of care and virtue ethics are applied throughout the Code when the researcher’s sensitivity to particular concerns of particular research participants is emphasised and the need for competence, self-knowledge and self-reflection stressed.
- *Acknowledgement that principles may conflict and may therefore need to be balanced in ethical decision-making.* The core principles are put in a hierarchical order according to the weight each should be given when a conflict occurs, with the principle of respect for the dignity of persons being of the highest while the principle of responsibility to society of the lowest priority.
- *Acknowledgement of the potentially complex process of ethical decision-making.* Unlike any other Code of Ethics, the CPA (2000) suggests a 10-step decision-making process that can help the researcher to assess the nature of the ethical conflict and the best way to resolve it.
- *Admission that the complexity of dilemmas in qualitative research precludes firm prioritising of principles.* Some tensions will be hard to resolve and the decisions will have to be a matter of personal conscience. Even those, however, are expected to be a result of a conscious decision-making process which draws on “a reasonably coherent set of ethical principles” and which is open to public scrutiny (CPA, 2000, p. 2).

I would like to suggest that ethics in situated applied linguistics research be approached with the above parameters in mind. On the one hand, there are the macroethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice that ethical research must adhere to and this paper does not deny their importance. As has been argued, however, the macroethical principles are neither absolute, nor can they be applied in a uniform manner with no further ethical consequences. On the contrary, situated research requires a balanced ethical decision-making which draws on the three “cornerstones” of ethical practice (Haverkamp, 2005):

macroethical principles, ethics of care and virtue ethics. Consulting all three can generate new solutions for approaching situations where conflicts occur. What follows is an illustration of this kind of reflexive process I needed to adopt when confronted with ethical tensions in the context of a longitudinal classroom-based project looking into EFL teachers' development.

### **6.2.3 Ethically significant moments in action: The case of a situated classroom-based research project**

In the following part, I illustrate ethically critical episodes that I encountered with regard to three interrelated areas: *research design*, *research treatment*, and *research relationships*. By providing examples from my data, I hope to illustrate that seemingly easy-to-satisfy general ethical principles can, in fact, have further ethical stakes when research participants' particular background, needs, concerns and interests are considered.

#### *Ethical tensions in pursuing a high quality research design*

It has been recently pointed out that the basic criterion for ethical research is its social utility (Ortega, 2005a) and only high quality research is believed to satisfy that requirement (Chapelle, 2005; Crookes, 2005; K. Richards, 2003), with quality typically being equated with technically sound research design. Yet, as we will see below, there may be ethical tensions involved in pursuing technical excellence because this may be at odds with that of respect for persons.

*(a) When technical rigour must be compromised in pursuit for respect for persons.* The original, carefully crafted design of the current research project was based on a review of the language teacher cognition literature (cf. Borg, 2006) and included data collection methods that have been proved effective tools for my research purposes, including regular reflective journals by the research participants, stimulated recall and in-depth qualitative interviews. However, I soon became more aware of the less-than-ideal conditions the state-school-based research participants faced on a daily basis, as described by one of the teachers with frankness:

*During breaks, I barely have time to reach our staff room and change the books before another class starts. And to be quite honest with you...when the classes are over...my priority is to be ready for teaching tomorrow. And to get out of here as*

*soon as possible. I'm really happy when I have some little time that I can use for not thinking about teaching. (Interview, January 2005)*

One would be hard pressed to believe that implementing the original plan with the abovementioned methods would have comfortably fitted into this context without any further ethical ramifications. The compromises, some of which are described below, had to be made not simply because pursuing the original plan was not feasible in the present context, which is, after all, a typical concern in classroom-based research (see e.g. Dörnyei, 2007b; Hobbs & Kubanyiova, in press; Pica, 2005; Rossiter, 2001; Spada, 2005), but because attempting to implement it would be disrespectful to the lives of the research participants by invading their privacy. However, while the amendments I made to my research design were believed to protect the welfare of the research participants, they at the same time involved obvious compromises to the technical rigour required of researchers.

For instance, it is not difficult to see how retrospective notes from my hurried conversations with the teachers would not pass for systematically designed and meticulously administered stimulated recall protocols. Yet, such conversations were for several research participants the only alternative that would pass for ethical research practice in the given context. Similarly, my initial call for keeping a reflective teaching journal was only taken up by two research participants and then almost instantly given up by one of them. With the increasing knowledge of the every-day concerns the research participants faced, this was already a loud enough signal that any further attempts to elicit data in this way would breach the rules of ethical conduct in this microcontext (Of course, this is not to say that their decision to engage in this exercise would have automatically ensured ethical practice; this problem is further illustrated by the dilemma of coercion resulting from positive rapport described later in this chapter).

Even though the research participants had originally agreed to take on responsibilities stemming from their participation in the project, it became obvious that some of the research methods were on the verge of invading the participants' privacy and disrespecting their normal ways of working. In this case a conscious ethical choice was made to prioritise the principle of respect for persons and responsible caring over the macroethical standards of technical rigour. Allwright's (2005) conclusion about conducting action research has, I believe, broader implications for ethically-sound situated research in applied linguistics:

research in the human field of language teaching and learning is necessarily and essentially, first and foremost an ethical and an epistemological matter. If that leaves us apparently vulnerable on the technical side, we are comfortable with that. (p. 362)

*(b) Negative consequences of 'harmless' research methods.* It is evident that some research methods may be harmful to research participants and IRB protocols and professional codes of practice rightly require researchers to “carefully consider and minimize the use of research techniques that might have negative social consequences” (AERA, 1992). The following example will illustrate that while such an obligation is straightforward at the macro-level, a microethical approach to research practice can reveal that even a ‘benign’ method, if not handled with care, can have harmful effects on research participants by undermining their professional self-esteem and leaving them with feelings of profound inadequacy.

Although some participants were generally willing to engage in interviews, reflection elicited on certain aspects of their lessons caused them a great deal of anxiety and embarrassment. Although one participant was generally able and willing to describe the lesson activities and comment on whether she thought they were successful, she was often taken aback by some of my, what I originally considered innocent, interview questions. One such situation is illustrated in the post-observation interview excerpt below:

*Interviewer: So, basically, if you were to summarise, do you think you have fulfilled your original aim for this class?*

*Teacher: (4) Hmmm. (3). Well, I'm not sure (2) if I have managed to fulfil it. (nervous, embarrassed laughter). Because I'm not really sure whether from that one exercise, they are supposed to be able to use the form of the tense, I think they would need more drill.*

Even though it is less well captured in the transcript, this and similar face-to-face interactions were marked by a deep sense of uneasiness on the part of the research participants. As I gradually came to understand, this was due to the fact that reflection was a foreign concept in the given context and most research participants had hardly ever thought let alone spoken about their classes in the way I had wanted them to. Employing research methods that would have ignored this specific research context could call the participants' expertise into question, leave them with a sense of inadequacy, and, consequently, undermine their self-esteem. Thus, even though, at the macroethical level, interview as a

research method would have been considered ethically ‘safe’ in this context, some of its aspects could and indeed almost did prove psychologically harmful to the particular participants and thus unethical at the micro-level. While I continued to use this research method where particular contexts allowed it (see the previous subsection), the desire to apply the principle of ‘responsible caring’ (CPA, 2000) demanded that I approach the method with microethical sensitivity and abandon themes with potential dire consequences for the welfare of the specific research participants.

The above examples point to the fact that although a typical question appearing in IRB application forms (e.g. “Will the subjects encounter the possibility of stress or psychological, social, physical, or legal risks?”) can be fairly routinely answered by ticking the ‘right’ box, even the most straightforward methods may not be harmless at the micro-level. What is more, negative consequences of research methods cannot always be anticipated, but may only be discerned through deliberate reflection on the direct relational encounter with the specific research participant in the particular research context. Even so, we need to acknowledge that there is an interaction between the practical and microethical considerations. For example, “the anticipatory mindset” that Borg (2006, p. 247) proposes researchers adopt in their research to ensure the practical utility of their research methods can also be interpreted as a call for ethical research at the micro-level, as by anticipating problems, some of the dilemmas described here could be pre-empted. I wish to emphasise, however, that the point I am making is slightly different. I would argue that despite anticipating challenges and adjusting the research design accordingly before the fieldwork, some data collection techniques may, nevertheless, emerge as *unethical* in the actual research practice. Thus, while research experience will undoubtedly assist in anticipating more appropriate and ethical choices, it cannot provide an a-priori guarantee that the research design will comply with the microethical criteria and therefore the exact nature of research methods will still have to be negotiated in the ‘here-and-now’ research situation.

#### *Conflict between macro- and microethical perspectives of beneficial research treatment*

Educational research whose purpose is to promote change in teachers with the aim to improve the conditions for student learning seems to satisfy the fundamental macroethical principle of beneficence. In the context of the particular research project discussed in this article, it was my ethical responsibility to provide beneficial ‘research treatment’, in other words, to design and run the teacher development course in a way that has been found effective in bringing about meaningful teacher change. However, as argued in the previous section, the interpretation of the macroethical principle of beneficence can become problematic when confronted with the specific research context. The following two sections



examine the ambiguity of beneficial research treatment in the light of two contextual features: the absence of the transformational agenda in the research participants and the absence of teacher development culture in the specific teaching environment. The former suggests that there can be a thin demarcation line between beneficence and coercion, while the latter indicates that what may be seen as beneficial at the macro-level, may have harmful effects when the micro-context is taken into consideration.

*(a) A blurred borderline between beneficial and coercive research treatment.* Thanks to an ongoing reflection on the research context and the data I was gathering, at one point during the project I started to realise that, contrary to my expectations, most teachers' motivation to join the project was not related to what I previously believed was our common agenda of change, even though it may have been the declared goal of some (see also Kubanyiova, 2006). As I note in my journal (March, 2005),

*Hardly anybody seems to be even thinking of change. They are not concerned with change. (...) The word change has simply not become their agenda (...) And so it probably should stop being mine. (...) They participate voluntarily, for their own reasons and not because they want to change something. They are not unhappy about the way they teach (most of them anyway) and so I have absolutely no right to talk about "change". That's not the word of this project – or, perhaps, shouldn't be?*

The participants' missing agenda of change represents an ethically significant moment, particularly when the teacher change literature is consulted. The findings make it clear that a teacher development course that strives to promote significant teacher change needs to go beyond offering a collection of motivating activities with the aim to provide momentary inspiration to the participants, but inevitably involves changes at deeper, personal levels in the teacher (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992). At the macro-level, such a treatment can relatively easily be justified ethically, but how does the situation change at the micro-level if it turns out that this change is actually against the will of most participants? The following journal entry (March, 2005) documents my (quite emotional) coming to terms with this ethical tension: my dilemma of wanting to promote change through the training processes but at the same time also respect the participants' right for self-determination:

*I'm not really sure whether I actually have the right to make them question their attitudes.... Who am I to jump into their lives and start eroding something that they have believed in for years, something that has been part of their teacher identity, of*

*the identity they enjoy, they strive for.... It was Tamara's dream to be a teacher because she wanted to feel important. Who am I to tell her that this attitude is actually hindering her from taking up the motivational teaching practice? ... Improving teaching practice does not seem to part of Lenka's intentions at all. Who am I, then, to make her ask questions about her teaching? ...I will leave, but they will stay!*

There is no easy way out of this dilemma, because if the trainer had no right to transform the trainees through the training practices, there would be no value in teacher education in general let alone in the growing body of research on language teacher cognition. Yet, the present research context urges us to pause and ponder to what extent we are allowed to pursue 'beneficial' research treatment when the emerging evidence points to its coercive effect in the specific micro-setting. In other words, can the threat to research participants' right to self-determination be justified by our quest for the "greater good", or, put more bluntly, are we allowed to be 'cruel to be kind'? These are age-old dilemmas that come to surface during situated research and its high prominence in contemporary applied linguistics simply does not allow us to eschew these debates.

As suggested earlier, applying an a-priori definition of 'greater good' in the way it is done in macroethical codes of conduct cannot guarantee ethical research practice as it overlooks the consequences of our choices on the particular individuals. In the light of my overall call for closer attention to the relational character of research practice while recognising the important macroethical criteria, I reached the following compromise: although I carried on designing the course tasks and processes in ways that have been shown to best support teacher learning (the principle of beneficence), such as interactive mini-lectures with participants' input, experiential activities followed by reflection time, case studies, scenarios, discussions, group-teaching tasks, debates and the like, some modifications of the originally planned research treatment were warranted. In particular, tasks with a more explicit focus on change were considered unacceptable as they had the greatest potential to impose the agenda that was not shared by the research participants. For instance, action plans originally aimed at facilitating the teachers' concrete decisions for classroom implementation were excluded from the course syllabus. Furthermore, the mentoring component of post-observation interviews, which was considered to be an extended research treatment, was only undertaken where professional conversation about particular teaching problems was explicitly initiated by the teachers.

*(b) Negative consequences of 'beneficial' research treatment.* It was not only the lack of mutual agenda of change, but the absence of reflective / teacher development culture that bore implications for ethical research treatment in this project. The problem and the implications are similar to those discussed earlier in the section on negative social consequences of research methods. Therefore, instead of further analysing the nature of the dilemma, I provide an example of an ethically significant episode that occurred throughout the project.

Certain activities aimed at promoting focused reflection during the course proved to be problematic. While the course sessions were marked by a pleasant atmosphere, with teachers enthusiastically engaging in most tasks, this was not the case when the task required more serious and more explicit reflection. Several participants felt visibly uncomfortable when, for instance, asked in one discussion activity to reflect on the groups they were teaching. Many of them either used their right to pass or contributed with a mere 'I agree with everything that has been said before'. Evidence in my data suggests that the highly threatening nature of such reflective activities could have been the reason why one participant got close to dropping out of the project in its third phase. Certainly, as mentioned before, I continued to design activities that have been shown to promote teacher learning. However, these episodes prompted me to revise activities that did not match the participants' background and experience and thus proved to cause a great deal of anxiety, and to find instead alternative, less-threatening ways that could potentially start the process of reflection among those who chose to enhance their teaching practice without threatening their self-esteem.

#### *The ethical tensions in research relationships*

Establishing trustworthy, positive researcher-researched relationships is often seen as a way of ensuring that the research is ethical. Although this project was characterised by warm rapport with the participants, a positive relationship did not offer a passport to ethical-dilemma-free research. In fact, as the following discussion illustrates, close rapport can paradoxically violate the principle of respect for persons and problematise the ethical principle of researcher integrity.

*(a) Coercion resulting from positive rapport.* Although negative consequences of close rapport with research participants have been acknowledged in research literature (see e.g. Russell, 2005), Haverkamp's (2005) warning resonates particularly strongly with the dilemmas I encountered: "The more adept we are at creating a sense of connection and engagement, the more we need to be attentive to issues of power, influence, coercion, and

manipulation” (p. 152). Even though informed consent was obtained and the participants’ right to withdraw was emphasised, there is no doubt that coercion, though unintended, did take place and the problem appeared more serious the stronger the rapport was. Two examples are provided for illustration.

Towards the end of the project, it was obvious that the involvement in the project, especially regarding classroom observations, was becoming a burden for one participant. This was, undoubtedly, partly caused by her new personal commitments. However, because she felt a high degree of responsibility for the project due to our close relationship, she found it difficult to admit her desire to withdraw. I began to sense this during the penultimate phase of data collection:

*At one point she said: “We might need to ask XY [her colleague] to replace me in the project.” I’m not sure whether these were the exact words, but I know that it was a very indirect comment. However, I could sense that she doesn’t really want to continue and perhaps doesn’t know how to tell me? I tried to assure her that I admired her commitment especially given her circumstances and that it was absolutely fine and I would understand completely if she decided to withdraw, but she would not hear about it. (Fieldnotes, March 2005)*

During the final phase, therefore, I only asked her if I could administer the questionnaires to her groups again as was done at the beginning of the school year, to which she had no reservations. Because I did not want to push this research participant to the stage in which she would have to admit her unwillingness to be observed, I simply said that I did not need to stay on and would leave the classroom after the questionnaire administration. Although not verbalised, her relief was difficult to mask. Interestingly, several hours later, she invited me to stay to observe her second group, as captured in the following field note extract:

*She said I could stay for the observation if I wanted to (with the previous questionnaire class, I felt she was uneasy about the observation and so without asking her if I could observe it, I said immediately I didn’t necessarily have to stay for the observation). About this second class, she said, ‘actually this is my best class and so you can stay if you like’. (Fieldnotes, May 2005)*

Coercion, it seems, was happening on two levels with this research participant. On the first, there was a perceived pressure to ‘deliver’, even though the project did not require the participants to depart from their normal teaching routines. As the quote above illustrates, due

to a combination of factors (e.g. groups' overall achievement and task engagement patterns, specific group composition, the teacher's familiarity with and/or attitude towards the specific teaching materials, etc.), delivering a 'satisfactory performance' may have required more effort of the teacher in some groups than in others. Where she was confident about her ability to achieve adequate results with relatively little extra effort (as was the case with the second group I was invited to observe), my presence was not perceived as unwelcome. In contrast, where the teacher sensed difficulties, the pressure to perform to a certain self-set standard was becoming less and less bearable for her. On the second level, there was a strong feeling of obligation to remain involved in the project which was undoubtedly a result of warm rapport and thus perceived higher responsibility towards the researcher.

Thus, it seems that closer relationships that are inherent in situated research can paradoxically be a source of pressure on the research participants to live up to certain perceived expectations. In ethical research, therefore, not only must the right to withdraw participation be safeguarded, but the researcher must also be "responsive to non-verbal indications of a desire to discontinue if a person has difficulty with verbally communicating such a desire ... or, due to culture, is unlikely to communicate such a desire orally" (CPA, 2000, I.30). This also relates to the problem of methodological rigour mentioned earlier. Indeed, the decision of research participants, whether teachers or learners, to engage in certain data elicitation methods has to be further examined as it may be that rather than taking up the invitation to participate out of their own will, they feel pressure to comply with the researcher's requirements despite the significant burden that the method places on them. Language learners are particularly vulnerable in this respect if they feel that their disengagement might have further consequences, for example, in terms of assessment. Applying virtue ethics is therefore essential to identify ethically important moments particularly in the absence of straightforward clues such as, for instance, the teachers' direct refusal to keep journals in my context.

*(b) Conflict between exercising integrity and respect for persons in reporting research findings.* Reporting research results is not without ethical challenges, some of which have been documented in the literature (see e.g. Shohamy, 2004). The ethical dilemma discussed here concerns a clash between distinct ethical responsibilities involved in distinct researcher roles and relationships inherent in this research context. On the one hand, there is an ethical principle of integrity which a researcher should aspire to (APA, 2002; CPA, 2000). This involves honestly reporting research results (Duff, 2007) and contributing to the field by producing knowledge (O'Leary, 2004). On the other hand, there is also a relationship unique to the particular research context, in our case the researcher being a teacher educator /

mentor / critical friend, adopting a non-judgemental role, which is believed to facilitate teacher development (e.g. Edge, 1992; Malderez & Bodóczy, 1999). The following contextualised example demonstrates the ethical tension between these two aspirations.

As has been mentioned earlier, one of the interview themes concerned the observed classes. The purpose was twofold: to gain insight into the teachers' thought processes and to facilitate their development. In other words, not only did these interviews represent a research method for eliciting data, but they also constituted a part of the research treatment. Post-observation interviews were, therefore, a most obvious place where the two roles, that of researcher and mentor, converged.

Where it was not against any ethical principles (see the earlier discussion), I would typically elicit the research participants' appraisal of the observed class and pursue their line of inquiry by encouraging them to elaborate on their thoughts without offering any evaluative comments. Of course, this does not imply that I had no personal views on what transpired or that I always agreed with how the participants were interpreting the classroom events. For instance, by asking one research participant to describe the rationale and set-up of the activities she employed in her class, I had a clear purpose: to direct her towards the possibility that the meaningful output which she expected but was disappointed not to see from the students in that particular class could have been a result of the absence of any meaningful input. That this could indeed have been the reason is not difficult to prove by providing an objective description of the type of tasks the students were asked to engage in during the class. However, the teacher refused, consciously or otherwise, to follow this line of inquiry during the interview and chose to pursue hers instead. As a mentor, I refrained from explicitly sharing my observation and accepted her agenda. This, eventually, turned up to be beneficial as this research participant was gradually able to identify a possible problem, albeit different from my observation, and even managed to come up with her own action plan to implement in the future. By adopting a role of mentor, then, I was giving her space to make sense of her teaching and of the course input in the light of her own experience, knowledge and beliefs. However, the absence of meaningful input in her classes proved to be so crucial in the dataset that without explicitly reporting on it later, I could not give justice to my obligation as a researcher to produce knowledge.

This does not appear to be much of an ethical dilemma until one is confronted with an excited exclamation from the same participant: "I can't wait to read your report!", a recollection of which always leaves me in the state of panic as my interpretation of the data does not correspond with the image of a 'converted teacher' that this particular participant seems to have construed for herself. Explicitly stating this in my report could have dire

consequences for the participant's self-esteem (This issue is particularly acute in this thesis!).

Although I had learnt to appreciate the teachers' sociocultural context and to respect and accept their views and practices in a non-judgmental way, I was, at the same time, processing the information through the researcher's lens who is trying to make sense of the project and holds the responsibility towards the academic community to honestly report the research findings as he/she understands them. The problem is that what needs to be reported out of responsibility towards academia is not necessarily what needs or even should be explicitly articulated in trusting relationships. There, one accepts the view that humans have the right to develop in their own way (Edge, 1992) and regards judgments on people's actions and opinions as well as any form of social comparison as unsupportive. However, a certain level of judgment explicitly expressed, accompanied by deliberate cross-case comparisons are unavoidable and in fact, highly desirable in reporting research results to the academic community. The dilemma that remains largely unresolved for me, then, concerns how to be ethical in my relationships with both the research participants and the academic community. There does not seem to be an obvious way out of this Catch 22 situation.

The problem of a possible clash between the researcher's and the research participants' interests is hinted at in the literature, and it has been pointed out that the welfare of the research participants should have priority above the researcher's (Dörnyei, 2007b) or the discipline's interests (CPA, 2000) and that the researcher must not write what would not be communicated in the face-to-face situation (Hornstein, 1996, cited in de Laine, 2000). Yet, if one accepts such advice unreservedly, there is a risk that this type of situated research (also including quantitative and experimental designs that are situated in classroom environments), which is fraught with similar microethical dilemmas, could never contribute fully to the advancement of theoretical knowledge in any discipline.

Personally, I have made the decision to report the research findings as I understand them, while making the best effort possible to adhere to the principles of respect for persons and responsible caring by applying some of the advice suggested in the literature (see e.g. Polio, 1996; L. Richards & Morse, 2007). Even so, I cannot guarantee that in the process some feelings of individual participants will never be hurt, nor can I rule out the possibility of unwittingly subjecting them to public shame if they can be recognised by others in my reports. It seems, then, that this is the type of ethical dilemma which precludes straightforward prioritisation of principles and the final decision how to approach it will have to remain a matter of the researcher's personal conscience (CPA, 2000). As de Laine (2000) points out,

When various parties with different interests and expectations clash there can arise an ethical and practical dilemma for which there is no satisfactory solution, but only a compromising experience that must be lived through and lived with. (p. 2)

#### **6.2.4 Conclusion**

Applied linguistics research has witnessed a growing tendency to situate its investigations and employ more holistic, ethnographic, or classroom-based approaches, which are believed to better account for the social dimension of learning a L2. However, when research becomes highly situated, it is as if suddenly a can of ethical worms was opened and what seemed straightforward and logical at the macro-level suddenly becomes ambiguous and problematic in the actual research practice, rendering existing ethical guidelines inadequate. Recently, a call for more contextualised approach to research ethics has been voiced in the field of applied linguistics (Dörnyei, 2007b). By locating the discussion in the particular research context, this paper has attempted to illustrate what such situated approach may involve in practice.

More specifically, I have examined the tension between macro- and microethical perspectives in three areas of situated research: research design, research treatment, and research relationships. First, I have illustrated that satisfying requirements for technical excellence in research design, which is considered a macroethical prerequisite for socially beneficial research, may in some contexts be at odds with the principle of respect for persons at the micro-level. I have suggested that ethics of care should come to the fore in defining high quality research design. In this way, we can speak of high quality situated research only when the criteria of methodological rigour respect concerns, needs, and aspirations of concrete individuals in the specific context. Second, it has been pointed out that although it is essential to consider the often neglected principle of beneficence with regard to research treatment, social utility is, nevertheless, a highly situated construct. Research treatment that is seen as beneficial at the macro-level, may, in fact, constitute coercive, psychologically harmful, and disempowering research practices in particular contexts. I have argued that because in research harm done to individuals cannot be justified by the pursuit of any generally defined ‘greater good’, relevant provisions in the research treatment that are responsive to the microethical priorities of the particular research setting must be made. Finally, although highly desirable, rapport between the researcher and the research participants appears to provide no guarantee of ethical conduct. As has been illustrated, closer research relationships may, paradoxically, violate the principle of respect for persons and pose a threat to the researcher’s integrity in reporting research results. While some of



these dilemmas can be sensitively approached by applying ethics of care, others do not seem to offer a satisfactory solution and the choice the researcher makes after engaging in a systematic decision-making process will need to be a matter of personal conscience.

In this section, I have attempted to illustrate that ethical research practice extends beyond the confines of macroethical principles. While these are important guidelines that every applied linguistics researcher needs to consider, situated research practice often brings about a host of specific ethically significant moments for which macroethics holds ambiguous, contrasting, or no answers at all. By exercising one's reflexivity, the researcher should develop the ability to discern ethically significant moments as they emerge in the research practice and in dealing with them apply the 'ethics of care', which recognises the relational character of situated research. The development of this ability is fundamental to ethical decision-making and need to become a career-long commitment of applied linguistics researchers.

While I do not suggest ignoring macroethical standards, I believe that our research practice needs to be informed by a code of ethics which caters to the specific needs of our discipline and which acknowledges, at the same time, the situated nature of research and hence the situated nature of ethical decision-making. Such code will need to make allowances for the need to prioritise macroethical principles when systematic reflection on the research process reveals a conflict at the microethical level of the research practice. At the same time, more specific guidance needs to be provided on how to approach conflicts that do not lend themselves to easy prioritisation, acknowledging the role of subjectivity and particularity of ethical decisions on the one hand and the researcher's responsibility on the other. The CPA (2000) has successfully demonstrated that the above proposal for the integration of macro- and microethical dimensions is not an impossible one. Therefore, to facilitate the process of developing a similar, more relevant, contextualised, and dynamic code of ethical research practice in our field, we need to engage, with a new urgency, in an open scrutiny of what constitutes ethical research practice in action in the diverse domains of our field.

## 7 Tracing Teachers' Conceptual Change

There are varied ways in which a teacher development course can impact on in-service teachers, and hence many different takes on the analysis of the present project's results. However, the definition of the desirable impact which I introduced in Chapter 3 of this thesis determines the direction which this analysis will take. As has been indicated in Chapter 3 and elsewhere, my study set out to trace teachers' conceptual change and, consequently, explore the link among teachers' cognitive development, their instructional practice and the impact on the students. To establish and then investigate this link, I will bring together several data sources and examine them for indications of change in (1) the teachers' beliefs about a motivational teaching practice, (2) the teachers' actual classroom practices, (3) the learning opportunities created as a result of these practices, and (4) the students' appraisals of the motivating properties of their classroom environment. A combination of various datasets outlined in Chapter 5 is believed to provide an integrated picture of whether or not the teachers who took part in the present research project underwent any conceptual change. I start with examining the qualitative dataset (including observations, interviews and course-related data) before looking more closely at the questionnaire data that provide insights into the developmental trends in the students' appraisals. In the next chapter, then, I will interpret the findings outlined in this chapter and I will discuss the main emerging patterns of teacher development in the light of the model presented in Chapter 3 (Figure 3.2).

### ***7.1 Tracing the Impact in Qualitative Data***

The following analysis is organised around common themes rather than particular datasets. I first illustrate the teachers' generally positive appraisal of the teacher development course before looking at how it impacted on their intentions to implement the motivational strategies, on their actual implementation of these in the classroom, on the impact of these practices on student task engagement patterns and, finally, on the research participants' beliefs about and conceptions of a motivational teaching practice. Different types of data sources are brought together within each theme to support and strengthen the claims made about it. It should be noted, however, that because the aim of this thesis is not only to demonstrate impact (or a lack of it), but also to understand why it did or did not happen, more emphasis will be placed on theory building in Chapter 8 in which empirical evidence will be scrutinised in more depth. Although this project generated rich data in support of the claims made in the following sections, space and time limitations do not always allow me to

go into as much depth as I would wish. (I can see that the dataset will give me sufficient food for thought for several years to come.) Let me reiterate, however, that the illustrative excerpts from the data are representative of more general trends.

### **7.1.1 Appraisal of the TD course**

A number of cues in the data point towards the research participants' generally positive appraisal of the TD course. First, despite the considerable time commitment required for participation in the project, all the eight participants remained involved until the completion of the course and, what is more, one of them even recommended it to their colleagues - as a result, an additional university teacher participated in the final session. Second, ample evidence from my field notes (see the example below) documents the teachers' active involvement and their enthusiasm and interest in the various topics, strategies and materials presented, which, along with the development of positive relationships within the course, suggest a general endorsement of the learning experience

*During the lecture, their involvement was amazing. They asked questions if they didn't understand, ... provided their own experience, but also showed disagreement with some ideas, which immediately triggered contributions from the others. I think this lecture was extremely fruitful.* (Fieldnotes on Session 3, 7 January 2005)

Thirdly, a summary of the teachers' feedback on each session (see Table 7.1 for a summary and Appendices D-G for sample extracts in the Newsletters), as well as comments made in interviews provide further evidence of the teachers' appreciation of the course, both in terms of content and processes. Let me just quote one illustrative extract (Interview 4, 15 May 2005), Jana's reaction to the course:

*[I liked] everything. Everything. The way... For example I am fascinated by the way you work. How you do a quality preparation beforehand...I am really fascinated by it. You know everything beforehand: what you are doing, how you're going to do it and ... why you are doing it and know what sort of things can come out of it. You have certain expectations of the result. ...I enjoy it thoroughly because I can learn from that. From the way you work. Or the materials, ... also, the way you present things, the way you interact with the group, I enjoy it, simply. It interests me. Also the topics. I would, most of all, like to learn to teach, work and prepare as you do. Now, it is sincere. It's nothing like scratching your back or something. I mean it. I'm fascinated by that, no matter who it is. So I would be very happy to continue.*

**Table 7.1: A summary of course feedback data in relation to course appraisal**

Type of Comment	No.	Content focus
Positive	86	activities, processes, friendly people, materials, atmosphere, ideas, topics, feeling comfortable during the session, enthusiastic trainer, trainer's skills, practical tips, background reading, links between theory and practice, training management, food and drinks
Mixed	11	suggestions for change of the training day (Saturday unsuitable), particular activities, processes, lack of time, suggestions for types of activities they missed in the session
Negative	5	room, specific activity, lack of theoretical input in one session

Yet, despite such positive appraisal, the following sections aim to demonstrate that most of the teachers not only did not implement any of the course input in their practice, but did not even demonstrate any intention to do so. The practice of those who did attempt implementation, continued to be guided by their pre-course conceptions of a motivational teaching practice and therefore failed to increase opportunities for students' learning engagement. Let me look at each of these areas in more detail, starting with the teachers' intentions with regard to implementation.

### **7.1.2 *Intention to implement the approach in practice***

As I have already suggested in Section 6.2 on ethical challenges, a transformational agenda, which was at the core of this project, did not become shared by most participants, as indicated by the fact that words such as 'change', 'improving practice' or 'transformation' did not even enter their discourse. Let me illustrate this with Lenka's case. She was a typical busy EFL school teacher with her teaching load surpassing by far the minimum of 23 contact hours, yet, in contrast with the general trend in Slovakia (as described in Section 4.5), she was an enthusiastic participant in in-service development opportunities available to English teachers. In her first interview (28 September 2004), she explains why:

*L: Yes, I've got a lot of work and I hope I always will, I always teach a lot of hours, but on the other hand, as they say, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks" – I don't believe in it.*

*I: Ah, you don't.*

*L: Because some of my colleagues ... think that they know everything.... But when I go to conferences I see that there are so many good ideas, so many interesting things I can learn. And also, I can hear English. Because here, among ourselves [colleagues], we don't do that [communicate in English]. ... And that is music for my ears. So, that I can learn, too.*

There seemed to be two reasons why she engages in professional development and I wanted to sum it up to check if this was what she meant:

*I; So two reasons. To gather some "new tricks"-*

*L:-but I have gathered so many things ... [and] I'm using a lot of that, although time is always short, but all the same. I often make copies for [the students], do activities with them, mainly in the conversation classes.*

The immediate denial of one of the reasons she initially outlined suggests that the primary purpose of Lenka's engagement in professional development activities was to practise English conversation. All her data point to the fact that it was indeed the main motive for her decision to participate in the present project and whenever asked about the possible implementation, she replied in a similar vein, often showing me her rich bank of materials that she uses in conversation classes and therefore suggesting no real need for more. Therefore, it seems that anything "interesting" that she could potentially learn on the TD course would end up as contingencies for conversation lessons, but she, otherwise, never contemplated integrating the TD course ideas into her every-day teaching practice.

Although, Jana's primary motive to participate in the project was similar to Lenka's (see also Section 8.1.1), she was, in contrast, very appreciative of the actual course input and there is no doubt that some awareness of the aspects of a motivational teaching practice had been raised. However, with regard to the intention to implement what she has learnt on the course, Jana openly admits that she does not quite "get it" and is very likely to put the materials in the "bottom drawer", rather than systematically work on implementing the motivational approach in her teaching.

*...now [that the course is over] I have a feeling that ok and now I will again do nothing for myself. I will do nothing. It is...maybe...when...it's highly probable that once we've finished, I'll put all the materials aside and they will be covered in dust somewhere in the darkest corner because I will never again take them out...unless I really have the time (Interview 4, 15 May 2005)*

Tamara, despite her repeated attempts to implement the course input (for a discussion of the nature of these, see Sections 7.1.3 and 8.3.3), was also quite honest as regards her intention to continue to implement.

*Yes, this is true, we should do it this way, but then you return home and you say to yourself: It's much more comfortable to do it the old way (Interview 4, 8 March 2005).*

On the other hand, Erika (in relation to one of her teaching contexts) and Silvia saw themselves as already implementing the reform in many ways and therefore had no intention to do more. At the same time, we must acknowledge that there were exceptions in the research sample. For instance, Denisa engaged with the course input at quite a deep cognitive level and indeed thought about how to implement it in her practice while Monika's discourse was dominated by the word 'change' whenever appraisal of her participation in the project was elicited. A further analysis of this is provided in Section 8.3.5. Overall, however, we can conclude that there were no significant traces of the intention to implement the course input in the data of most research participants.

### **7.1.3 Classroom practice implementation**

Because a detailed description of the instructional practices the research participants engaged in is outside the scope of this thesis, let me just acknowledge at this point that the teachers had incorporated various elements of the motivational teaching practice into their teaching prior to their participation in the course and as the various data from primary (questionnaire results comparing participants and non-participants) as well as secondary data sources (interviews with head teachers, students' feedback, etc.) suggest, most research participants seem to have been highly regarded by students and/or colleagues. The fact that they volunteered to participate in this course in their own personal time also demonstrated exceptionally high levels of commitment. The following conclusions should therefore be interpreted in the view of this thesis' focus. Rather than evaluating the teachers' practice in

general, this analysis focuses primarily on the *developmental trends* in the research participants' teaching practice which could possibly be ascribed to the impact of the teacher development course they participated in. As such, therefore, it makes no claims with regard to the overall quality of the teaching each research participant engaged in.

As has been mentioned in the discussion of classroom observation in Section 5.5.3, my analysis was not rooted in the empirical-rational perspective whereby a specific set of behaviours is a-priori defined and the teachers' replication of these in their classroom serves as evidence of teacher education impact. Instead, I was interested to see how the teachers created opportunities for student engagement in the classroom and whether there were any shifts in these practices which could possibly be ascribed to the training impact. I therefore examined the lessons in a holistic way and considered, as Figure 7.1 illustrates, all aspects of *tasks*, *classroom management*, teachers' *teaching style* (i.e. autonomy supporting versus controlling, feedback, encouraging critical thinking, etc.), and *teacher discourse* (i.e. communicating academic and social norms, communicating mastery versus performance goals, etc.), which, in the context of the specific lesson, either showed to be creating conditions for student learning engagement or hindering them.

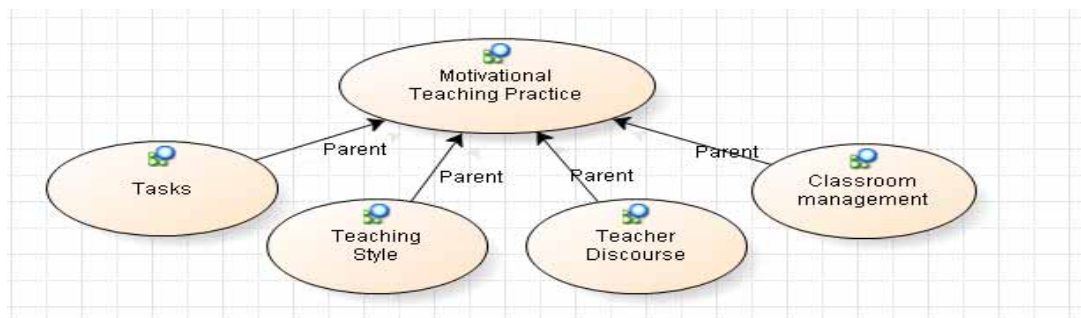


Figure 7.1: NVivo screenshot of a partial coding catalogue relating to the teachers' motivational teaching practice

In order to be able to draw such links between the teachers' practice and student engagement, I coded observational data for the types of student task behaviour that either represented learning engagement or, on the other hand, was an indication of their disengagement (see Figure 7.2 and a further discussion in the next section). In this way, I was able to obtain a picture of general patterns of student task engagement as well as potential changes in these. The construction of both sets of codes (i.e. representing the teachers' motivational classroom practice and student task behaviour) is grounded in the observational data and the catalogues therefore do not represent exhaustive theoretical lists.

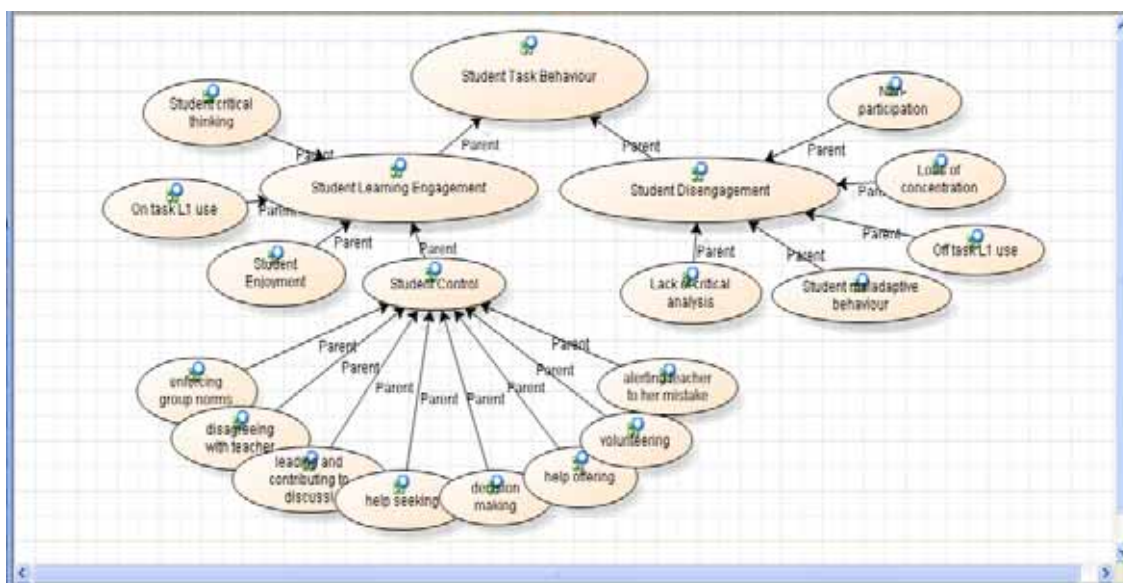


Figure 7.2: NVivo screenshot of a coding catalogue for analysing student task behaviour

The observational data of Lenka, Iveta, Jana (with the exception of one isolated instance in her classroom discourse that could be linked to the course input, see also 8.3.1) and Silvia do not seem to indicate any traces of implementation, which is, after all, in accordance with their previously discussed intentions. Tamara, in contrast, engaged in a number of practices which can be clearly associated with the impact of the TD course. These concern both replicated activities that were part of the TD course and tasks which were interpreted by Tamara as in keeping with the motivational approach to teaching. The course impact was also obvious in Monika's teaching practice. Hers, in contrast with Tamara's, seems to be a more advanced level of implementation encompassing classroom management (e.g. group processing, establishing group norms) as well as teacher discourse (e.g. communicating social norms) besides the actual choice of tasks (see a detailed analysis of one instance of Monika's implementation below). Erika, despite her conviction that there was no scope in her EFL teaching context for implementation, nevertheless, displayed certain signs of impact in her discourse (communicating academic and social norms) as well as classroom management (creating opportunities for group work). And finally, Denisa's observational data hint at one isolated instance (her attempt to personalise a coursebook task) which could possibly have been influenced by her participation in the TD course (for a more in-depth analysis of some of these implemented practices, see Section 8.3).



In addition, several teachers reported, either in the interviews or the course feedback, the implementation of the aspects of the course input in their classroom practice and these mainly concern specific activities and tasks that were part of the TD course syllabus (e.g. group building activities, warm-ups, stories, and the like).

In a way, then, the teacher development course could be deemed successful in influencing at least half of the research participants' teaching practice. We need to establish, however, the nature of this influence. In other words, to fulfil the purposes of this research project, we need to understand how much of this implementation represented one-off attempts and superficial endorsement and how much of it was in fact grounded in the teachers' transformed beliefs about a motivational teaching practice and resulted in improved conditions for student learning. As the summary provided in the next section demonstrates, the vast majority of implemented practices showed no links with student task engagement and could therefore not be considered a motivational teaching practice. This conclusion suggests the absence of conceptual change in most teachers and an in-depth analysis of individual teachers' implementation instances, which further corroborates this conclusion, is provided below as well as in Section 8.3.

To support the claim regarding the lack of conceptual change, I present data from a class episode (observed lesson on 3 May 2005), during which Monika decided to communicate the norm of group responsibility. Let me first provide a brief background to the course input this implementation was a response to. During an interactive lecture on learner autonomy and group responsibility (see also Table 5.3), we discussed various autonomy-supporting strategies, including simple verbal and non-verbal signals to the students that their participation in the classroom tasks is not in the teacher's but in their own interest and the pressure to engage must therefore lie with the learners. An example of such non-verbal strategies included increasing waiting time. A transcript of the lesson segment in which Monika attempted to incorporate this strategy can be found in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Monika's classroom implementation of the 'waiting time' strategy

T: Now you as a group, try to choose 3, decide on 3 of these adjectives that you think best characterise you as a group. (3) OK? (*some chatting – task related, they ask questions*). 3 of the adjectives? Let's (*over the noise*) say from the key words? On page 80, or you can use some that were at the end of the book, but they are not in the xxx. You have a difficult task. Now? To agree on 3 qualities that characterise you as a group. (*they start chatting*) So I'll just wait here in the classroom for when you're ready?

6:35

(*Students start talking. It seems that some of them are not on task, some of them speaking L1, some silent, but generally I can hear some adjectives being uttered. T does not interfere, is waiting at the front of the classroom. In the meantime she had written the following on the board:*

We ARE  
1).....  
2).....  
3).....

9: 39

(*Class is getting quieter now and there are some voices in L1 like: So what are we supposed to do now? The class seems to be ready now, they are quiet. T is waiting quietly. After some time, they start chattering again and several seconds later, they are almost completely silent, waiting for the teacher to do or say something. T is waiting without giving any instructions. After some time the T says*)

T: I didn't tell you to be quiet (*in a pleasant tone with smile*) (2) (*some voices from the students now, T laughs*). 10:24 I'm just waiting for the qualities that characterise you as a group, that's all.

(*some students mumble something in L1, but the whole class again falls into almost complete silence, 10:30 which is now getting pretty long; most students have their heads down, some giggle, some look embarrassed, some start whispering: What's she waiting for? What's she waiting for? In L1*)

(*12:51 i.e. after almost 2 and a half minutes of silence, T laughs; silence continues; it is without doubt that the students are totally flummoxed, they have no idea what to do*)

(*14:04 a student mumbles something like: We don't have to be quiet. And others start laughing, another student responds: Ahaaaa, we don't have to be quiet that's good! All in L1; silence continues*)

15:29

T: I could write it myself, but I don't want my opinion, I want yours on the board.

(*some chatting has started among them now, immediately a student (S2) gets up and goes to the board. She starts writing. Writes the first one: Creative. Another student (S6) tries to tell her what to write next: Try the second one. Write confident, patient. She does not respond, possibly didn't hear him. Others shout "helpful". She ends up with a list of 3 adjectives: creative, flexible, helpful and goes back to her desk.*)

T: OK?

S3: Uhm?

T: So this is? Is this your result? Are you satisfied with this?

S6: (*low volume, not heard and not responded to by anybody*) No.

T: This is what you came up with, yes? (*and she starts asking them questions about the qualities*)

As is clear from the transcript above, the teacher's implementation of the 'waiting time' concept produced prolonged periods of embarrassing silence with less than satisfactory outcomes in terms of student task engagement. Although, judging from Monika's final remarks to the students, she was clearly dissatisfied with the outcome of the student work, her post-observation appraisal, captured in the following field notes excerpt (3 May 2005), is somewhat puzzling.

*I know I didn't do what I had planned, but I have a good feeling about this class. Although at times I started to feel embarrassed, I didn't want to do it for them. I expected [that] there would be a leader, they would organise themselves as a group, but they didn't really cooperate. When S2 went to write [on the board], what she wrote was not a result of a group decision. But maybe it's OK, next time it will be better.*

While she was aware that the students did not fulfill the task requirements, she, nevertheless, had “a good feeling about this class”, even though she “started to feel embarrassed” when the students did not take the kind of action she had envisaged. What is striking, however, is the absence of any indication that Monika pondered the reasons that may have contributed to the failure of the implementation to bring about expected outcomes. Indeed, as was revealed later in the same interview, she was completely unaware of the students’ classroom reactions which clearly pointed to gaps in communication rather than their ability to work in groups (see also students’ appraisal of this class in focus group interview presented in Table 7.3 below). Thus, even though this type of implementation may be seen as more advanced than that of other research participants, Monika’s inability to critically assess the actual implementation situation in or post-action inhibited rather than facilitated student task engagement.

**Table 7.3: Student focus group interview extract regarding the ‘waiting time’ element (10 May 2005)**

I: Let's talk about the class I observed recently. How did you feel about it?  
 (All laugh)  
 S1: We didn't know what to do.  
 S2: We didn't get it.  
 S3: Like we felt it was a kind of game of something, we were just looking [at the teacher] like what are we supposed to do?  
 S4: I like wanted to ask, but then thought maybe it was mentioned and I just didn't hear or something.... Do you know what I thought? I thought that the teacher waited so that she could observe us or something so that she could then write her opinion about us, like what we are like. (laughs) Like whether it will match ours. I don't know. It somehow made sense, like she waited a bit and then write down the 3 words [the task]. But when she didn't say anything, then (showing resignation).  
 S1: It was very weird. We were just looking at each other, like what? What? What's going on?  
 I: And didn't you feel some sort of pressure to actually ask?  
 All: Oh yes!  
 I: And so why didn't you? Like did it feel weird, or were you afraid, embarrassed, or?  
 S4: No so much embarrassing as it was weird.

To examine Monika’s conceptual understanding of this aspect of the reform message that she chose to implement in her class (i.e. waiting time to enhance learner autonomy), let me look at another data source. In her interview (Interview 4, 10 May 2005), which took place a

week after the observed class in question, I used an instrument (originally designed as a TD course task) for eliciting the teachers' views on the topic of handing over responsibility to learners (see Appendix L). The purpose of this interview task was to find out whether the teachers could see any links with concrete classroom situations and the recent course input. The scenario (see Table 7.4), which the following interview excerpt is based on, illustrates an almost identical situation to that experienced by Monika in her class a week earlier. Yet, it seems that no connections whatsoever were made in Monika's deliberations:

Table 7.4: Classroom Scenario: Promoting group responsibility

<p>T: "Who wants to continue?"  [silence – 2.5 seconds]  T: "Somebody must continue."  [silence – 2 seconds]  T: "So, Betka, tell us..."</p>
--

*I mean, I wouldn't say somebody must, but I would, ... I really don't know. Well, now. Maybe? I would wait. xxx I would remain silent. But if nobody wanted to, if they remained silent, I really don't know what I would do. (2) But. I mean. Now I can imagine how Betka feels. (2) Now I can think about how she feels. I wouldn't think about this before. I would just like OK, Betka, why not. ... Or maybe, do not ask this question, but kind of there's always, you make them, you can make them do something and they won't be realising that you make them do it. I could give them cards, for example, and say, OK. Those who have, I don't know, number ehm, ...whatever. I don't know.*

To my suggestion that it might perhaps help to actually wait for someone to volunteer rather than decide for them, her response was the following:

*OK. So if they don't respond, what do I do?*

A week earlier, she was ready to sacrifice almost 10 minutes of class time to 'wait' for the students to take charge. However, the way she responds to a similar situation in the above interview indicates that this concept had not been systematically processed and therefore never conceptually grasped. It appears, therefore, that while her previous implementation of the 'waiting' strategy may have indicated her awareness of the TD course input and her willingness to experiment, it has not resulted in true conceptual change.

#### **7.1.4 Student engagement**

Although, as mentioned in the previous section, there were a number of episodes in the observational data that could be traced back to the course impact, a more in-depth analysis of those instances shows that as far as students were concerned, the conditions for their learning hardly changed. For example, there is evidence that creative and imaginative activities implemented in the classroom as a clear response to the teacher development course often gave the class an unusual twist, but required hardly any cognitive engagement on the part of the students, elicited limited linguistic output from them and on several occasions even directly hindered opportunities for student participation or had the potential to seriously undermine the students' self-esteem.

At a more general level, student engagement patterns remained intact even where there was a genuine scope for improvement. For instance, in one teacher's class, only a limited number of students regularly participated in the classroom interaction with the teacher at the expense of the rest of the class and this pattern remained to be the case throughout the project without the teacher ever acknowledging the discrepancy between this pattern in her classroom and the primary message of the TD course as regards centrality of learning engagement, let alone considering altering her instructional practices to encourage wider student participation. In another teacher's class, the students could be generally described as extremely passive and unengaged in learning tasks and although the teacher in question appeared to cognitively process the rationale of the course input, the actual situation in her classroom remained unacknowledged and, consequently, unaddressed.

Overall, therefore, the qualitative data indicate that student task engagement patterns not only did not improve, but most of the research participants did not even start to think about this issue as central to their teaching and as a key part of a motivational teaching approach even though they may have implemented several activities as experienced on the TD course.

#### **7.1.5 Teachers' conceptions of motivational teaching and beliefs about their role as motivators**

Despite their participation in the course whose aim was to explain aspects of a motivational teaching practice (in keeping with the literature review summarised in Chapters 1 and 2), most teachers continued to interpret a motivational teaching practice as "warm-ups" (Tamara), "games, cards, and all that stuff" (Jana) or "little activities" (Monika) aimed mostly for use in "conversation classes" (Lenka). There is no evidence in the data (not even those obtained six months after the project ended) that these pre-training beliefs underwent any substantial restructuring and several teachers' attempts to implement what they

interpreted as motivational teaching (i.e. mainly warm-ups and “little activities” with no real aim to improve students’ learning) confirms this (for an example, see Section 8.3.3).

Furthermore, even though an explicit emphasis on the proactive role of the teacher in creating a conducive learning environment was at the very core of the input sessions, it seems that most teachers’ prior beliefs regarding their own role in the process had been stable and thus not amenable to change (Pennington, 1996). My field notes from a discussion in Session 2 of the TD course provide perhaps the most pronounced insight into Iveta’s and Lenka’s beliefs in this respect:

*Iveta: If students are not interested in what you want them to do in class, you should simply let them be. They are adults, mature enough to make decisions. And so if they decide not to participate in classroom activities, they simply should not be pushed, because it is their right to choose not to participate.*

*Lenka: (From the way she spoke, it really seemed to be something she very strongly agreed with.) You can lead a horse to the water, but you can’t make it drink. We should think whether we should waste our time on those who are not interested and neglect those who are or the other way round.*

In a similar vein, Monika perceived autonomy-supporting practice as applicable only to teaching mature classes. Although she may have demonstrated her endorsement of such an approach on a declaratory level, her feedback on Session 4 illustrates her general belief about a motivational teaching practice, namely that it can only be “done” to groups which are already motivated, whereas there is not much a teacher can do if this is not the case. As she wrote about a particular aspect of a motivational teaching practice,

*[Whether or not learner autonomy is relevant] depends on the level of the group’s maturity [in terms of] things like proper judgement. With some groups you reach this point, with others you never do, and that is where my scepticism sources from. We are not lucky to have the same groups...Therefore, we often do not see the results of our trying hard, and therefore maybe we think it is all useless.*

Jana’s final interview (Interview 4, 15 May 2005) provides powerful confirmation that, although the training input, undoubtedly, managed to raise her awareness, her original beliefs remained in place, guiding her teaching practice.

*I don't know...I haven't really thought that it's necessary to motivate learners. As I see it – they either want or don't want to learn. So...and I myself am not motivated enough to engage in further learning... So, this one, I haven't succeeded in.*

All of the above extracts testify to the existence of the teachers' pre-training beliefs, which were in sharp contrast with the fundamental assumption underlying the TD course. In accordance with the evidence generated in the teacher cognition literature, the data of this project appear to confirm that these conceptions were a result of a variety of the research participants' prior experiences either as learners in the language classroom or student teachers on the initial teacher preparation programme. Similarly to the assumptions of Patrick and Pintrich's (2001) regarding pre-service teachers, the current research participants believed that motivation was important (that is why the course may have had an appeal for some of them), but most of them considered it to be outside their control (e.g. Lenka, Monika), or beyond their responsibility (e.g. Iveta, Jana). Most of what they could do was to try to enhance the students' motivation by "games, cards, and all that stuff" (Jana), but this could only work if they were "lucky" enough to "receive" good groups (Monika). If this was not the case, the motivational teaching approach remained something to be approached with "scepticism" (Monika). Despite the explicit objective of the training course to challenge these pre-training beliefs, they remained intact for most research participants, and, consequently, precluded any implementation which would have significant impact on the students' learning. The reasons that may have been responsible for the failure of the TD course to challenge the status quo are the subject of Chapter 8. I now turn to the examination of the quantitative data, that is, the changes in students' appraisal of their classroom environment.

## **7.2 Tracing the Impact in Quantitative Student Data**

### **7.2.1 T-tests**

As has been mentioned in Section 5.6, the statistical analysis of independent-samples T-test was performed to evaluate potential changes in the students' perceptions of their classroom environment before the teachers embarked on their course and after completing it. As can be seen in Table 7.2, out of the total of 56 measures (i.e. eight variables for seven participants as Teacher 5 did not participate in the questionnaire study), only 10 changed significantly, out of which nine actually decreased (an explanation for the decreasing tendencies is provided in the next subsection). Thus the data provide a clear message: the students'

perceptions of their classroom environment showed no improvement during the research project and therefore it can be concluded that the TD course failed in its goal to promote conceptual change in the participating teachers.

However, as has been explained in the first two chapters of the Literature Review part of this thesis, the classroom environment is an extremely complex and dynamic construct and the developmental trends in students' perceptions could, therefore, be a result of a variety of issues that may have had no relationship with the impact of the TD course. Similarly, even if no changes are indicated between the pre- and post-test data, ascribing the outcome to the failure of the teacher development course to promote change is still problematic from an experimental point of view. For this reason, I recruited several student groups of non-participating teachers to serve as control groups for the study and used a different statistical procedure (two-way ANOVA) to assess the differences between the two data sets. As will be shown in the discussion of the following section, these statistics coupled with the results of the qualitative data also enabled me to explain the rather puzzling decreasing tendencies indicated by the T-test results.



**Table 7.5: T-tests assessing change in students' perceptions of their classroom environment**

Variable		Teacher 1		Teacher 2		Teacher 3		Teacher 4		Teacher 6		Teacher 7		Teacher 8	
		M	t-value	M	t-value	M	t-value	M	t-value	M	t-value	M	t-value	M	t-value
<b>Cohesive</b>	Pre- test	3.70	-0.60	3.80	0.46	4.02	1.06	3.61	0.70	4.27	0.49	4.31	3.36 **	2.93	2.04
	Post-test	3.77		3.73		3.89		3.52		4.21		3.75		2.54	
<b>Goal</b>	Pre- test	3.50	0.51	3.47	0.12	3.78	2.17 *	3.06	-0.42	3.84	0.26	3.04	1.16	3.47	2.03
	Post-test	3.43		3.45		3.50		3.12		3.80		2.78		3.14	
<b>T_Style</b>	Pre- test	3.43	-0.32	3.42	0.81	3.84	3.49 **	3.49	-1.19	3.88	0.94	3.77	1.97	3.84	2.60 *
	Post-test	3.46		3.33		3.39		3.63		3.78		3.47		3.53	
<b>Rapport</b>	Pre- test	3.79	1.68	3.72	0.62	3.90	2.52 *	3.61	-2.70 *	4.31	-0.32	3.84	1.00	3.68	2.39 *
	Post-test	3.59		3.64		3.57		3.92		4.35		3.67		3.20	
<b>Useful</b>	Pre- test	3.59	0.74	3.77	0.72	4.21	3.39 **	3.71	0.85	3.96	0.57	3.81	1.80	4.01	0.52
	Post-test	3.45		3.62		3.70		3.55		3.84		3.36		3.86	
<b>Hard</b>	Pre- test	3.53	0.90	3.58	0.21	4.02	0.76	4.03	0.23	3.83	-0.26	3.59	-	3.77	-
	Post-test	3.31		3.54		3.81		3.98		3.90		4.07	1.44	3.86	0.23
<b>Selfconf</b>	Pre- test	3.48	0.44	3.26	0.18	3.60	1.43	3.43	-0.05	4.02	1.00	3.35	0.56	3.42	0.02
	Post-test	3.40		3.21		3.32		3.44		3.83		3.18		3.42	
<b>Accept</b>	Pre- test	3.51	-0.61	3.53	0.16	3.78	0.66	3.37	-1.11	3.59	-1.76	3.71	2.70 *	3.44	2.20 *
	Post-test	3.58		3.51		3.70		3.53		3.82		3.30		3.08	

\*p< .05, \*\*p< .01

### 7.2.2 A two-way ANOVA

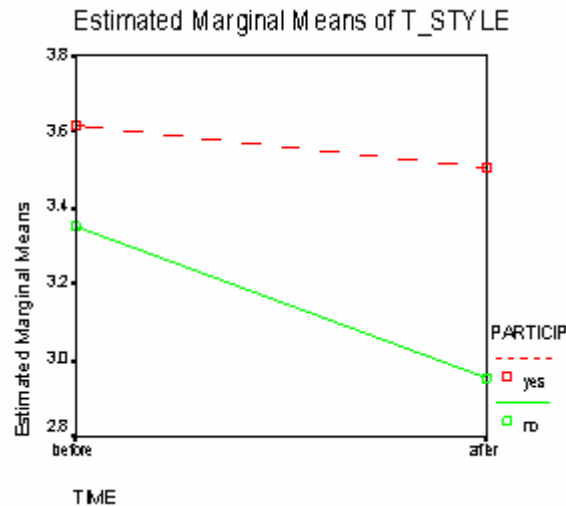
As suggested above, I was interested to see whether the developmental trends in the students' perceptions of their classroom environment were due to the teachers' participation in the teacher development course or were the result of other influences present in the dynamic classroom environment. I recruited three class groups taught by non-participating teachers (pre test N=37, post-test N=28) and the two-way between-groups ANOVA was performed to examine the interaction effect of participation (yes/no) and time (time 1= Sept 2004; time 2=May/Jun 2005) with the aim to answer the following question: Can the potential changes in students' appraisal of their classroom environment over time be ascribed to the TD course impact?

**Table 7.6: Results of 2x2 ANOVA examining the interaction effect of Participation and Time variables**

		COHES	GOAL	SOC	T_STYLE	RAPPORT	USFL	HARD	SELFCONF
PARTICIP YES	Time 1 (N=167)	3.81	3.46	3.55	3.62	3.82	3.84	3.78	3.51
	Time 2 (N=176)	3.70	3.33	3.54	3.51	3.73	3.61	3.76	3.40
PARTICIP NO	Time 1 (N=37)	3.63	2.60	3.25	3.35	3.77	3.40	3.90	3.40
	Time 2 (N=28)	3.51	2.36	3.16	2.95	3.45	3.24	3.82	3.37
SIG.	PARTICIP* TIME	.954	.483	.588	.023	.129	.721	.846	.727

As Table 7.6 illustrates, the only category that reached statistical significance is the *Teaching style* variable and while the perceptions of both the participating and non-participating teachers' students decreased, this drop is significantly sharper for the student groups whose teachers did not participate in the study (see also Figure 7.3). This result suggests the conclusion that the TD course was successful in that the teachers' new practices, adopted as a result of their participation in the course, had the power to hamper the decreasing tendency. However, it seems that such an interpretation directly contradicts the qualitative data described previously, which indicate no significant changes in the teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to a motivational teaching practice and no changes in students' classroom engagement. This outcome is a classic example of a situation in which mixed methods produce divergent results (i.e. the 'initiation function' of mixed methods research

whereby discrepancies are hoped to lead to new perspectives; see Dörnyei 2007b). In an effort to understand this contradiction, I engaged in a further scrutiny of the data, illustrated below.

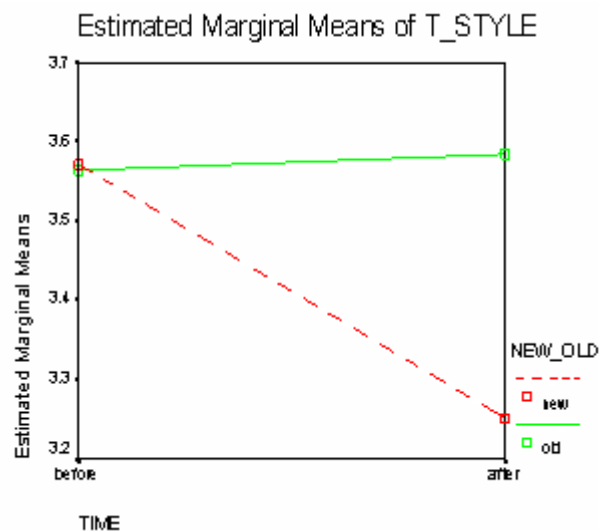


**Figure 7.3: Teaching Style for Participants vs. Non-participants**

To resolve the problem, I had to query the literature with regard to temporal changes in students' perceptions of their teachers' teaching style. One of the few studies that have attempted to examine changes in L2 learners' motivation over time is that of Gardner et al. (2004) and the findings showed that classroom-specific motives, rather than integrativeness, were most prone to change. Interestingly, the findings of the study revealed similar decreasing tendencies in the students' perceptions of their L2 teacher. Gardner et al. (2004) hypothesised that this may have been due to the fact that students' initial appraisal was based on their first, rather optimistic, impressions of the teacher or on his/her reputation, whereas the evaluation they provided at the end of the study was more likely to be based on their actual experience with the teacher during the semester. The decrease therefore may simply be a result of the students' insufficient experience of the L2 teacher's teaching style at the time of initial appraisal.

The viability of this explanation could, in fact, be tested in my data. If it is true that students' appraisals of the teacher decreases because of the inadequate information regarding the teacher's teaching style at the beginning of the semester, it follows that this tendency should not appear in the data of students who had had sufficient direct experience of their teacher at Time 1 of the questionnaire study. It therefore seemed reasonable to treat the student groups in my dataset as homogeneous in terms of teacher training intervention (in

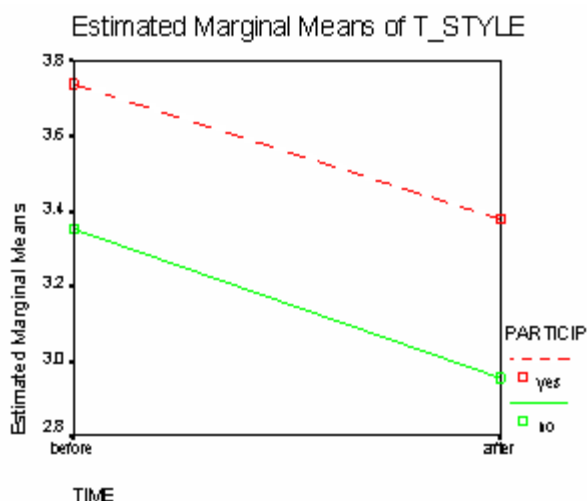
keeping with the results of the qualitative data discussed above) and divide them, instead, into two groups based on their prior history with the given teacher. Learner groups with no prior experience of the teacher at Time 1 were assigned a ‘New’ condition whereas those who had been taught by the teacher prior to the questionnaire study were assigned an ‘Old’ condition. A 2x2 ANOVA was performed to test the interaction between time and New/Old variable. The new results for the Teaching Style scale were striking (see Figure 7.4) and seem to corroborate Gardner et al.’s (2004) interpretation fully. Student appraisals of ‘Old’ teachers appear stable over time. In contrast, the students of ‘New’ teachers seemed to be more optimistic initially and “corrected” this inflated score in the post-appraisal after they developed a more realistic picture.



**Figure 7.4: Time effect on New/Old condition**

I finished my scrutiny with one final test. Since all of the non-participating teachers happened to fall in the ‘New’ condition, that is, they were new to the particular non-participant groups that responded to the questionnaire, it made sense to exclude all ‘Old’ teachers from my data set and only compare New Participating versus New Non-Participating teachers (see Figure 7.5) to assess the potential course impact. Although the limitations of reducing the number of respondents are obvious, the results are, nevertheless, indicative of Gardner et al.’s (2004) assumptions and corroborate the findings obtained from the qualitative datasets: the students’ appraisal of their teachers’ teaching style followed the same decreasing trajectory over time regardless of their teachers’ participation in the TD course. It seems, therefore, that the initially identified significant difference in teaching style was a result of non-TD-course-related influences and the new results converge with the

qualitative data findings indicating that the TD course did not have a significant impact on the participating teachers' classroom practices. The complete results for all variables are presented in Table 7.4.



**Figure 7.5: Teaching style for New Participants vs. New Non-Participants**

**Table 7.7: Results of 2x2 ANOVA examining the interaction effect of participation and time for 'New' teachers.**

		COHES	GOAL	SOC	T_STYLE	RAPPORT	USFL	HARD	SELFCONF
PARTICIP YES	Time 1 (N=49)	3.86	3.51	3.67	3.74	3.72	4.04	3.77	3.37
	Time 2 (N=67)	3.49	3.17	3.45	3.38	3.42	3.60	3.70	3.18
PARTICIP NO	Time 1 (N=37)	3.63	2.60	3.25	3.35	3.77	3.40	3.90	3.40
	Time 2 (N=28)	3.51	2.36	3.16	2.95	3.45	3.24	3.82	3.37
SIG.	PARTICIP* TIME	.230	.580	.393	.798	.896	.181	.982	.524

The analytical scrutiny described above attests to the value of utilising a mixed methods approach in assessing L2 classroom environments. On the one hand, the qualitative data were able to increase the interpretability of the quantitative data, to the extent of triggering a re-analysis, while the results of the quantitative data threw light on the dynamics of the L2 classroom environment that would have been likely to remain hidden had purely

qualitative data been relied on. Although such insights may not be critical for the purposes of this study, they, nevertheless, will be important in informing my future inquiries into the students' appraisals of their L2 classroom climate.

### **7.3 Summary**

Before I draw conclusions regarding the impact of the teacher development course on the teachers' conceptual change, let me stress how the results described in this chapter must be interpreted. The extensive data generated throughout the project indicate that various aspects of a motivational teaching practice advocated by the teacher development course had already been part of most teachers' instructional practices, even though it is outside the scope of this thesis to describe these in detail (though see Newsletter 3 in Appendix F, for some examples). Furthermore, the comparison between participants' versus non-participants' questionnaire data confirm significant differences in the students' perceptions of the classroom environments these teachers created for them. The participating teachers' students reached significantly higher scores on a number of measures, which clearly suggests a higher level of motivation to engage in learning activities. Also, the fact that the research participants were among the few initial conference participants who volunteered to take part in the follow-up study is a testimony of their dedication and a willingness to move beyond duty (we must not forget that the seminars took place on Saturdays!). In fact, (as also shown in Newsletter 3), I found the examples of the practices I saw while observing the participating teachers enriching and illuminating in many respects. Thus, the results presented here must be interpreted in this light – they only show the absence of conceptual change as a result of the course, but in no way demonstrate the absence of motivational elements in the research participants' teaching practice.

With the current focus in mind, nevertheless, we need to conclude that no conceptual change occurred as a result of the teachers' participation in the present teacher development course. The qualitative data of this project, corroborated by the quantitative data of the students' perceptions, suggest that apart from three teachers who were demonstrating signs of various degrees of engagement with the course input (which will be further analysed in Chapter 8), overall, the participants in this study do not seem to have changed their beliefs regarding a motivational teaching practice and, consequently, did not alter their practices in any significant ways. Those who believed that motivation was important, but was, predominantly the students' "business", continued to do so after the course ended. Similarly, those who interpreted motivational teaching in terms of "little activities", "warm-ups", or

“games”, remained convinced that that was what a motivational teaching practice involved. That may explain why implemented practices guided by the above rationales (e.g. to provide entertainment) failed to create opportunities for student meaningful engagement. And, finally, those who had from the outset either believed that they were already motivational practitioners or did not agree with such approach (whatever their interpretation of it may have been), continued to hold such views without engaging in further analysis of the course input in relation to their practice. The question the next chapter will seek to answer, then, concerns what accounts for the absence of conceptual change in language teachers even when they positively appraise the innovative input and what (if anything) can be done to facilitate an effective restructuring of teacher cognition. Hence, the focus of the following chapter will be on the “anatomy of failure”.

## 8 The Anatomy of Failure

The focus of this chapter requires a more in-depth analysis of the data than was the case in the previous chapter. I would like to reiterate at this point that even if some of my conclusions and observations may come across as negative, they are only pursued with the aim to understand the process of language teacher change rather than judge the research participants' instructional practices. I am aware, however, that despite this assurance, some teachers' feelings may be hurt if they recognise themselves in these descriptions. This is a possibility I cannot rule out despite the special care I have taken to secure anonymity, and, as I concluded in Section 6.2, this is a very difficult dilemma for me to solve. It is my hope, nevertheless, that even if such analyses may be perceived as negative, they will eventually be read in the way they had been intended, that is, as opportunities for understanding and for further learning.

The chapter is divided into three main parts. In the first two, I explore themes that emerged during the analysis of the qualitative data generated throughout the fieldwork and will indicate how these have led to the development of the integrated model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) introduced in Chapter 3. The purpose of the third part of the chapter is to apply the LTCC model to explicate the developmental paths of the eight EFL teachers' as they engaged with the course input. I start with the first broad theme, motivation, which has led to the introduction of the key construct of LTCC, the Language Teacher Possible Self (see Sections 3.6 and 3.7.2 for a conceptual discussion).

### ***8.1 Motivation and the Language Teacher Possible Self***

As pointed out in Chapter 3 of this thesis, understanding teachers' motivational orientations may be crucial in understanding their conceptual change. However, just as is the case for the language learners in the classroom (see Chapter 1 and 2), it is not only the question of *whether* the teachers are motivated to pursue their professional development, but also, and as the following data will show, even more importantly, *what* motivates them. These issues are addressed in the following sections as I explain how a closer look at the distinct motivational orientations of the participating teachers began to uncover a broader self-construct that permeated the data of the research participants and which emerged to play a crucial role in determining the kind of the developmental route each of them followed in their response to the teacher development course.



### **8.1.1 The ‘wrong’ type of teacher motivation**

In the earlier stages of the qualitative data analysis, the issue of motivation emerged as critical and the following discussion (also reported in Kubanyiova, 2006) represents my early thinking on this. Let me first describe the nature of the motivation with which most of the research participants entered the research project. As has been documented above, the current research participants were, undoubtedly, exceptionally motivated. However, the emerging patterns in my data prompted me to consider the types of teacher motivation that might perhaps not provide sufficient fuel for change in teaching practice. Drawing mainly on the interview data, I will first examine the research participants’ general motivation to teach, starting with their entry to the profession.

Most research participants chose their university programme because they either had a positive attitude towards English or because, as opposed to other school subjects like Maths or Chemistry, English was one they felt fairly competent in. Their initial motivation to major in English, therefore, was not to be teachers of English, but, rather, to know and use English. This ties in with the motivational patterns reported in Kyriacou and Koberi’s (1998) study of Slovenian teacher trainees for whom enjoying English and the importance of English were the top two motives to become English teachers. Subject matter-, rather than teaching-oriented motivation, in fact, seems to be the case at a more general level in Slovakia, as confirmed in informal discussions I had with university teacher trainers at universities in two different cities: The vast majority of students on the teacher preparation programmes do not have any particular attraction to a teaching career. As the head teacher at one of the research sites sadly observed, due to the unfavourable conditions (primarily with regard to remuneration), teaching as a career seems to be in the vast majority of cases a last resort for graduates in foreign languages.

Clearly, the above does not hold true for all my research participants, though the interview data do show such tendencies in Monika (at least initially), Iveta, and Jana. Although several research participants seemed to be satisfied in their jobs, the data reveal that it may not necessarily have been for the “right” reasons. Let us look at a few examples.

Lenka’s major motivation was clearly the love of English, as for her it is “music to my ears” (Lenka’s Interview 1, 28 September 2004). Having grown up in a family of teachers, Lenka had never considered any other career. The teaching job somehow felt a natural choice. Similarly, having been surrounded by teachers in her family all her life, Tamara knew she was “most probably going to do a teaching degree, what exactly, that was just the question of time”. What she likes about being a teacher is the “feeling that I am important to [the students] at that moment” (Tamara’s Interview 1, 22 September 2004).

Iveta, to give another example, was motivated to pursue any career in which her self-esteem would be nurtured. Her account confirms that rather than a result of a conscious choice, her ending up in a teaching career was simply a matter of unpredictable twists in the course of events. In the following interview extract she is explaining why she did not choose English as the topic of her PhD dissertation:

*Iveta: I'm sure it would interest me more [writing a thesis on the topic of English teaching] and also I'm practising it whereas I don't do anything with [the other subject]. But when I enrolled, I didn't know that, that I'd be in school, teaching and stuff and probably I didn't consider it properly. So I originally thought, I'd finish the exam, finish the school year and then off to [an English speaking country] ...*

*Interviewer: What would you like to do [there]?*

*Iveta: Anything. Just go and see. Of course you'd have to study – that's the condition. So perhaps I'd enrol on an intensive English programme – that wouldn't do me any harm. And work. Anything.*

*Interviewer: [So] if you could choose [now, what would you do]?*

*Iveta: If I could choose, I think, just about anything would be better than this [teaching at this school]. It's killing me here. You do your best and nobody appreciates it, you work hard and nobody gives a heck.*

The above extracts suggest that innovation directed towards improved conditions for student learning in no way tapped into Lenka's or Iveta's motivation to teach. Tamara's motive of being important in the classroom, which, as the data presented in Section 8.3.3 will further illustrate, proved to be an important part of her language teacher identity, was, in fact, in direct contrast with principles of a motivational teaching practice (which include learner and group responsibility).

With respect to teacher motivation, then, my research participants seem to markedly differ from Tardy and Snyder's (2004) Turkish university teachers whose motivation to teach was shown to be driven by students' "moments of learning". On the contrary, the Slovakian teachers seem to strikingly resemble Johnston's (1997) research sample of Polish EFL teachers whose entry to the profession lacked a sense of agency and was either accidental or second choice. Even where a teaching career was an obvious first choice for some of my participants, it was, in most cases, either subject matter- driven (just as in the Polish teachers' study) or self-esteem-driven. Yet, bearing in mind the underlying focus of

the TD course, namely, the commitment to enhance student motivation to learn, it may be reasonable to speculate that the teachers' interest in their students' "moments of learning" may be a prerequisite for teachers' genuine desire to adopt a motivational teaching practice. Because this type of intrinsic teacher motivation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) was absent from the data of most participants, the possibility of their motivation to change may have been reduced.

The above finding seems puzzling to say the least given the teachers' documented enthusiasm and commitment for the duration of the course and warrants further inquiry into the research participants' *motivation to join the project*. When asked directly, most teachers would initially formulate their motivation to join the project in terms of the desire to learn new things and improve their teaching practice. This, of course, made sense given their deep commitment as well as genuine enthusiasm and involvement during the input sessions documented earlier. A closer look at the qualitative data, however, uncovers very different motives and clearly supports the conclusion reached above.

As has been suggested earlier, a close inspection of the interview and course feedback data reveal that, contrary to the common-sense expectation, the teachers did not volunteer to participate in the project in order to explore ways of creating a motivating learning environment. Instead, the boost in self-confidence and the opportunity to practise English emerge as major reasons and these, as has been tentatively suggested above, may not be sufficient to lead to significant change in teaching practice. Like in her motivation to teach, it was Iveta's self-esteem that seemed to be her driving force in joining the project. The following extract from her feedback on the first session is but one example of what appears a major theme in her dataset:

*the fact that I have joined the project gives me more confidence. Perhaps this seems to have no connection, but I feel that I am doing something for myself, that I am not just a "dumb colleague" as we are sometimes addressed by XY (her colleague).... And lastly, the kids love me more, because they say it is so nice of me that I allowed them to write their own opinion about me and that I want to change because of them....they told me that no one had ever done that for them before.*

For Lenka and Jana, the main motive was the opportunity to practise English, given that they could not do it elsewhere. Lenka, in fact, does not really mention other reasons than the change to speak English (see also Sections 7.1.2 and 8.3.1). Although Jana does mention learning about teaching methods, activities and motivation in giving reasons for joining the project, her priority from the way she elaborates on it in her feedback on Session 1, is clear:

*For me, it's invaluable to spend at least one whole day speaking English with other teachers, because at home I mostly teach beginners, or lower-intermediate students and you can't really discuss things with them that much. They mostly learn from me, not the other way round. During the seminar, I can learn from others things like vocabulary, pronunciation, or teaching methods, activities, motivation.*

Thus, it seems that the teachers did not volunteer to participate in the project in order to explore ways of creating a motivating learning environment; their motivation to join, instead, appears to closely correspond with their idiosyncratic motivation to teach. Although my earlier deliberations based on preliminary findings of this study (Kubanyiova, 2006) were not grounded in the current theoretical conceptualisation, the tentative conclusion I presented in that report that such reasons may not be sufficient to lead to a desire to change seem to be strengthened in the context of the currently proposed theoretical concept of the Ideal Language Teacher Self and point to LTCC as a viable model for explaining teacher education impact on language teacher change. The next section provides more insights into the development of the concept of the Ideal Language Teacher Self and I offer a more thorough examination of several individual teachers' Ideal Language Teacher Selves in Section 8.3. A conceptual definition of both the Ideal and Ought-to Language Teacher Selves was provided in Section 3.7.2.

### **8.1.2 Towards identifying the 'Ideal Language Teacher Self' as a conceptual construct**

Like in L2 motivation research, the examination of the research participants' motivation discussed above pointed to some more fundamental identification element. It began to emerge that the motives of teachers to pursue their career as well as to engage in the current teacher development initiative permeated all facets of their data and were in various ways reflected in the teachers' classroom behaviours, discourse and thinking, and the frequent occurrence of diverse self-related constructs in the initial phases of the coding process (e.g. self-esteem, self-perceptions, self-image, perceived superiority, ego-related goals) began to reveal the importance of an over-arching self-concept theme. For example, Tamara's desire to be important for the students, which she quoted as one of the primary motives to teach, matched her instructional practices and discourse: she took on almost all (if not all) leadership roles in the classroom and this was clear from the way the tasks were organised, the classroom interaction was structured, or grammar was explained in her classes. In

addition, her control and leadership were also exercised outside the classroom, in her professional as well as personal interactions with colleagues, family and friends.

To give another example of how the teacher motivation identified above transcended all spheres of the teachers' cognitions and behaviours, let me look at Iveta's data. As indicated in the previous section, being appreciated seems to have been her primary motive for pursuing any enterprise, including the teaching job, and this was obvious from the way she participated in the TD course, reflected on her teaching and talked about her personal and professional history. Pursuing her ego-related goals is also clearly traceable in the observational data of her instructional practice. The following excerpt from one of my analytical memos documents my emerging understanding of the nature of Iveta's often contradictory data.

*What ... seems to permeate all her data is her insatiable desire to be liked, respected, praised, etc. Her self-image needs constant reassuring. ... And so although I am not sure I can trust her often contradictory and incoherent stories, I can certainly trust their connecting and ever-present element of this approval-seeking. This, in fact, may well explain why many of her statements seem to be a reflection of a fabricated reality and tend to be rather inflated (including her course endorsement). It may be nothing but the need to be respected, accepted, successful in the eyes of the interviewer as well as others in her surrounding (Analytical memo, 27/06/2005).*

Her need to be recognised by the students as an expert was often traceable in the observational data. The following is a lesson excerpt (26 April 2005) in which she explains a usage of future tenses (transcription conventions used in the transcripts of observational data presented in this thesis can be found in Appendix O):

T: So. We are dealing with going to? But so as not to confuse it with another structure, let's look at page 43? (they all open the books, the T waits) we have exercise number 5 there. Tenses. So we are going to have a look at will and going to. So will is (reads what the coursebook says), so for example, if you want to say, xxx (very fast speech in L1 follows, explaining when they would use it by giving examples of what they might want to say in what situations, etc.), so when it's certain, you'll use will. But then what is certain, yeah? It's probable that it will happen. So it is as if xxx. OK?

While prior to this episode, the students generally interacted with the teacher (frequently nodded and ‘uhmed’, etc.), the teacher’s mini-lecture documented here was accompanied by complete silence, suggesting that the students may not have grasped the explanation (and, I have to admit, I did not quite follow it either). However, Iveta did not seem to pick up this clue and, despite the students’ lack of interaction, spoke markedly faster than usual and made very definite statements. It was, in fact, impossible to interrupt her in any way to express doubts, let alone to ask questions. Yet, despite her appearance of being extremely confident and knowledgeable, the content of what she said did not seem to facilitate the students’ understanding. However, Iveta either did not notice, or chose to ignore, this. It seems that her Ideal Self as a respected and appreciated teacher (in this case as an expert linguist, able to readily provide an explanation for a particular grammatical structure) was central to her self-concept and thus obscured her ability and/or willingness to examine whether or not the students understood. Her observational data contain numerous instances where she seemed to be pursuing her ego-related goals at the expense of the goal of facilitating student learning and this has led to my understanding of the kind of Ideal Language Teacher Self that was central to Iveta’s working self-concept.

An extensive in-depth analysis of the multiple source of data began to reveal broader “conceptions of the self in future states” (Leondari et al., 1998, p. 219) or “identity goals” (Pizzolato, 2006) of the participating teachers and it became clear that inquiry into the content of these identities could provide cues to the individual teachers’ responses to the course input. The reconceptualised model of L2 motivation within the self-framework discussed in Section 3.6.1 began to appear particularly relevant, and theoretical assumptions of possible selves theories strongly resonated with the current project’s emerging themes. Further inquiries into the content of the Ideal Language Teacher Selves of individual teachers are the subject of Section 8.3.

### **8.1.3 *Ought-to Language Teacher Self***

The early stages of data analysis during the data collection phase revealed certain discrepancies in some of the research participants’ data, indicating the possibility that they were, in a way, working with their assumptions of what was expected of them and tried to live up to these expectations (see also a theoretical discussion of this issue in Section 5.3.1). I developed a whole coding tree of such instances with a working name “Living up to expectations” (for examples of individual categories and sample data coded at them, see Table 8.1), which seemed to feature particularly strongly in the data of Monika and Tamara and are also traceable in Iveta’s data, collected mainly in the initial stages of fieldwork. In

contrast, Lenka, Jana, Erika and Silvia did not display any (or almost no) signs of living up to expectations and this seems to make sense in the context of the discussion in Chapter 7. Let me now present Monika's data which are a powerful illustration that the desire to live up to expectations was associated with some kind of temporary externally defined identity (Ought-to Self) which often clashed with the more internalised and permanent one (Ideal Self).

Monika seems to have adopted an identity of a committed research participant, eagerly taking on all the tasks associated with the project. As one of the very few participants to do so, she began to keep a reflective teaching journal, but soon started to feel a clash between her wanting to live up to this image and her inability to do so because of her heavy workload. I began to sense her growing feelings of guilt. The following entry documents what transpired on the night before an input session of the teacher development course.

*I have a feeling as if she started to regret joining the project or at least committing herself to some of its tasks. She kept complaining about too much work as if to prepare me for the fact that she did not write any reflections. I think she may have felt guilty about it and was trying to offer some excuses. Then she told me she was actually considering not attending the session due to her work load (Personal journal, January 2005).*

My hunch expressed in the above journal entry was confirmed several times during previous as well as subsequent interviews (see the excerpts below) when this research participant, perhaps unwittingly, admitted the feeling of frustration and even anger that I had sensed and attempted to address, albeit not always successfully.

*while I'm enjoying something, it's great, but when all my energy's gone, that's it. (laughs). Humanist or no humanist. Yeah, like what does she want from us! (meaning the researcher) (laughs). Yeah, I was, within me, angry, like what does she, all the time, what does she want?! I've got other things to think about. (Interview 2, November 2004)*

*I remember coming home from the seminar and I was thinking, damn, what did she? Like what was she on about? ... Even though I tended to moan, like this will not work and this is easy to say to someone who hasn't tried it but really it did pay off. (Interview 5, December 2005)*

It seems that the identity Monika was projecting was a temporary response to the project's requirements and was associated with the feelings of frustration and even anger when it was difficult to reconcile with the demands placed on her by the particular educational context. Yet, it was clear that she continued to 'deliver' despite her frustrations. For example, when I asked her, six months after the project ended, whether she thought experimenting with new things was possible in the state school system, she was quite sceptical. To my question whether she, despite the system, ever attempted to do that type of activities, she replied:

*T: I think I did. In the year when we attended the seminar, certainly yes at that time...*

Monika's students, too, were quite aware that when I was there as an observer, their lessons were markedly different from their regular ones. To my question during the focus group interview, whether they noted some differences, they seemed to be unanimous:

*S1: Absolutely.*

*S2: Definitely.*

*S3: No doubt.*

*S4: Like we always know that when you're gonna be there, we would have some kind of games and fun.*

This is, of course, not to say that Monika's desire to live up to the project's expectations was necessarily a negative phenomenon (also see the discussion in 6.3.2). On the contrary, Monika's adopting of a temporary Ought-to Self was, in fact, instrumental to her internalisation of a particular type of teacher identity that allowed her to re-consider certain aspects of her teaching practice. What I intended to demonstrate in this section was that there were many instances of teachers' adopting their temporary course-input-related Ought-to Selves and in order to understand the true impact of the TD course, it was critical to become aware of these. As will be shown later, the introduction of the Ideal and Ought-to Self concepts provided considerable explanatory power in accounting for a lack of conceptual change despite the teachers' positive appraisals.



**Table 8.1: A summary of early coding that has led to embracing the concept of Ought-to Language Teacher Self**

Node name	Node description	Sample data coded at the node
<b>Ambiguous messages to students</b>	Messages during the class that, although technically addressed to students, seem to have been directed towards the observer.	<i>You need to express yourself and now you have the opportunity.</i>  <i>So you see it is also possible to revise this way.</i>
<b>Ambiguous use of terminology</b>	Using TD course terminology with ambiguous or empty meaning, often indicating misinterpretation, lack of confidence or lack of conceptual understanding.	<i>Simply, [the teachers] were, I think, more eh humane, humanistic, humane, or whatever is the correct word.</i>  <i>I felt the class was not as dynamic as I wished it to be. I like it when it is dynamic.</i>
<b>‘Denial’ Messages</b>	Short comments, typically in feedback, e-mails or interviews, indicating that the previous content may have been a desire to live up to certain expectations, rather than their genuine opinion.	<i>Hope you find it useful.</i>  <i>Please let me know if this is enough and if not, I’ll do better next time.</i>  <i>So I don’t know if you saw what you were interested in.</i>
<b>Departing from routine</b>	Any traces in classroom discourse or in interview responses that suggest departure from routine.	<i>(T to the class at the beginning of the lesson): We’re going to do something non-traditional today.</i>  <i>I: Do you think you wouldn’t have done the activity... if I hadn’t been there?</i> <i>T: Hmmm...I wanted the class to be more dynamic.... But no, I would probably not have done it...</i>  <i>T (in class): Why should I always check your homework. Try to check the homework in pairs.</i>
<b>Developing rationale post-hoc</b>	Any indications that the teacher was not quite clear about the rationale for the implemented activity and attempted to develop it post-hoc, either during the actual class or in the interview.	<i>T (to students at the end of a “jazz chant” activity): So this is what I learnt at our teacher development seminars and. Did you like it?... Yes? Yes? <u>Well, when you look at the verses that we repeated, vocabulary of this little exercise, you will indeed see that it’s a useful language for complimenting someone or somebody if you have (2)I don’t know (1).</u></i>
<b>Incoherent or discrepant messages</b>	Either incoherent messages indicating no true identification with their content or contradictions between what the teachers were saying they did and what they actually did in classes.	<i>I always plan my lessons in such a way, well, my aim is always to start communication among students themselves, not myself. Communication channel... so that it works among them, sharing information.</i>

<b>Dissatisfaction</b>	Any indication either during the lesson or in post-observation interview that the teacher was either not happy with how the implemented activity went or she felt that it did not match her idea of a good L2 lesson.	<p><i>I: ...do you feel that it was not a good class then?</i></p> <p><i>T: (silence) Well, as such, it was not really my idea. This [activity] should have been the beginning. [Here], it was the end. So it didn't have any particular (I). This is what I try to do; the classes have to have head and tail. What we did was a sort of post-activity.</i></p> <p><i>I: So what would it have been like in order for you to be satisfied with it?</i></p> <p><i>T: OK, I'll tell you what I had planned to do. I actually also taught the same class to another group. HW check was at the beginning, then ...we were looking for similarities between their opinions and the article...And then we were back to the original article...[and] I could connect it to another activity - there were 16 new verbs, they were asked to find them, find equivalents of full meaning words, this was nicely done, practiced in sentences, so from that article I moved to grammar.</i></p> <p><i>I: So this is what was kind of missing in today's class.</i></p> <p><i>T: Yes! Yes! (very emphatically)</i></p>
<b>Unsolicited excuses</b>	When the teacher initiates the discussion on what she didn't do, which suggests that she's working with some kind of assumptions of the researcher's expectations.	<i>Immediately after the lesson she told me that she can't move and walk around the class that much these days. And she admitted that normally, she is sitting during the class and only stands and moves when I'm there to observe her.</i>

## 8.2 Internal and External Resources

The interrogation of the qualitative database of this project generated a number of salient themes that appeared to bear relevance in the quest for understanding the lack of change in addition to the previously discussed language teacher self concept. These concern a variety of individual and contextual factors and because the data point towards a significant interplay between these two dimensions, they will be examined here under a common theme of internal and external resources. The specific dispositional and contextual factors will be summarised at the end of this section and I will also draw links between the data discussed in this as well as the previous sections and the integrated model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) introduced in Chapter 3.

### 8.2.1 The absence of reflection

As discussed in Chapter 3, a reflective approach to teaching has shown to be a prerequisite for teachers' cognitive development. However, the data of this project reveal that "reasoning

in action” (K. E. Johnson, 1999) was a foreign concept in the given teaching environment and several factors that were believed to contribute to the absence of reflection and, at the same time, hindered systematic efforts of the TD course to promote it are described in the subsequent sections. Here, a data excerpt is provided to illustrate that in making judgements about the effectiveness of their teaching, the research participants almost exclusively relied on their previously established theories rather than reflected on the actual evidence gathered from their own classrooms.

The following is a post-observation interview extract with Jana (Interview 2, 11 January, 2005). She is unhappy with the way a group of weaker students in her class organised a group discussion and particularly points out a substandard summary they wrote about the outcomes of that discussion (this is how classes were organised, with a different small group of students organising a whole-class discussion on an assigned topic each week and subsequently writing a summary that was handed in for assessment purposes). I am trying to encourage her to engage in a more thorough reflection on this by suggesting that there may have been several reasons for the students’ poor written performance.

*I: Yes, maybe it would be interesting to compare this. Like if they wrote three sentences again, even if the discussion organised by somebody else went really well, maybe that would tell us something about their skills, their abilities.*

*J: Uhm. Uhm.*

*I: Because now it may not be quite clear why they only wrote so little. Because of the failed discussion? Or the new role they found themselves in? Or their knowledge of English in general?*

*J: Sure. Sure. But they, they have done several years of English now. So they really should be able to do this. It’s not that they, that they, that they couldn’t know this, but [they performed poorly] because they didn’t want to [do well]. Or, maybe, they don’t know. But they should. They should be able to do this.*

It is clear that Jana judges the students’ skills based on what she thinks they should know, rather than on what they actually know. She draws her conclusion (that they “didn’t want to” rather than “couldn’t”) based on her heuristic appraisal without actually attempting to reflect upon and examine the real reasons behind the students’ poor performance.

Not only was this a typical approach she took when evaluating her classes in post-observational interviews, but the qualitative data indicate that *most* research participants’

assessment of their classes and student engagement was filtered through their prior beliefs, theories, experiences and feelings and the conclusions they made about the learners' expectations (which is also illustrated in Section 8.2.5), participation, motivation, task appraisal, classroom disengagement or poor/excellent performance were hardly ever grounded in the actual evidence. Admittedly, with experience, language teachers develop a knowledge-base of what works and what does not in the particular language education context (Borg, 1998b, 1998c; Woods, 1996) without necessarily having to systematically scrutinise all classroom events in order to make appropriate instructional decisions. However, because a thorough situation-based assessment of the students' reasons for engaging in tasks in the language classroom as well as for withdrawing their participation is a paramount in understanding and adopting a motivational teaching approach, this finding may have broader significance for constructing the 'anatomy of failure.' Let us now examine factors that on the one hand, appeared to contribute to the teachers' lack of systematic examination of their classroom practices and, on the other, hinder the efforts of the current TD initiative to encourage reflection in the research participants. These include contextual constraints, low efficacy and a lack of necessary skills.

### **8.2.2 Contextual constraints on pursuing a reflective approach to teaching**

My own exposure to the research context, coupled with an account of a principal in-service teacher trainer, have confirmed that it is not unusual for EFL teachers in the present context to interpret professional development solely in the sense of improving their linguistic competence, rather than the teaching practice, which is reminiscent of Maley's (1986) observation of the nature of English teacher development in China. In the light of the previous discussion of the participants' motivation to teach and motivation to join the project, this is perhaps unsurprising. However, even if awareness is raised of a reflective approach to teaching and of professional development activities that can foster it, engaging in them is far from easy, as Tamara's interview extract eloquently illustrates:

*I wanted to say that this sort of self-reflection as we do here...for me, I told you, the first class when it was finished, perhaps just on the way to the staff room I would just say it worked or it didn't work, that was good, that wasn't good, that's it. Sometimes it happens to me that the bell rings, the class has ended and at that moment I start thinking about the following class. That I have no personal time to sit down and jot down a couple of notes. (Interview 3, 13 January 2005)*

It may be the result of such constraints that a reflective approach to teaching and indeed the culture of professional development are not part of the Slovakian EFL teaching context. The following two examples provide further insights into factors that are at play when teacher development initiatives, such as the current project, are introduced.

### **8.2.3 Reflective inquiry obstructed by the teachers' insecurity**

As suggested before, non-judgemental peer observation as one of many ways of engaging in a reflective teaching practice (Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001) is a concept that is simply not part of the teaching culture under investigation. As a result, observation is notoriously seen as a threatening exercise, the main reason being teachers' feeling of being checked on. The realisation that observations would be an important part of the current research project was, in fact, one of the major aspects that put more teachers off participating in it. However, my data suggest that rather than worrying about their teaching competence, the teachers' fear of being checked on was mainly related to their English proficiency. Having learnt about the research participants' major motives for teaching and pursuing professional development, this is no surprise, but rather a logical consequence. Numerous examples from the dataset confirm such claim.

For instance, the questions I was asked by Lenka after (and sometimes even during) observed classes were never actually related to particular teaching strategies or pedagogical problems, but always concerned vocabulary or grammar. She seemed to be constantly occupied with whether what she said in class (and even in the TD course itself) was correct. The following excerpt from my interview with Monika after her first two observed classes further illuminates this kind of uneasiness.

*M: ...the second class you observed I was much more relaxed....[I think it is] very inspirational. To take observation as something inspirational among colleagues, for example. That I don't go there to check on her, yes,[we should] get rid of this feeling, but [I should go] because I want to copy something, learn something. I think, however, that... that... we... that we have something like that in us, that, subconsciously, we do sit there and check. It is in you – you hear something, like your colleague made a mistake or something, it is there you can't wipe it out.*

*I: Hmm... actually, I noticed in many teachers' classes that they are extra careful when they speak and when they explain things, they always look at me to sort of check whether it was correct.*

*M: But I did that too. I think. That I searched for some assurance. Like – she’s in England, she will know! (laughs) That’s the first thing that comes to your head. But, for example, when XY [her senior colleague] was there to observe me or when I was in her class – I remember ... she often turned to me – like “isn’t it so” or “it is, isn’t it!” [confirmation of grammar or vocabulary item]*

Thus, one of the difficulties of encouraging continuing professional development in the present context seems to be rooted in the teachers’ lack of teaching efficacy. My data show that insecurity in one’s English proficiency is a substantial part of this lack of confidence, an issue which might act as a distracting factor in EFL teachers’ development and which perhaps warrants more attention in research on L2 teacher cognition in EFL contexts.

#### **8.2.4 Lack of skills to pursue articulated reflection**

Another problem associated with attempts to promote change by encouraging reflection stemmed from the teachers’ inability to pursue articulated reflection. Given their motivation to teach outlined above, not only did the research participants not understand why they should reflect on their own teaching, but having never engaged in such an exercise before they also lacked the actual skills and language to do so. Indeed, my data document that during post-observation interviews or in written reflections which were part of the TD course, few research participants were ready to reflect at other than a superficial level on their rationale behind their classroom behaviour or particular TD course activities, which is also seen in the pattern with which feedback was returned, for example. When more reflective feedback on a particular topic was elicited, the return rate was significantly lower.

While the TD course was designed in a way that encouraged teachers’ involvement in reflecting on their new and prior experiences, the exposure to new professional discourse with which to articulate them was limited by the structure of the course (especially its relatively short length and large gaps between individual sessions) and, thus, could not compensate for its general absence in the teaching culture of the current context. As a result of these various factors, including a heavy teaching load, the fear of making mistakes and a lack of skills and discourse to pursue reflection, I had to carefully reconsider some of the planned TD course processes aimed at facilitating reflection and significantly adjust the methods for data collection that I had originally intended to employ (see Chapter 6 for more details).

### **8.2.5 Fear of not meeting students' expectations**

*...the most important thing is how [the students] responded, and from that I can say that the class wasn't successful.... I was embarrassed, I saw them [wondering], 'And what was this?', 'What was it about?' (Tamara, Interview 3, 13 January 2005)*

Two further themes that emerged as potentially significant in piecing together the 'anatomy of failure' constitute (1) the teachers' fear of not meeting students' expectations and (2) their concerns over the competing demands of the educational system in general. As the introductory quote suggests, this section examines the first of these themes, while the unsupportive system will be the subject of the next section.

The possibility of not satisfying students' expectations was a recurrent concern in several research participants' data, quoted as one of the factors preventing them from implementing the motivational teaching approach in their classrooms. The following excerpt illustrates Monika's worries with regard to an autonomy-supporting teaching practice:

*I am a bit skeptical about [learner autonomy] unless we all [teachers of all subjects] start doing something about it. I do believe it is very important and something that is my priority, but my own experience is that I have not reached much understanding from students, on the contrary, the effect often was that I am not serious (or maybe competent) enough about teaching. (Feedback on Session 4 of the TD course)*

In a similar vein, Iveta describes how her desire to satisfy students' expectations led her to abandoning a certain approach to teaching that may have, in the initial stages of her teaching career, been part of her instructional practice:

*When I was a beginning teacher, I tried to use as little from the coursebook as possible. I always looked at it and checked what sort of grammar there was to go through and [prepared some] grammar games, and that was what I did. I tried to do it this way, but found out that ... they didn't appreciate it much.... And so I did less and less of that and they wanted the coursebook, they said "we're not following the book".... Well, we were following the book, but we skipped some bits. And they asked: "Why did we skip these things? We haven't done this yet, let's return to that." So they required it. And if I am required to cover everything there is in the coursebook, I can't do the games. (Interview 3, 3 January 2005)*

Finally, in her post-observation interview (Interview 1, 22 September, 2004), Tamara describes the observed lesson, which clearly represented a departure from her routine to live up to what she perceived were the expectations of the project, and, similarly to Monika and Iveta, she brings in students' expectations to justify her own disappointment and, consequently, her unwillingness to consider certain types of tasks:

*I have a feeling that the students expect that every single class should present a new grammar item. They don't realise that also by that 20-minute discussion they can enrich their language, their communication abilities. I can see that they are disappointed if we don't have a new grammar exercise, they're used to drills (Interview 1, 22 September 2004).*

These are just some examples of what seemed to be an important element in several teachers' data: their fear that by adopting a new approach to teaching they would fail to meet the students' expectations. The impact of this type of cognition (i.e. beliefs about students' expectations) on teachers' instructional practices has been documented in Borg's (1998c) study exploring the cognitive basis for one teacher's approach to grammar teaching. However, a closer scrutiny of the current project's data also reveals that the students' expectations were in most cases interpreted by the teachers through their own identities, goals, theories, expectations, preferences or experiences rather than based on the actual evidence of what the students really expected, which further corroborates my claims in the previous sections about the absence of reflection in this research context. Tamara's post-observation interview excerpt (describing a warm-up activity that involved having blindfolded students guess whose of their classmates' voice they were listening to) is provided to illustrate a general pattern in her as well as other teachers' appraisals of students' expectations:

*I: And you said[to the students]: 'You might have found this a stupid activity'.... Do you think there was a possibility that they thought it a stupid activity? Or did you have the feeling they did?*

*T: (3) You know (uncertain), I have to admit that I didn't notice this in particular. I have to admit I didn't notice that, I did not inspect their faces, yeah? That is one thing that should be there, ... one doesn't concentrate on that ..., you see that's a good point, (1) but I had the feeling that it seemed to them as non-sense because*



*they responded immediately, see? They didn't think who it was, but they knew instantly...*

*I: Aha, so during the activity you noticed that it was easy-*

*T: -easy and that's why I thought what's easy must be nonsense. (laughs).*

Thus, although the research participants were generally concerned with students' expectations, they were hardly ever able to provide data-based evidence for their conclusions. Instead, they tended to interpret these through the filter of their own theories ("what's easy must be nonsense"), beliefs about a good language class (each lesson should contain "a new grammar exercise"), or their various ego-related goals ("they didn't appreciate it much"). As also mentioned in Section 8.1.2, these cognitions showed to be a reflection of the Ideal Language Teacher Selves the research participants adopted and, as the excerpts presented here show, the fear of not meeting students' expectations indeed proved to be associated with the fear of identity implications (i.e. being perceived as a teacher who is "not serious enough", "incompetent", and therefore "not appreciated" by the students) and accompanied by negative emotions, such as anger, embarrassment and disappointment, when such implications were directly experienced. The data of this research project, therefore, indicate that the fear of not meeting students' expectations may become a factor inhibiting change when it is associated with an imminent threat to the teachers' ideal selves, irrespective of whether or not students' real expectations are at play.

#### **8.2.6 Unsupportive system**

In her report on a collaborative school-university partnership project aimed at fostering autonomous learning in Portuguese EFL classrooms, Vieira (2003) quotes "institutional resistance" as the major factor negatively affecting the possibility of sustained change. The issue of an 'unsupportive system' was, indeed, a recurrent theme in the data of most of my research participants. Monika, for example, complained a great deal about insufficient school support and the mindset of most of her colleagues that prevented her from engaging in autonomy-supporting teaching practice (see, for example, her feedback excerpt in the previous section).

The feedback that we received after the initial conference was full of similar concerns. Although, at the end of the day, the extent to which some 50 participating teachers felt "revitalised", "energised" and motivated to experiment in their classes was 73%, they only saw a 51% chance to succeed, quoting contextual constraints, such as "older colleagues

who don't agree with such approach", "prescribed curriculum and 45-minute classes", "the system" and "the reality of Slovak schools" as the major obstacles (see Appendix B).

Reflecting on a background article on learner autonomy in her feedback, Erika provides the following image of teaching in a state school system:

*[I realised that] it is really a very good idea to teach students to be more responsible for their learning and that very often they are able to do a lot of things alone, we, the teachers, just don't give them many opportunities. Our school system is so weak because of it. We teachers are waiters. Not paid a lot, but we do everything for our students.... Not to mention that very often the teachers are waiters in the restaurant of the worst category and don't have so many opportunities and good conditions and equipment.*

It appears, therefore, that the extent to which teachers respond to innovative practices may not entirely depend on individual psychological factors, but is also shaped by the "micropolitics of the school organization" (van den Berg, 2002, p. 595). Research evidence suggests that such contextual factors may impede language teachers' efforts to adopt practices that are in line with their beliefs (Borg, 2003c). Essentially, then, even though the research participants may have enthusiastically endorsed the course input as meaningful and valid, many found that the underlying philosophy of the new approach was in stark contrast with the political, cultural, and social structures within their schools. As a result, they did not attempt to adopt the practice they considered meaningful.

Curiously, two of the three teachers who have demonstrated that some 'seeds might have been sown', were the ones who decided to set up their own English language schools during the course of the project in which they could 'teach the way they wanted'. For them, it seems, the only way to adopt a motivational teaching practice and thus practise what they had gradually come to believe in was to break free from what they perceived as unsupportive school system.

Thus, apart from "asking how schools as socio-cultural environments mediate and transform what and how teachers learn" (Freeman, 2002, p. 12), inquiry into how they *hinder* teacher learning is equally important. How, if at all, in-service teacher development can be encouraged *despite* such adverse effects, seems to be a crucial part of that question.

### **8.2.7 Interim summary: Towards an Integrated Model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change**

An in-depth inquiry into the reasons for the failure of the current TD course to bring about conceptual change in its participants has identified a number of internal and external factors which showed the potential to inhibit the change process. The most pervasive concepts that emerged from the data and seemed to be implicated in many of the identified themes concern the language teacher identity, conceptualised in accordance with the literature reviewed earlier as the Ideal/Ought-to Language Teacher Self, and the absence of reflection. The data show that change in the desired direction is unlikely if the orientation inherent in the ideal teacher self (which appears to be a central cognition impacting on teachers' work), does not correspond in some way with the content of the TD course. Similarly, it appears that the absence of reflection, which seems to be caused by an interplay of individual (ability, self-efficacy) and contextual factors (contextual constraints, unsupportive system, students' expectations), may considerably hinder the teachers' efforts to understand the conceptual basis of the course input and instead divert their attention to cues indicating a threat to their language teacher identity. The data also point to numerous instances when such threat was perceived as eminent and these perceptions resulted in negative emotions of embarrassment, anger, frustration, or disappointment.

Although contextual factors, such as those discussed in this section have also been quoted in the literature as hindering teacher change (e.g. Sarason, 1996), the analysis of these data has revealed that it was not so much the stable characteristics of the context as the teachers' *appraisals* of these that appeared to bear implications for their individual growth. It is quite clear, for instance, that the teachers working in similar contexts differed considerably in how they responded to the reform initiative, some refusing to accept its underlying philosophy, while others appraising it positively with, however, no intention to implement it, and yet others trying to experiment with the new approach with varying outcomes. It seems, therefore, that contextual constraints, students' expectations or unsupportive system are interpreted through the teachers' self-relevant cognitive guides (ideal, ought-to or a clash of both selves) which determine how the course input is appraised by them (i.e. as challenge or threat) and, ultimately, what the outcome of their reform processing will be (accommodation, assimilation or no belief change).

As Figure 3.2 and a discussion in Section 3.7 demonstrate, all of the constructs identified through the analysis of the qualitative data and presented in this section are accommodated in the proposed LTCC model, which is intended to account for language teacher possible selves (ideal and ought-to) and the external and internal resources just

identified. LTCC also highlights other important elements revealed in the data, such as prior cognitions, emotions, situated motivation (i.e. goal choice and goal commitment) and different types of outcomes as a result of the teachers' participation in the course. The aim of the following discussion will therefore be to explicate, by adopting the proposed LTCC model, the individual research participants' developmental paths with regard to the current teacher development initiative.

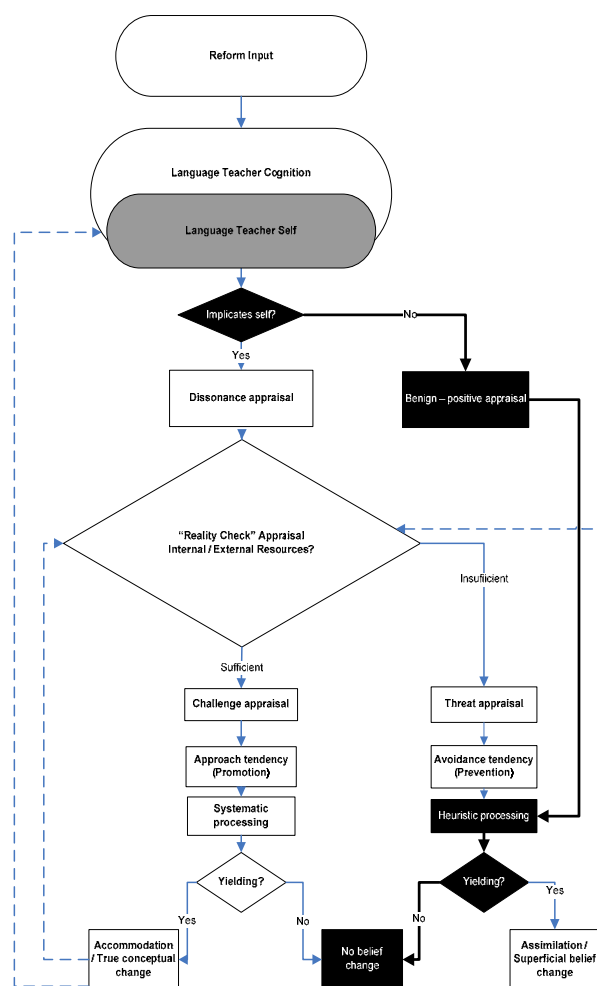
### **8.3 Individual Teachers' Routes towards Conceptual Change**

The aim of this section is to apply the Integrated Model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) to the findings generated in the previous two sections and thus offer a consolidated, empirically grounded and theoretically sound 'anatomy of failure.' As I have previously stressed, 'failure' in this thesis in no way implies any judgements regarding the individual research participants' competence, but rather represents the inability of the current teacher development initiative to bring about conceptual change.

The following theoretical consolidation serves the purpose of illuminating the actual mechanisms involved in individual teachers' processing of the TD course input and highlighting those factors that the data suggest were critical in determining the varied outcomes of this process. I have divided this section into distinct developmental patterns that emerged from examining the routes taken by individual teachers. As a result, Lenka, Jana, and Iveta have been grouped into one section as they all followed an identical developmental path. I also document Silvia's and Tamara's idiosyncratic processing routes in a separate section each. The purpose of this section is not to account for every teacher in this research project, but rather to demonstrate that although teachers develop in highly personalised and variable ways, all of these can be accommodated within the proposed LTCC model.

#### **8.3.1 Lenka, Jana, Iveta: No self-implication, no change**

The three teachers who are the subject of this section seem to have followed fairly similar paths in their reactions to the TD course input (henceforth 'reform input') and although there were slight variations in how they approached it, the mechanisms that were ultimately at play in hindering the process of conceptual change appear identical. Figure 8.1 is a graphical representation (with the particular route highlighted in black) of how the LTCC model can be applied to explain these three teachers' common developmental route.



**Figure 8.1: LTCC: Lenka, Jana, and Iveta’s developmental route**

In a nutshell, the major reason why the reform input did not stir Lenka, Jana or Iveta to reform-related self-regulated action was that it simply did not tap into their ideal language teacher selves - in other words, their identities were not implicated by the reform message. As a result, they appraised it either positively or in a neutral (benign) way and thus experienced no dissonance emotions necessary to trigger one’s motivation to further process the reform message systematically. Consequently, Lenka, Jana and Iveta used their heuristics (i.e. prior beliefs and theories about motivational teaching) to assess the reform message and because the outcome of this assessment was their disagreement with such approach to teaching in their respective contexts (even despite a positive appraisal of one of the teachers), no conceptual change occurred. The empirical grounding for many of these claims has already been documented earlier (see the data presented in Chapter 7 as well as the previous sections of the current Chapter) and a summary is also provided in Table 8.2.

**Table 8.2: Lenka, Jana and Iveta: A summary of the main features in their LTCC processing route**

**Ideal Language Teacher Self:**

- Subject-matter related – Self as English Expert  
*“English is music to my ears.” (Lenka)*  
*“I teach because I want to stay in touch with the language.” (Jana)*
- Ego-related – Self as Highly Regarded Person  
*“Like it’s this thing when somebody tells you, thank you that you smiled at me today, you made my day. You know. And at schools this cannot happen... I think I need in my life that sort of recognition.” (Iveta)*

**Implicates Self?**

No. The content of the reform message does not relate to their Ideal Selves, i.e. creating conducive conditions for students’ learning is not central to their working self-concept.

**Appraisal:**

- Positive  
*“[I liked] everything, everything!” (Jana)*
- Benign (Neutral)  
*“but I have gathered so many things ... [and] I’m using a lot of that.” (Lenka)*  
  
*“No. I personally can’t do that. I can’t integrate it in [my normal lessons]. I can’t. And they also... Even if I tried something of that sort, they don’t cooperate .... For them, it somehow doesn’t fit into a normal class.” (Iveta)*

**Heuristic processing** facilitated by the teachers’ prior theories and experience

- *“We should think whether we should waste our time on those who are not interested and neglect those who are or the other way round.” (Lenka)*
- *“If students are not interested in what you want them to do in class, you should simply let them be.” (Iveta)*
- *“As I see it – they either want or don’t want to learn.” (Jana)*

**Yielding?**

No. Their beliefs are in contradiction with the reform message.

**Outcome: No belief change**

Although, in the context of their overall dataset, the routes of these three teachers were fairly transparent, some idiosyncratic deviations in their data deserve additional attention. To start with, my data records document a moment in the course of the fieldwork when Lenka, despite her general confidence in her teaching and her conviction that the reform message did not implicate her self, might have experienced temporary dissonance caused by her realisation of a discrepancy between her ought-to (i.e. the one implied by the reform message) and actual selves. This is documented in my journal (6 January 2005):

*Lenka rang me today to let me know that she's not coming to the seminar because the Maturita exam questions had to be submitted soon...and she left it to the last minute, that's why she cannot come to the session. I have actually anticipated this, given her lack of engagement in Session 2, and I honestly think she must have been decided then, with this just being an excuse. She also asked, not very courageously, whether I was coming to her school. I said I would love to if she did not mind, but should it cause any trouble to her, I was all right and we could postpone it. This time, I didn't have the feeling how welcome I was (as opposed to the first time when she generously offered me the chance to observe as many classes as I needed).*

The excerpt shows that Lenka may have become aware of the kind of language teacher self that the reform input implied and realised that she did not feel comfortable with some of the elements promoted by the course as well as the research methods. My data indicate that the reflective approach could have been the major challenge for her (see also Section 6.2.3). Because she might have realised her inadequate skills and motivation to engage in such an approach to teaching, it is likely that she perceived her prolonged engagement in the project as threatening her identity and hence, she may have decided to gradually withdraw participation.

It seems, therefore, that Lenka's LTCC processing route resembles that of Tamara (discussed in detail in Section 8.3.3) rather than the one proposed here. However, the insights into Lenka's motives, major concerns and beliefs allow me to conclude that Lenka's Ideal Language Teacher Self as an Expert Speaker of English was so central to her working self-concept that its influence was able to override any other feared selves that might have been induced by her continuing involvement in the project. Her decision to remain involved (she did come to the subsequent session of the TD course and did invite me with the same generosity to observe her classes in the subsequent phase) despite her temporary feelings of uneasiness and anxiety suggests that the feared self associated with not fulfilling the project's requirements became peripheral, less accessible and the threat to her identity was

therefore averted. In short, Lenka's relentless pursuit of her Ideal Language Teacher Self seems to have rendered this temporary reform-related Ought-to Self insignificant and therefore with no long-term impact on her participation in the project, which provided her with a valuable and rare chance to practise English conversation.

There were instances in Jana's data, too, that suggested a slightly different LTCC path than is proposed here. While Jana's motivation to teach was undoubtedly rooted in extrinsic reasons (also see the second quote below), some segments of her dataset do not allow any hasty conclusions that creating a motivating learning environment was not part of her Ideal Language Teacher Self. On the contrary, her concerns indeed seem to be linked with improving the conditions for students' learning, the core part of the reform message. She describes this in her second interview (11 January 2005):

*I: You mentioned XY and how she wondered why on earth anyone would want to attend some teacher seminars on a Saturday morning. Could you perhaps again explain why you do that?*

*J: Sure. ... it seemed to me that this would be helpful to me in that it could help me to revitalise my classroom a bit, make it more dynamic and a little bit, not really make them, but motivate them to learn. Because I feel it so much that they actually take it as a punishment, as an obligation. That now we need to attend this English course, because we have signed up for it. And for me this is demotivating. That they must and that's how they behave in the classroom as well. And I would be so happy if I could arouse this feeling in them, like we want to learn this. Because we enjoy it, because English is great, because this is interesting. So that's why.*

However, in the context of her overall data, particularly with regard to her intention to implement the course input discussed in Section 7.1.2 as well as her ambitions for the future (she did not really plan to teach unless her financial situation required it), these ideas seem to represent her 'abstract ambitions.' Although she values and positively appraises them in theory, she does not really feel they implicate her self in practice. The following, a purposefully lengthy extract (Interview 4, 13 May 2005), captures Jana's struggle to establish whether or not the reform input implicates her identity. In the light of her complete dataset, I venture to suggest that this attempt may in fact be a reflection of the interplay between her temporary ought-to (rather than ideal) and actual selves.



*J: And (1) I don't know (1) but I myself (1) I observed that it hasn't influenced me that much, I haven't started to teach differently, but I started to think about certain things – that if I have time, I'll do them. But, for example, today when I (1) but perhaps I would have said that regardless of the project...don't know whether you were there then when I said that they're not working as a team. I told them also at the beginning that I didn't like how they don't cooperate, don't copy things for each other, don't pass things or information on to each other. That has lasted until now, and I haven't succeeded in solving this. To bring them together as a team and encourage them to work together. Not at all. Not even in this group, although at the beginning I thought they were a better team ... So, this I haven't succeeded in, but perhaps when I have time to really go through all the materials from the seminars again, to read them and begin working in that spirit, I think I could perhaps succeed in something of that sort, you know, bringing students together as a group, team and to motivate them a bit. I think the motivation bit is somehow going past me ... I myself am not motivated, so I can't motivate those students to want to learn.*

*I: You are not motivated, in what sense?*

*J: I'm not motivated ...hmmm...ehm...(3). I go to teach perhaps mainly for (1) (quietly) the money...So I'm not really enjoying it that much. ... But even there (2) I don't know. I haven't really thought that it's necessary to motivate learners. As I see it – they either want or don't want to learn. So...and I myself am not motivated enough to engage in further learning. But what motivates me is a person like yourself - to do something for myself, and of course for the students, to think about my classes...So when I see something that is interesting for me, that motivates me. But (2) well (1) I also tried to do something interesting for the students, to bring some elements to my classes like to have them decide what they want to do, what they find interesting, so I thought that would motivate them. But then... well something worked out and something didn't.*

This excerpt reveals that Jana is aware of a number of reform-related issues, with the aspects of group-sensitive teaching being one example. However, it is also quite clear that not only has she not grasped conceptually what group-sensitive teaching entails (i.e. that it involves the teacher's proactive intervention rather than expecting the groups to develop naturally into the kind of productive groups she desires to have), but she struggles to see how her self is implicated by the reform message. Being a motivating language educator is, as she candidly admits, not part of her Ideal Language Teaching Self and although she tries to make

sense of the reform message, she simply does not feel the necessary dissonance between who she is (actual self) and who she wants to be (ideal self) even though she actually reports incorporating some elements into her practice. Thus, in her case, the reform variables, such as the course, the tasks, the trainer, the peers and the actual message, failed to induce any dissonance emotions and therefore functioned as heuristic rather than persuasion cues. Jana simply lacked the motivation to systematically process the reform message in relation to her practice and while she liked the approach, she concluded that this was not something that was relevant for her teaching context. Therefore, she did not yield to the message and no belief change occurred as a result.

Although I have grouped Iveta with Lenka and Jana, it has to be said that, initially, her developmental path appeared to be slightly different, displaying hints that her behaviour and discourse (either during the observed classes, interviews or course feedback) were guided by what she perceived were the obligations of the project, that is, her Ought-to Self. For example, in the initial fieldwork phases, she attempted to give somewhat more creative twists to coursebook vocabulary exercises (e.g. by having students prepare definitions of unknown words from the coursebook article themselves and have the rest of the class guess their meaning). In her feedback, she also seemed to positively appraise the TD initiative and perceive it as beneficial to her professional development, as the following excerpt from her feedback on Session 2 illustrates:

*Ever since I became involved [in the project], I tend to reflect much more on my classes, their structure and on what the students will get from them.*

However, there were significant discrepancies between these appraisals and her teaching practice that I witnessed in the later stages of data collection. The next interview extract (Interview 3, 3 January 2005) is possibly the best illustration that her beliefs remained intact and her intention to reflect on her classes and how they create opportunities for students' learning simply did not become part of her goals:

*Interviewer: So when you now prepare for the classes, it's more or less like -*

*Iveta: - I open the book, go through what's there, read the article. That's it. The only thing that I might think about is how to introduce the lesson. E.g. a short discussion related to the article. That's what I think about. But otherwise, I look at what's in the book and go.*

As I documented elsewhere (see Section 8.1.2), these discrepancies may have reflected her striving for recognition, which, as has also been pointed out earlier, was part of her Ideal Self, that is, the identity goals she often pursued at the expense of the goal of facilitating student learning. However, her attitudes towards teaching became more transparent in the later stages of data collection and, possibly because of her realisation that her extended involvement in the research project no longer allowed her to project certain ought-to identities, she had no problems with frankly admitting her real beliefs. For example, she did not make any extra effort to prepare for her observed classes (and hence my conviction that it was the above quote about her preparation rather than the earlier course feedback excerpt that reflected a typical reality), and she even admitted explicitly her unwillingness to expend any more effort than was necessary:

*I don't really have the time [to invent something interesting for each class], and I don't feel like it either, to be honest. (Interview 3, 3 January 2005)*

As the project progressed, it became clear that in her language teaching she mostly drew on her identity as a liked, recognised and appreciated person and had not specified any language-teaching-related identity goals that would guide her classroom behaviour. In fact, she was happy to consider any career where her need for recognition could be satisfied. In the following extract from the same interview, she describes her short work experience in customer services:

*Because you are always in contact with people and they smile at you and you know when I worked [there], you know how great it felt to hear, you made my day or stuff like that? And thank you and tips which they didn't do normally, but they would come to me and tip me and say thank you so much. So you know (4). That's what I like.... Here when you do what you are supposed to do, everything's OK. When you don't, you're in trouble. But there's never a time when it's great and when they praise you for things. [I would really like to do this], to serve people and to know them, to know that this is not their first time here and to greet them and I would remember them, what they liked. This is what I would enjoy.*

It seems that specific language teaching identity goals are absent from Iveta's self-concept and because the reform input did not imply a direct link between reform implementation and recognition (i.e. she did not think she would increase her chances of being appreciated by the people in her teaching context by implementing the reform, though there was a possibility

that she could achieve that by mere participation in the TD initiative, as illustrated in Section 8.1.1), Iveta did not perceive her Ideal Self as being implicated by the reform in any way. Consequently, there was no basis for reform-related dissonance appraisal. Instead, she appraised the reform input as neutral, used heuristics to assess the reform message, and concluded that she plays no role in the motivation of her students and is not ready to change this belief.

### *Summary*

Lenka's, Jana's, and Iveta's situation strongly resembles that of the EFL teachers in Sri Lanka (Hayes, 2005) or Poland (Johnston, 1997) in that they, too, were "brought" to the profession through the "force of circumstances" (Hayes, 2005, p. 177). As described in Section 8.1, the decision to be a teacher was more thrust upon Lenka by her family circumstances than made consciously by her. Similarly, Jana was simply teaching to secure additional income and Iveta's original vision about her future career was wholly unrelated to language teaching.

There is a major contrast, however, between the teachers in this research sample and those in Hayes's study. The latter, once in the profession, talked about a strong sense of pride of their students and cited the "gleam in their eyes, the way they show that they understand" (Hayes, 2005, p. 178) as the major source of their personal satisfaction. In contrast, I had hardly ever heard the research participants in the current study talk about their students' "moments of learning" (Tardy & Snyder, 2004). Instead, their main concerns centred around their expertise in the subject-matter and maintaining positive self-image, the two of them often overlapping. Sadly, therefore, Watzke's (2007) conclusion about the primary concerns of teachers appears in sharp contrast with the data generated in this project. As he maintains,

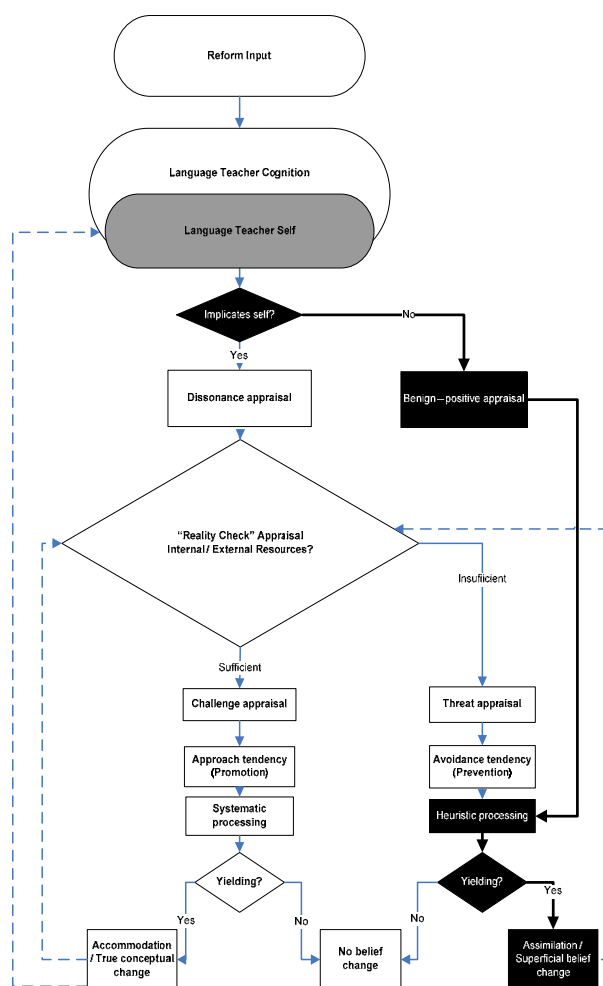
Across various types of teacher education programs, a similar pattern emerges: Although beginning teachers initially struggle with self- and, increasingly, task-related concerns, these concerns are never as important as concerns for impact. Teachers' concerns for student learning and personal well-being are central to their work, regardless of years of teaching experience. (Watzke, 2007, p. 66)

In sum, the application of the LTCC model to the data of Lenka, Jana and Iveta suggests that the reform input will be effective in motivating behaviour and promoting change only to the extent to which its basic premise (in this case, the need for the teacher's proactive intervention to create conditions conducive to learning) has been incorporated into the

teachers' ideal teaching selves. Without such specific cognitive representations of future identity goals, "there should be little instrumental behavior in the direction of mastery" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 961) and thus little prospect of language teacher conceptual change.

### **8.3.2 *Silvia: No self-implication, superficial change***

Although, similarly to the previous group of research participants, no conceptual change occurred in Silvia as a result of her participation in the TD course, the reasons for this outcome in her case are quite different. As can be seen in Figure 8.2 and in a summary provided in Table 8.3, Silvia's Ideal Language Teacher Self as a humanistic motivating English teacher is directly compatible with the reform message and this is in sharp contrast with the ideal selves of Lenka, Jana and Iveta analysed previously. However, because Silvia strongly believes that her instructional practices and cognitions are already aligned with the core principles advocated by the TD course, she, similarly to the previous three research participants, does not perceive her self implicated by the reform. Consequently, she does not engage in the systematic processing of the reform content in relation to her teaching practice, but relies instead on her prior beliefs and theories about motivational teaching. Because Silvia perceives these as identical with the reform message, she yields to the reform and assimilates its principles into her existing belief system. This outcome, however, fails to impact on her instructional practice in any significant way and the conditions for students' learning thus remain unchanged even though her observational data reveal scope for improvement. What follows is a more thorough look at the nature of Silvia's LTCC developmental route.



**Figure 8.2: LTCC: Silvia's developmental route**

Silvia was the only research participant who, from the outset, clearly defined her language teacher identity along the lines of the reform philosophy. The following interview excerpt (Interview 2, 11 November 2004) shows that she perceives herself as someone who belongs to the right camp and already has whatever it takes to be a motivating language teacher.

*I think [motivation] should be a subject. Like how would a university graduate ever have a clue what's to come when she enters the classroom, that there will be racism, drugs and things. So whatever she learnt, she can't use. Like you come to the classroom and the kids have their legs like this (puts her legs on the table). Well, I solved that very quickly, I put my legs on the table as well (laughs). And they were shocked. So I have it, I'm lucky it comes naturally to me, but not everybody has it.*

**Table 8.3: Silvia: A summary of the main features in her LTCC processing route**

**Ideal Language Teacher Self:**

Self as Motivating Humanistic English Teacher

*“I’ve always wanted to teach”*

*“Why do we have to [yell at them]? Why can’t we just talk to kids like normal people?”*

**Implicates Self?**

No. Although the content of the reform message is relevant to her Ideal Language Teacher Self, her identity is not implicated by it as she believes her practice is already aligned with the core principles of the reform message.

*“I have [the ability to deal with motivation problems], I’m lucky it comes naturally to me, but not everybody has it.”*

**Positive Appraisal**

*“I think [motivation] should be a [university] subject.”*

**Heuristic processing** facilitated by her prior theories and experience

*“I had a really bad teacher in high school, but then we had a different teacher and I loved her and that’s when I decided I myself wanted to be a teacher. She pushed me beyond my limits and I started to love English with her. So without this teacher who did do something to motivate me, who didn’t just let me be, I would have never liked English and I would have never become an English teacher. So I think, the students will be sorry later on that they did not do anything if I don’t try my best to motivate them.”*

**Yielding?**

Yes. Her beliefs are in agreement with the reform message.

**Outcome: Assimilation**

In addition, there are frequent hints in her data that her definition of her language teacher self also involves clearly distancing herself from the rest of the teachers in general, which is obvious, for instance, from the way she talks about her former teachers and her colleagues:

*You know, the thing is that the whole attitude [in this school] is totally off-the-mark. ... you see, if somebody starts yelling in the corridor, like, go to your classroom (referring to some colleagues who apparently do). And that student just came out of the classroom to have a little stroll or something. Like why do we have to do that? Why can't we just talk to kids like normal people? (Interview 3, 9 March 2005)*

It looks as if she had formed some kind of imaginary community to which she, myself and few other teachers belong, even though the criteria for membership have never been specified by her:

*You know, XY (university lecturer), she's the type like you or me, who deviates from the norm. (Interview 2, 11 November 2004)*

I have to admit, however, that her data differed from the rest of the research participants in that they did not make it clear whether this was her Ideal or rather Ought-to Language Teacher Self and because no other alternative identity emerged from the available data, I assume that the motivating teacher was an intrinsic part of her future identity goals. However, even if this turns out not to be the case (as some of her data may suggest), the distinction is not critical for our current purpose of understanding the basic mechanisms involved in her response to the reform initiative and the excerpts above present a convincing case that Silvia does not perceive any dissonance between who she is (actual self) and who she either aspires to be (ideal self) or feels she ought to be (ought-to self). As I write in my analytical memo (22 February 2007),

*I think her frequent use of the phrase "you know" is quite significant. By throwing it in every now and then, she may want to remind whoever her audience is where she positions herself and use it as a device to ... make it clear that the course content does not concern her in the sense that she should change anything as she, "you know", already does everything that needs to be done. By using the phrase, she in fact does not allow space for any doubts or questions her audience might have about some of the claims she makes.*



Yet, despite her firm conviction about her actual language teacher self, a closer look at Silvia's data reveal numerous incoherent and contradictory statements even within her answers to the same interview question, and I record my difficulties in making sense of her data in my annotation on her second interview (11 November 2004)

*She definitely didn't feel very good about the [observed] class, because she brought it up out of the blue again and now it looks like she is providing another unsolicited excuse. But it's not quite clear what the excuse is for because she didn't really articulate what she was unhappy about. Whenever she suggested something that could have been a problem and this did not match with my observations, she almost immediately turned that into something positive. So it really reminded me of a guessing game. She tried to anticipate what I could have seen as problems so that she could show that she was aware of those things and because they were due to factors beyond her control, there was nothing she could do about them. It's very complicated, I think, to follow this interview. A big puzzle. A big game. Only I'm not quite sure yet, what the game is about.*

Situations as the one described above were an integral part of Silvia's interview data and as it later emerged, these represented Silvia's inability and/or unwillingness to systematically process the implications of the reform input to her own teaching and her heavy reliance on heuristics (e.g. simple rules like 'they didn't participate because of the weather'). Even where she encountered anomalies between her theories and the actual data (i.e. objective evidence from the classroom), she resolved the problem swiftly, in a matter-of-fact manner by either ignoring the anomaly or reinterpreting it without amending her existing theory (cf. Chinn & Brewer, 1993; see also section 3.5). Of course such strategies resulted in messages which were extremely hard to make sense of. Nevertheless, Silvia's confidence never appeared to be shaken. One example of Silvia's processing is provided next.

As I mentioned earlier (see Chapter 7), I found no traces in Silvia's data of course impact (which is unsurprising, given her previously noted belief with regard to her actual language teacher self), apart from one brief moment. In her feedback on Session 1 of the TD course, Silvia writes:

*we were talking about listening to each other and what is going on in our heads. It was a new thing which I learnt and I will think about it when I do listening with my kids.*

She did not elaborate on this any further and because I was not sure about her interpretation of this reform message, I had planned to inquire about it in the subsequent interview. Before I had the chance to do that, I witnessed the following instructions she gave to her students in one of her observed classes (11 November 2004) prior to the interview:

The only thing I will ask you, turn your chairs so as to see those who are reading and listen to them (noise as they start rearranging their chairs) until your last breath, yes?

It seems, therefore, that she indeed picked up the reform message regarding the importance of establishing certain social group norms in the language classroom, such as listening to each other, which were believed to facilitate the development of cohesive learner groups. However, even though she communicated it verbally at the beginning of the class task, she did not follow it up in any way and, more importantly, did nothing when the norm was almost instantly violated. One interpretation could be that this instance reflected the developmental process in Silvia whereby, although she has acquired a new conceptual understanding, she had yet to develop specific instructional strategies of enforcing the norm in her class. As I had planned, I asked her to elaborate on her feedback in the post-observation interview, also hoping to get insights into whether or not my preliminary interpretation was viable. Surprisingly, her deliberations not only did not resemble in any way the reform input, but she never made the connection between this particular reform message and her previous, not more than an-hour-old classroom implementation.

*That was the [activity] we did at the beginning, it was when you suddenly said, when you suddenly asked us what we were thinking about while the others were talking. And I then realised that yes, I wasn't listening at all, I was thinking about my own stuff, like how happy I was and [things] (laughs) and then when it was nearly my turn, I began to pay attention. So what I took from that for my own practice was that I observe when [we do] listening, like who is really listening and then I can see, really you can tell from the facial expression whether the person is listening or daydreaming. So now I am sort of aware of this. You know. That now. It may have been a bit strange to me, but now I already know what it is. That I'm just the same. So I don't really punish them for that. Because sometimes (laughs) it's really better to do something else than listen to them (laughs).*

Even though she may have displayed some signs of impact in her previously described observed classroom, the above extract shows that she did not engage cognitively with the reform message and, as a result, did not grasp its conceptual basis. Instead, she produced a whole series of heuristic ‘rules’ to justify her views (e.g. ‘it is all right not to listen, because I’m like that too’, or ‘sometimes it’s really better to do something else than listen to them’) and to demonstrate her awareness of what she interprets to be a motivational approach (‘So I don’t really punish them for that’). The absence of her systematic processing, however, did not enable her to see that the conclusions she reached were in contradiction with those implied by the original reform message. Indeed, rather than facilitate her students’ learning, the application of the principles just articulated, would, in fact, directly contribute to their disengagement.

### *Summary*

Even though space limitations do not allow further analysis of Silvia’s data, it needs to be acknowledged that numerous motivational strategies were part of her teaching practice (e.g. humour, personalised digressions from more structured dialogues, etc.) and her warm rapport with the students was noticeable. This may be a confirmation that a Motivational Language Teacher could indeed be part of her Ideal Language Teacher Self. She aspires to be a motivational teacher and she is, in fact, strongly convinced she already is. However, at a conceptual level, she does not seem to fully comprehend just what exactly her Ideal Self entails. Therefore, even though her observational data indicate a scope for reflection on how conditions for all students’ engagement could be improved (e.g. cognitively unchallenging tasks, embarrassing situations for weaker students), she is unable to perceive any discrepancy between her Ideal and Actual Selves and hence lacks the motivation to engage with the reform message at a deeper cognitive level, which is a prerequisite for conceptual change. Instead, rather than engaging in the intentional goal-directed systematic processing of the reform message, she generates heuristic resources which help her to resolve potential discrepancies by either ignoring them or reinterpreting the inconsistencies in such a way as to preserve her unwavering confidence in her current beliefs.

Silvia’s data converge with the findings in both the language teacher cognition literature (e.g. Golombek & Johnson, 2004) and conceptual change research (see Section 3.5), attesting to the key role that dissonance plays in triggering conceptual change. While, as will be shown in the next section, dissonance alone does not guarantee conceptual change, Silvia’s data make it clear that in order for her to start a systematic processing of the reform message, her confidence in her cognitions, and particularly her beliefs about her actual language teacher self, need to be undermined.

### 8.3.3 Tamara: Self-implication, no belief change

Tamara's ultimate LTCC processing route was identical with that of Lenka, Jana and Iveta in that she did not perceive her self implicated by the reform message, appraised it positively and as a result of her heuristic processing concluded that the motivational approach actually “distract[s] [her] from teaching” (Interview 3, 13 January 2005). Therefore, no belief change occurred and she continued to interpret motivational teaching as a list of warm-up activities. However, Tamara's data are markedly different from the first group of research participants in that they reveal an exceptionally strong and fairly transparent presence of her reform-related Ought-to Language Teacher Self. Hence, this discussion will focus on those mechanisms of LTCC that involved her temporarily adopted identity (see Figure 8.3 and the shaded section of Table 8.4). A brief summary of these is also provided in the next paragraph.

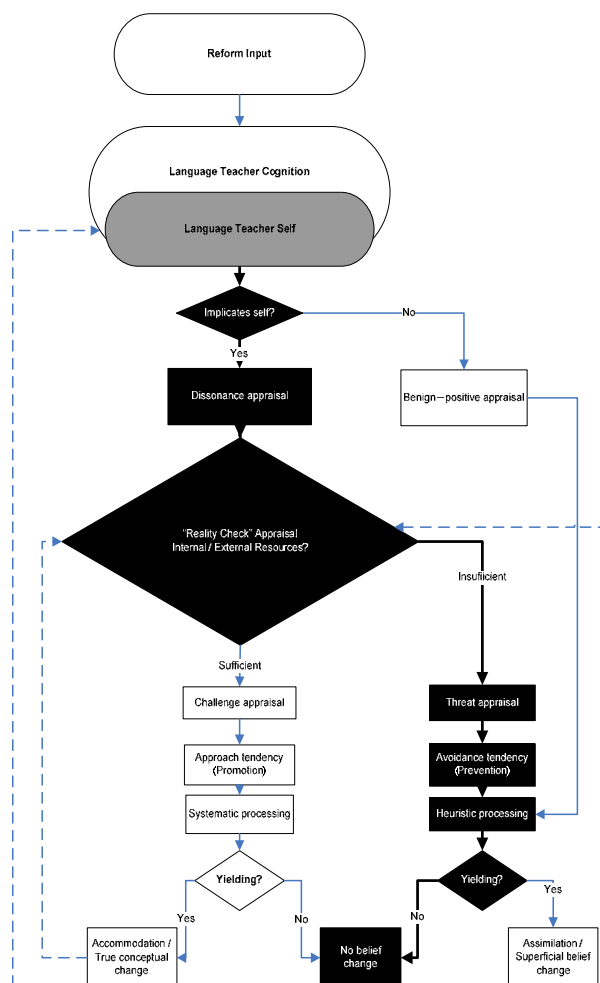


Figure 8.3: LTCC: Tamara's developmental route

**Table 8.4: Tamara: A summary of the main features in her LTCC processing route**

**Ideal Language Teacher Self:**

*"I like ... the feeling that I have taught them something. I feel important for them at that moment"; "I am a grammar person"; "I am a person who must have intro, body, conclusion."*

**Implicates Self?** No.

**Positive appraisal.**

*"You were a wonderful ENTHUSIASTIC lecturer, ...girls were wonderful partners [and] GREAT and MOTIVATIONAL activities were done!" (original emphasis)*

**Ought-to Language Teacher Self**

*"I wanted the class to be more dynamic .... But no, I would probably not have done it [if you hadn't been there]."*

**Implicates Self?** Yes. The content of the reform message relates to her Ought-to Self.

**Dissonance Appraisal:**

*"I felt the class was not as dynamic as I wished it to be. I like it when it is dynamic"*

**Reality Check Appraisal: Insufficient Internal/External Resources.**

- Low self-efficacy

*"If it didn't work, my enthusiasm was gone, because I was not able to arouse the same enthusiasm in them"*

- Fear of not meeting students' expectations

*"I can see that they are disappointed if we don't have a new grammar exercise, they're used to drills .... I have a feeling that speaking alone doesn't fulfil their expectations."*

**Threat appraisal**

*"I was embarrassed, I saw them [wondering] 'And what was this?', 'What was it about'?"*

**Avoidance tendency**

*"I feel that I should really have done more with the actual grammar. I am a grammar person, you see. I feel most comfortable explaining grammar."*

**Heuristic processing** facilitated by her prior theories and experience

*"[Motivational teaching practice] distracts me from teaching."*

**Yielding?** No.

**Outcome: No belief change**

*"Many [seminar activities] will be included in my warm-ups list."*

The reform message implicated Tamara's Ought-to Language Teacher Self in that she was aware of the discrepancy between what she did in the classroom and what she believed the reform message implied she ought to do. Therefore, even though she had not personally identified with the reform message (i.e. it did not tap into her Ideal Language Teacher Self), she constantly sought ways how to incorporate the reform input in her classes. However, because of her repeated negative experiences with the reform implementation, she appraised her internal and external resources as insufficient (i.e. she felt "it doesn't work" because not only was she "not able to arouse the same enthusiasm in [the students]", but they were also "disappointed" if she deviated from the regular structure of the class "they're used to"). In order to avert threat to her identity, which she felt further implementation would lead to, Tamara made a conscious decision to avoid reform-related experiments (i.e. instead of continuing in her attempts, she wanted "to do more with the actual grammar", which she believed to be a counterpart to the motivational approach). Because she perceived her beliefs about language teaching as sharply contradicting the reform message, she did not yield to it and no belief change occurred as a result.

Before I analyse one of her reform implementation attempts in detail, let me take a closer look at the nature of Tamara's *Ideal Language Teacher Self*, which she seemed to perceive as incompatible with the reform message. As has been mentioned in Section 8.1.2, "feel[ing] important for [the students]" (Interview 1, 22 September 2004) showed to be central in Tamara's working self concept. The data indicate that for her, one of the most important ways of enacting this identity goal was through rigorously structured lessons with well-linked content, an essential part of which was grammar. The emphasis she put on grammar is evident throughout her data. For example, she was dissatisfied with her lessons whenever she failed to incorporate explicit grammar instruction into them. She also expressed her reservations about the new maturita school leaving exam, quoting insufficient grammar coverage and too much emphasis on listening and reading as inadequate features (Interview 4, 8 March 2005). It will probably be no exaggeration to consider the following excerpt (Interview 1, 22 September 2004) to represent her idea of language teachers' 'heaven':

*Homework check was at the beginning, then association, we were looking for similarities between their opinions and the article. Opinions on friendship, he/she should be loyal. And then we were back to the original article, what I needed, because then I could connect it to another activity - there were 16 new verbs, they were asked to find them, find equivalents of full meaning words, this was nicely done, practised in sentences, so from that article I moved to grammar.*

In sum, Tamara perceived herself as someone who “must have intro, body, conclusion”, whose lessons must “flow well” (Interview 3, 13 January 2005) and in order to appraise a class as successful, it has to include explicit grammar instruction. Students’ learning would certainly be a bonus, but its absence in no way implicated her Ideal Language Teacher Self. As the following analysis will demonstrate, it appears that a motivational teaching practice as she interpreted it directly violated her prototype of a perfect language lesson.

I now turn to the analysis of one representative example of Tamara’s course implementation in the classroom. In this specific lesson segment (13 January 2005), Tamara decided to replicate an ice-breaker activity that was part of the TD course (see the description of the rationale as well as procedure in Table 8.5 below). By examining the lesson observation and interview data, my aim is to establish the nature of this implementation. I look at (1) those instances of Tamara’s classroom discourse and behaviours during the implementation that are indicative of her underlying cognitions, and (2) her post-implementation appraisal. I start with the examination of what transpired in the classroom.

**Table 8.5: A description of “Grab the Finger” activity on the TD Course**

At the beginning of Session 3 of the TD course, we did a simple ice-breaker activity, so called “Grab the Finger” with the rationale to get the group together, by having a laugh, and a bit of excitement and challenge. The teachers stood in circle, arms out to the side, their left hand palm up, right index finger pointing down and touching on their neighbour’s outstretched palm. The participants were asked to listen to a short story and whenever they heard a specific word (in our case “marry”), they had to try to grab their neighbour’s finger in their left hand and at the same time prevent their right finger from being grabbed. The winner of the task would be someone who not only gets caught the least number of times, but, to double the challenge, who can also summarise the story. The story for this task was written in easy English (lower-intermediate), so as not to make the challenge unattainable and was read in an expressive manner with dramatic pauses to add further suspense. The total time of this activity, including the instructions was approximately 7 minutes.

In order to link the activity to her own teaching context, Tamara used a coursebook article that introduced the topic of Travel. Table 8.6 provides a transcript of the instructions part of this activity. Space limitations do not allow an in-depth analysis of all the insightful elements in the transcript (e.g. Tamara’s clear enacting of her Ideal Language Teacher Self) and the current discussion is, therefore, restricted to the examination of the rationale with which the activity was carried out. Lines 20-21 provide some insights into this, when Tamara announces, *“I hope that we know each other very well. But I don’t know whether you trust your partner. So I’m going to test you on the trust.”* Judging from these

instructions to the students, she seems to have adopted the social purpose for this task. More specifically, gauging the trust level among the students seems to have been her major purpose, even though we do not know at this point why she thinks this is important in this particular class and how exactly she intends to fulfil this objective.

**Table 8.6: Grab the Finger: Instructions**

3:58	T: Now, what I wanted to do. Close everything. Leave everything from your brain, don't think about anything, concentrate on my voice, on what I'm going to tell you. OK? And. Every instruction, every instruction that I'm going to give you, please xxx. OK? Now. Stand. ( <i>Ss stand immediately</i> ).
5	Now make a circle. ( <i>noise of chairs, inaudible, t repeats several times, I can hear some students saying "What?" or "In circle?" to each other. They go to the front and start making a circle</i> ). <u>Well, so far it looks like xxx or a bean, but there's no way this is a circle! I didn't say moon. (<i>Ss laugh</i>)</u> . I said make a circle. Do you think this is a circle?
	Ss: No.
10	T: No. I'm not in. I'm out. I want to see a nice circle. Go closer to each other. Go closer to each other. ( <i>several inaudible sentences related to their making the circle, some noise, students moving chairs</i> ). Now put you hands like this. ( <i>demonstrates</i> ) Put your hands like this. OK? ( <i>students do it</i> ) Ehm. Next, make a little more space. Make a little more space ( <i>students do it</i> ). OK. Good. Now each of you, each of you, put (1) your (1) ehm (2)
15	S: index finger
	T: Yes, index finger on your left, no, on you partner's left hand, sorry. ( <i>some confusion, students ask about it</i> ). <u>Yes, I'm saying it right, on your partner's left hand.</u> OK. Index finger on your partner's left hand. OK. Now. The partner's hand must be stretched. You must stretch your hand, not like this ( <i>demonstrates</i> ). Let's stretch it. Stretch your hand. OK? That's good. That's not good (looking
20	in one student's direction). Stretch your hand (some students laugh). I hope that we know each other well. But I don't know whether you trust your partner. So I'm going to test you on the trust. OK? So when I say a particular word, <u>when I say a particular word, those of you who have the finger on the palm, I'll say this in Slovakian, those who have their finger on the palm, you will try to lift it up as quickly as possible and those who have the palm stretched will try to, they will try to</u>
25	<u>close their palm.</u> ( <i>upon realisation as to what they're going to do, students burst out laughing in a positive sense. They obviously find it amusing. They do a mock run.</i> ) <u>OK, once again. If I say a word, let's say, tada dada da, I don't know (<i>gives an example which makes everybody laugh</i>).</u> <u>I will read you and you will do the same, it means, the palm stretched, (<i>brief description again</i>) and the words will be those that have the same root, which is travel. That is, all word classes that are</u>
30	<u>related to travel.</u> OK?
	Ss: Yeah.
	T: <u>So do I understand?</u> ( <i>she tends to use first person, to address the students</i> )
	Ss: Yeah.
	T: <u>So if you hear travel, travelling, traveller or anything else, of course xxx. OK?</u>
35	Ss: OK
	T: OK. Let's start.
8:27	

Unfortunately, a closer look at the actual 'in-action' phase (see Table 8.7) does not clarify the previous concerns as there is no indication of how "trust" is being "tested". What Tamara's discourse, however, does reveal is the insight into what she does *not* envisage as



the activity's purpose. She clearly does not want the students to "laugh and chat" and is, in fact, really annoyed by their having fun. She simply wants them to "do this simple movement and that's it" (Table 8.7, lines 13-14). Because the students continue chatting, laughing and generally enjoying themselves whenever they have to perform the 'grab-the-finger' action, she is frustrated and makes the effort to put the class 'in order' by telling them to keep quiet.

**Table 8.7: Grab the Finger: In action**

8:27	T: <i>(starts reading)</i> Travel ... <i>(students taken aback, do the 'action', laugh)</i> Remember, you have to do it. Ok. ...is very popular amongst...
5	<i>(continues reading the article, students keep chatting, she has to "shhhh" them, they are quieter, she continues and they do the 'action' when they realised that she has just mentioned the word travel again. They are quite excited. The article, however, is too long and the students obviously don't pay any attention to the content of the article itself, they only concentrate on the word travel. The teacher in fact reads it in a rather monotonous way and so it's really to hard</i>
10	<i>concentrate. It now seems that the teacher feels it's getting off the handle, she has to hush the students after each time they've done the 'action'). (9: 40)</i>
	<u>And there is another thing. I didn't say that you laugh and chat, did I? You only have to do this simple movement and that's it. OK? So let's try not to laugh and xxx.</u>
15	<i>(inaudible; she has a serious tone in her voice, it's clear that she is frustrated with how the activity is going. She carries on reading. She now mentioned 'transport' and all the students get excited and do the 'action'.)</i>
20	Hey! It's not travel! Travel. Transport, huh?
	<i>(She now looks really annoyed, and continues reading. Students continue chatting, probably still about their previous mistake and laugh while the teacher's reading. Another "travel" follows, the students do the action with excitement, the teacher "shhhes" them and continues reading without any comment. She reads a rather long passage without any action and after she's read the last sentence, she says)</i>
25	
	That's the end. (12:40)

In the post-action processing stage (see Table 8.8 below), we witness a transformation of what seemed to be her original rationale behind this activity. As can be seen from lines 5-17, Tamara performs a typical listening comprehension check, even though explicit instructions about the importance of paying attention to the content of the text were never given. This may explain why the students were taken aback and were only able to provide very basic answers, most of which seemed to be simply a result of students' common-sense guesses rather than the actual comprehension of the article. Towards the end of this implementation episode, Tamara makes an additional attempt to return to the originally announced purpose

of the activity (lines 18-19) before trying to develop a whole series of purposes which the activity could possibly have served (Lines 21-26).

**Table 8.8: Grab the Finger: Processing**

	12:40
	T: How many times were you caught? ( <i>some students say 4 times</i> ). It means that you were not listening well, right? Who wasn't caught at all? One time? One time only? OK. Maybe it was because concentrating on the word ( <i>inaudible and comments in the sense that listening properly is important</i> ). 13:34 OK. What was the text about? (2) What was I reading about.
5	S: Transport ( <i>others burst out laughing</i> ).
	T: ( <i>Serious, doesn't laugh</i> ) Tell me about the text. Something from the text.
	S: ( <i>uncertain</i> ) Something about kangaroo ( <i>others laugh</i> ).
10	T: Yeah, the word kangaroo was there. ( <i>Other students now provide other words they caught, teacher repeats after them: Australia, India, Africa. T now starts asking some wh- questions about the text. Several students attempts to answer. She elicits, prompts when they don't know and finally approves of the answers</i> ) Very good. One way of travelling was mentioned at the beginning and that's the xxx way of travelling. Do you remember?
	S: xxx
15	T: Excuse me?
	S: Trams.
	T: Trams? Any other? (2) This one is more dangerous. (4) Never mind. OK. Thank you very much? ( <i>Students go back to their seats now; T speaks over the noise</i> ). So did you feel any particular feeling when you were holding your partner's finger? (3) Yes? Was it difficult for you?
20	S: ( <i>inaudible; quite a long sentence in L1</i> )
	T: OK. So it was similar to listening to a tape; maybe you have to concentrate on the word, you have to concentrate on the whole context, on the voices of people who are speaking together, and maybe you have to concentrate on some exercise like true false xxx. That was something like concentration, but also something about the trust. You have to trust your partner. (1) OK? Maybe if you can't xxx, then the partner will help you in some way. OK? <u>So this was meant to introduce the topic that we had started and xxx</u> ( <i>inaudible, the rest in English</i> )
25	
	16:41
	T: So today we will continue on page 23 with the topic types of transport ( <i>students open their books; T reads the instructions for the exercise and explains the topic</i> ). <u>So I'd like to ask you ...</u> ( <i>the next task follows</i> )
30	

As the previous analysis suggests, there are a number of indices in Tamara's classroom implementation behaviour suggesting that rather than having a genuine desire to experiment with the new approach, her behaviour was guided by her temporarily-adopted reform-related ought-to teaching self. What comes through particularly strongly in this transcript (and indeed in most of her implementation attempts) is her struggle to identify the purpose her implemented activity was supposed to serve. Yet, she included it in her lesson plan despite her uncertainty in her effort to fulfil her 'obligations.' However, because the outcome did not satisfy her beliefs about language teaching, she made several attempts at redefining the rationale as she went along. The lack of success in arriving at a satisfactory purpose resulted in her negative emotions of dissatisfaction and frustration, with her identity of a highly organised language teacher with perfectly structured classes threatened. In her appraisal immediately after the lesson, she made the following conclusions:

*Students can't concentrate on the content as well as on the activity and so my conclusion is that the listening comprehension and movement don't go together. You can only do the activity if you simply want to start them off – a warm-up kind of thing. (Field notes after the lesson, on the way to the staffroom)*

This suggests that she appraised her internal/external resources as insufficient, which, in turn, posed a threat to her identity and made her determined to avoid further engagement with this type of reform input. Because she never systematically processed the reform message, her heuristics was the only source of information which she used to make a decision as to whether or not to yield to the reform message. The result is her reinforced prior beliefs about motivational teaching: you can't use motivational (which she interprets as warm-up) activities to actually *teach* the language and therefore serious language teaching and a motivational practice do not go together. These findings, based on the observational data and the brief post-lesson comment, converge with Tamara's deliberations during the formal interview (Interview 3, 13 January 2005).

First, she admits that she did not feel comfortable with the activity and her uncertainty about its actual purpose is obvious from her rather vague justification as to why she chose to implement it. Note that "enjoying themselves", which she quotes as one of the reasons, is in stark contrast with what she actually did in the classroom:

*I have to admit I didn't feel at home with the first activity, even though I instinctively chose it, like it would be good to try whether these older students are capable of developing (1) or (1) simply (1) their relationships in terms of touching each others' fingers or enjoying themselves.*

Tamara does not hide her feelings of dissatisfaction. From the way she analyses this classroom activity, her uncertainty, dissatisfaction, and her Ideal Language Teacher Self gradually emerge:

*T: I wasn't at home with the activity because they were too excited, they had too much fun, you know I had to tell them several times that they should be quiet and shouldn't laugh so much and should not elaborate on that so much, if they caught the finger, they caught it, that's it. So maybe that was also necessary to say it as part of the instructions. That when something like that happens, but you didn't tell us! We*

*[the teachers at the seminar] were different automatically, did you feel that we behaved differently from the students?*

*I: Yes. And I wonder why.*

*T: I think it is about discipline and also the fact that we are more mature. They really acted like children here (1) like (1) 'Yeah, I caught your finger! Wow!' And then they went on about it. So. So that was what got me off the track.*

There are two issues that the above excerpt points towards. First, Tamara clearly expected that by doing the same task as was done on the TD course, she would achieve the same results and was disheartened when it was not the case. Like most of the research participants in this study, she would put the failure of a new 'experiment' down to the immaturity of the students, their disagreement with the approach, or their contradicting expectations. Therefore, the actual 'experiment' would never get scrutinised and in this case, the purposes and the instructions, as well as the length, difficulty level and the actual presentation of the text were never considered as potential factors contributing to the failure of this task in Tamara's classroom. As has been mentioned before (see Section 8.2), this reflects a more general lack of reflection in the Slovakian EFL teaching context and explains the teachers' frequent use of heuristics, such as prior cognitions or feelings, in assessing success or failure of their language instruction. This type of processing, however, is unlikely to lead to intentional conceptual change.

Tamara's interview data presented above reveal a further insight into Tamara's Ideal Language Teacher Self. Clearly, too much disorganised fun and laughter is not part of her routine and it simply "gets her off the track" and "distracts her from teaching." So in a way, by performing the activity she was experiencing dissonance between her Actual Self at the given moment in the classroom implementation (fun and chaos provider) and her Ideal Self (a highly organised teacher with a well planned and carefully structured lesson). Thus, it appears that her newly adopted reform-related Ought-to Language Teacher Self was in fact identical with her Feared Self (i.e. a disorganised and chaotic teacher), and by engaging further in the reform initiatives, a threat to her identity was imminent. This is also captured in the next extract:

*T: I don't know whether you noticed that, but I feel that it wasn't closed, the first part. I was searching for words, and in the end I only found the link between travelling and the topic of last class. Like what we were doing with that activity.*

*Because I think sometimes it's not necessary to tell them why we did it, that it's enough if I know, and they don't have to know it.*

*I: And now you felt that you had to tell them in this case?*

*T: No. This time I didn't feel that I had to tell them. But on the other hand, I was embarrassed, I saw them [wondering] 'And what was this?', 'What was it about?' ... Because I think that people are (1) so used to (1) I don't know (1) perhaps I look at it from my perspective, but I think that when people do something they need to know why they do it. (3) The purpose must be there. But does anyone tell them the purpose of that [typical classroom task]? No, and they know that they need to know it because of the maturita exam or because they will be orally tested in the following class. But the meaning of this kind, either a warm-up activity or something of this entertaining sort, it's very difficult to explain to the students, in my opinion.*

The fear of not meeting students' expectations seems to play an important role in Tamara's anatomy of failure. She feels that it is difficult to explain the purpose of "a warm-up activity or something of this entertaining sort" to the students and that is the reason why she is reluctant to engage in such activities. However, there are a number of pointers in Tamara's as well as other research participants' data that students' expectations were typically processed through the filter of the teacher's own beliefs and therefore judgements about what the students would think or feel were typically processed heuristically with no data-based backing. The descriptive classroom observation data for this particular activity suggest that the students were indeed having fun and did not seem to require further explanation. Therefore, it may not so much be the students' need for explanation at stake as the teacher's, as Tamara herself seems to admit towards the end of the interview:

*Everything that is non-standard, I think they perceive as ...some of them maybe as entertainment, like relaxing that we don't do grammar exercises, and some of them indeed seek the purpose, why we did it. And then I do want to explain it to them, why, but many times it comes to me, really why? (laughs) Although I know that you had the explanation when we did it in the seminar, that it's the trust. But then who thinks about the trust in the class? Towards the teacher. Towards each other. Towards the group they are in.*

I argued in the theoretical discussion in Section 3.7.3 that even if the teachers' desire to implement the reform is externally motivated, in other words guided by their Ought-to Self,

conceptual change is still possible provided this self becomes internalised. Tamara's data indicate that the internalisation was unlikely because her reform-related ought-to self was not conceptually grasped, lacked specificity and plausibility, and was not contextually-cued. These factors appear to have contributed to her appraisal of 'Internal/External Resources' as insufficient. What is more, her Feared Language Teacher Self, as a counterpart of her Ideal Self, was much more central in Tamara's working self-concept and was specified in considerably greater detail. Therefore, her reform-induced ought-to teaching self was rendered insignificant in guiding her actions further. As a result, Tamara did not plan to continue experimenting beyond the life of the project and in her fourth interview (8 March 2005), she is very honest about it:

*I'll tell you using my example of me attending this XY training programme (unrelated to language teaching) about how to involve people, and stuff like that. The trainer, when she speaks about it, it's so clear, I'm so enthusiastic that if they asked me to do something, I would do it. But as soon as the door closes and I'm at home – it's gone. I think that maybe I'm not enthusiastic enough, maybe I'm not convinced about it. They work using those methods and they are successful, but maybe I'm not that convinced about it so I don't go for it. And maybe it's the same with the [TD course]. Yes, this is true, we should do it this way, but then you return home and you say to yourself: It's much more comfortable to do it the old way.*

### *Summary*

The above is an expressive explanation in Tamara's own words of the theory of language teacher change and of her own response to the TD initiative. Even though she attempted to implement some elements of the TD course in her classes and may have positively appraised the trainer, the tasks, the peers or some of the ideas, the reform message does not implicate her Ideal Language Teacher Self and therefore she is "not convinced". In other words, because Tamara does not possess the vision of a motivating, autonomy-supporting, and group-sensitive language educator implicated by the reform message, she does not perceive any dissonance between who she is and who she wants to be (she is happy and "comfortable" with the way she is) and is therefore not motivated to cognitively process the message any further. By employing her heuristics, she concludes that motivational teaching is no more than a list of warm-up activities, which can often "get [her] off the track", and thus no belief change occurs.

#### **8.3.4 *Interim summary***

We have seen accounts of five research participants' developmental paths as they responded to the current teacher development initiative. While an in-depth analysis of the further three would undoubtedly reveal interesting insights into the idiosyncrasies of their development and factors that prevented them from engaging fully with the reform message, their story lines, too, can be understood through the lens of the LTCC model.

For example, Denisa's data strongly suggest that although she was exceptionally willing to learn, her acutely low level of self-efficacy simply did not allow her to systematically process the reform message in relation to her specific teaching situation. Because her vision of her Feared Self appeared to be significantly more accessible in her working self-concept than her vision of herself as a Motivating English Language Teacher, she focused her self-regulatory action on prevention, rather than promotion strategies.

Monika's data, too, point towards a number of factors, such as low self-efficacy, students' expectations, cognitive ability, contextual constraints and unsupportive system, that prevented her from engaging in the systematic analysis of the reform message. Because her existing beliefs about motivational teaching did not embrace the reform message in its fullness, her frequent and what even appeared fairly advanced implementation of the reform input in her teaching practice was, nevertheless, a result of her heuristic processing. Thus, even though the tasks she designed as a response to the reform may have demonstrated Monika's remarkable level of creativity, they, nevertheless, failed to facilitate her students' cognitive engagement with classroom tasks and therefore did not increase opportunities for student learning.

Finally, Erika's data with regard to her language teaching context suggest a developmental path that is identical with that of Silvia (see Section 8.3.2), indicating no dissonance between her Ideal and Actual Language Teacher Selves and therefore no conceptual change. However, interesting tendencies can be traced in another of her multiple professional contexts suggesting that she indeed may have embarked upon the systematic route of the reform message processing in relation to her non-EFL teaching. A further promising sign that some seeds may have been sown is very recent evidence of Erika's dissonance appraisal even in her language teaching context. It seems, therefore, that although the data generated during the project do not reveal any hints of such appraisal, the teacher's altered circumstances triggered her delayed re-appraisal of the reform message in relation to her Actual Language Teacher Self.

This recent finding in particular, which emerged two years after the project had ended, demonstrates that teacher development is a complex, longitudinal and dynamic

process. Thus, although a thorough analysis of the current data for traces of conceptual change may be seen as predominantly pessimistic, the results must not be understood as definitive. A further strength of the LTCC model therefore is that it allows for the dynamic nature of conceptual change and does not assume definitive, once-and-for-all outcomes of language teachers' processing of the reform input.

To sum up, the above analysis of the research participants' developmental paths as they responded to the current teacher development initiative demonstrate a real-world power of the proposed Integrated Model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change. Even though the teachers clearly differed in how they approached the reform, the LTCC model seems to accommodate all these idiosyncratic developmental paths, which provides a powerful indication of validity.



## 9 Conclusion and Implications for Language Teacher Education and Research

This study set out to investigate the effectiveness of a theoretically informed language teacher development course. My aim was to design and administer a programme with a potential to bring about conceptual change in language teachers and to study the underlying mechanisms and processes which contributed to the course participants' development. As the mixed methods results presented in Chapter 7 showed, although some traces of impact *were* found in the participants' practices, real conceptual change did not occur despite the theoretical underpinnings of the course processes and the research participants' positive appraisals. Thus, what was originally envisaged to be an in-depth analysis of a 'success story' turned into the examination of the 'anatomy of failure.'

Thanks to its longitudinal nature and the multiple methods employed, the project generated a wealth of quantitative and qualitative data, whose analysis led me to the conceptualisation of an integrated model of Language Teacher Conceptual Change (LTCC) which builds on and extends a recent influential model of conceptual change published in the psychological literature (Gregoire, 2003). By putting this theoretical framework into practice, I have documented and interpreted several research participants' idiosyncratic developmental paths. The fact that the model could accommodate these complex and highly personalised growth patterns provides powerful validation for the theoretical construct and therefore I would like to believe that the LTCC model offers an integrated, theoretically-sound and empirically-grounded template that future research on language teacher development can build upon. Although conceptual change was investigated in this research project in relation to a specific focus of the teacher development course, that is, a motivational teaching practice, the LTCC model integrates constructs that seem to be applicable to any teacher education content or educational context. Of course, the actual content of Ideal and Ought-to Selves will undoubtedly be determined by the specific teacher education content.

Because the summary of my research project was provided by the LTCC model as it pulled together all the relevant theoretical threads and provided a framework for the empirical results, I would not like to reiterate here the material presented in the previous chapters because it would require, in effect, re-introducing the model. Instead, in this concluding chapter I would like to examine my findings in terms of two important issues: (1)

the practical implications of the results for language teacher education, and (2) the possible implications of the study for language teacher cognition research.

## **9.1 Implications for Language Teacher Education**

As a preliminary, I would like to emphasise that before any substantiated claims can be made about effective language teacher education pedagogy, more research is needed on examining the opposite of my current theme, namely ‘the anatomy of success.’ Although the LTCC model certainly provides a useable blueprint for outlining the developmental patterns that may lead to success, we will need to accumulate a substantial database which actually documents language teacher conceptual change. One of my primary research plans is, indeed, to continue my future inquiry in this direction. Nevertheless, the study has generated several broad issues with regard to implications for language teacher education and these are summarised below.

### *Contextual priming of relevant Ideal Language Teacher Self*

The findings of this study leave no doubt that the identity goals that the teachers adopt permeate all facets of their work as language teachers and impact on (1) what they know, think and believe about teaching, learning, their students or their own self; (2) what they do in the classroom; (3) what cues from the teaching context they are sensitive to; (4) how they approach their professional development; and (5) how they process any reform input. The LTCC model posits that until the teachers’ *commitment to student learning* becomes a central part of their identity goals (i.e. of their Ideal Language Teacher Self), teacher education interventions aimed at improving conditions for student learning are unlikely to bring about conceptual change. From a macro-perspective, therefore, all the levels of the Slovakian education system, including pre-service and in-service training as well as school contexts, will need to establish new ways of encouraging as well as modelling such commitment. Pre-service language teacher education in Slovakia in particular will need to extend its current emphasis confined to developing the *Language Expert Self* to include the active priming of the Ideal *Language Teacher Self*. From a micro-perspective, specific teacher education programmes (pre-service as well as in-service) will need to incorporate into their syllabuses particular strategies for developing a relevant reform-oriented Ideal Language Teacher Self in the participating teacher learners.

### *Inducing dissonance while maintaining self-efficacy beliefs*

In keeping with the findings of language teacher cognition research, the results of this study confirm that *dissonance appraisal* is essential for triggering the process of conceptual change. If language teachers do not perceive a discrepancy between who they are (their Actual Language Teacher Self) and who they want to become (their Ideal Language Teacher Self), their ideal self, even if congruent with the reform message, is unlikely to impel them to self-regulatory action. Teacher education programmes, therefore, need to find ways of destabilising teachers' established beliefs and knowledge base, while at the same time making sure that such a conflict is not detrimental to the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in their ability to learn and improve their teaching practice. In other words, dissonance is an essential, but not sufficient condition for teacher conceptual change. In order to learn, teachers must also be given hope that they indeed *can* attain their ideal selves.

### *Providing a roadmap for achieving the specific Ideal Language Teacher Self*

A mere possession of a relevant Ideal Language Teacher Self may not be sufficient for triggering conceptual change and, as I have argued, neither is dissonance in itself. Teachers need "access to alternative images" of practice (Johnson, 1994), that is, they need to be provided with conceptual and procedural frameworks to attain their ideal teaching selves. This would involve (1) conceptual frameworks that facilitate teachers' understanding of the implications that arise from their commitment to a particular reform-related Ideal Language Teacher Self, (2) models of how the specific approach can be enacted in their particular teaching contexts, and (3) strategies for dealing with various contextual constraints and pressures.

### *Promoting systematic processing through data-based teacher development tasks*

As has been documented in the analysis part of this thesis, the research participants never reached the stage of systematic cognitive engagement with the reform message, even though numerous attempts to encourage reflection were made. One of the specific strategies to facilitate more systematic processing even in contexts where reflection is a foreign concept could involve data-based tasks (see specific recommendations in Borg, 1998a, 1998b, 1999a). Judiciously selected real-life data extracts (such as those provided in this thesis) of language teachers' reform implementation attempts can have the potential to serve a variety of purposes discussed above, including promoting dissonance, providing procedural roadmaps for attaining ones' Ideal Self and clarifying the conceptual implications arising from its adoption. Excerpts which highlight (a) both positive and negative effects of teachers' instructional decisions and their classroom discourse on the students' classroom

engagement, and (b) teachers' misinterpretation or partial understanding of the motivational approach might be particularly effective in the context of the present study. The extensive database of the current project, which combines data about what the teachers did in the classroom, how they appraised the situation and what the consequences of their actions for the students were could serve as useful material for designing such teacher development tasks.

## **9.2 Implications for Language Teacher Cognition Research**

With its focus and design, this longitudinal mixed methods study of language teachers' conceptual change addresses a number of current gaps in language teacher cognition research and highlights several possible future directions. Because the limitations were dealt with in detail in Section 3.2.4, let me briefly outline the main pointers that future studies of language teachers' cognitive development may benefit from.

### *Exploring the future dimension of language teacher cognition*

Contemporary language teacher cognition research focuses on what teachers know, think and believe with regard to any aspect of their work (Borg, 2006). The findings of the current research project make a strong case for expanding this focus and embracing the future perspective of language teachers' cognitions: their goals, aspirations as well as fears and worries. These identity goals, which are conceived of in this project as 'possible selves' (ideal, ought-to and feared), appear to be at the very centre of language teachers' mental lives and further systematic inquiry into these constructs is therefore warranted. This call is further strengthened by the finding that, contrary to common assumptions, students' learning does not necessarily comprise a central part of language teachers' ideal selves. It may be that specific Ideal Language Teacher Selves are cued by specific sociocultural contexts. A systematic examination of these identity goals in a variety of environments may therefore be instrumental to our understanding of why some contexts seem to be more conducive to teacher cognitive development than others.

### *Embracing motivational, affective and dispositional factors*

This study attests to the role various motivational, affective and dispositional factors play in language teacher cognitive development. These have not been sufficiently accounted for, let alone systematically examined within the language teacher cognition domain and the LTCC model is believed to provide a framework for helping to integrate these variables into our

future inquiries. Because language teachers' cognitive development is to a large extent a motivational process, further examination of teachers' general motivational orientations (i.e. possible selves) as well as situation-specific motivation (i.e. approach and avoidance tendencies) can significantly advance our understanding of the individual and diverse ways in which cognitive development occurs.

#### *Employing longitudinal, mixed methods designs*

This research demonstrates that employing multiple methods can generate a fuller and more meaningful picture of language teacher change than single-method designs. Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods enables us to add multiple perspectives to the study of language teacher cognitive development, particularly by bringing in the valuable, yet largely overlooked student dimension. Further research efforts should therefore concentrate on developing designs that give justice to the complexity of language teacher conceptual change and that forge a link between teacher development and student learning (or non-learning) outcomes. Furthermore, as the post-project data of this study discussed in Section 8.3.4 suggest, development is a dynamic and iterative rather than a linear process, and the impact of teacher education is unlikely to be fully appreciated if we rely on predominantly short time-span research designs. Investigations which reach beyond the life of a discrete research study are likely to provide more intriguing insights into the teacher development process. Therefore, more studies are needed that examine the long-term impact of both pre-service and in-service teacher education (see also a related discussion in Section 3.2.3).

#### *Building a programmatic research agenda*

As is clear from Borg's (2006) recent review, the domain of language teacher cognition is largely fragmented and has not been able to go much beyond the mere description of various types of teacher cognitions and the factors that appear to influence them. However, if we strive to assemble a bigger picture of how, why, when and under what circumstances language teachers develop and, even more importantly, why, when and under what circumstances they do not, we will need to engage in empirically-driven theory-building research initiatives that draw on findings from across a number of disciplines and approaches. I believe that the LTCC model that has emerged from the data of the current research project can serve as a basis for future programmatic research agendas in one particular strand of language teacher cognition research – language teacher conceptual change. The model lends itself to investigations of a variety of content areas (e.g. grammar teaching), training course types, as well as educational and sociocultural contexts.

### **9.3 *Limitations***

A variety of context-dependent limitations have already been described in the previous chapters, most notably in Chapter 6. However, let me outline here three main types of limitations that this complex study presents. The first pertains to the actual TD course, particularly its structure (a relatively small number of sessions with lengthy gaps between them) and its unofficial status (it was taught by an independent teacher educator from outside the state system). Admittedly, such characteristics could have contributed to the limited impact of the course.

The second limitation concerns research methodology. Because of the large number of components integrated into this mixed methods design, some inevitably received less attention than others. This is true, for example, of the small sample size for the quantitative component or the less rigorous data recording procedures for research site observations

The final set of limitations relates to data presentation. Although this project generated a wealth of data in support of the claims made throughout the data analysis part of this thesis, space and time limitations inherent in a PhD project did not allow me to go into as much depth in presenting the data as I would have wished. I can foresee that the dataset will give me sufficient food for thought for several years to come.

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## List of Appendices

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- D** TD Course: Newsletter on Session 1
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- H** TD Course: End of Course Certificate
- I** TD Course: Session 3 Sample Activity Handout
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## Appendix A



**Univerzita Konštantína  
Filozofa  
Nitra**



**The University of  
Nottingham**

**University of Nottingham  
Veľká Británia**

Vám ponúkajú jedinečnú príležitosť podeliť sa o Vaše skúsenosti a načerpať nové nápady za prítomnosti renomovaných odborníkov zo zahraničia na jednodňovej konferencii pre učiteľov anglického jazyka

**Miesto: FF UKF Nitra (Štefánikova 67)  
Termín: 14.5.2004, 9.30 – 17.00**

# Revitalising Your Classroom

**Prof. Zoltán Dörnyei, Chaz  
Pugliese, Magdaléna Kubányiová**

Prístupy, metódy a techniky vyučovania cudzieho jazyka sú bezpochyby dôležitou výbavou každého učiteľa. Každý z nás, či už začínajúci alebo skúsený, však určite na vlastnej koži pocítil, že ak žiaci nie sú motivovaní a v triede nevládne príjemná a zároveň produktívna atmosféra, i tie najlepšie metódy sú odsúdené na neúspech. Dobré správy pre nás, učiteľov, sú, že motivácia i atmosféra nie je otázkou šťastia, či náhody a práve my ich môžeme ovplyvniť. O tom, ako na to, budeme na konferencii nielen hovoriť, ale vyskúšame si celú plejádu stratégií, vďaka ktorým naše hodiny môžu dostať nového ducha.

**Čo ak žiaci nemajú záujem? Čo ak nie sú pre nich hodiny pútavé? Čo ak v triede vládne nepriateľská atmosféra a žiaci si jeden z druhého robia posmech? Čo s nedisciplinovanými žiakmi? Čo s tými, ktorí sa boja niečo povedať a tými, ktorí nedajú možnosť iným?**

Na tieto, i mnohé ďalšie otázky budeme v príjemnej, neformálnej atmosfére spoločne hľadať odpovede. A to všetko za účasti svetových odborníkov zo zahraničia s bohatými skúsenosťami v danej problematike.

## Conference Programme

8.45 – 9.25	Registration
9.30 – 10.00	Opening Prof. Zdenka Gadušová, Dr. Jana Hartánská
10.00 – 11.00	<b>Opening Plenary: Revitalising the Language Classroom</b> Prof. Zoltán Dörnyei, University of Nottingham
11.00 – 11.15	Coffee Break
11.15 – 12.30	Workshop 1 <b>Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom</b> Magdaléna Kubányiová, University of Nottingham
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch Break
13.30 – 14.45	Workshop 2 <b>Humanising Your Classroom</b> Chaz Pugliese, Catholic University in Paris
14.45 – 15.00	Coffee Break
15.00 – 16.00	Workshop 3 <b>Motivational Strategies for the Language Teacher</b> Prof. Zoltán Dörnyei, University of Nottingham
16.00 – 17.00	<b>Discussion and Action Plan</b> Closing

**Dátum:** 14. máj 2004

**Miesto:** FF UKF Nitra, budova na Štefánikovej ulici

**Čas:** 9.30 – 17.00

**Účastnícky poplatok:** ZADARMO (!) vrátane materiálov a jednoduchého občerstvenia počas "coffee breaks". Obed je zabezpečený v neďalekej reštaurácii a účastníci si ho budú hradiť z vlastných zdrojov (cca 100 Sk).

**Organizátor:** Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky FF UKF Nitra v spolupráci s prestížnou britskou univerzitou v Nottinghamu.

**Účastníci:** Srdečne vítaní sú všetci, ktorí sa venujú vyučovaniu anglického jazyka, príprave budúcich učiteľov, zaškolovaniu začínajúcich učiteľov, či študenti, ktorí sa na učiteľskú kariéru pripravujú. V prípade veľkého záujmu budú uprednostnení začínajúci učelia (absolventi Katedry anglistiky a amerikanistiky na FF UKF Nitra), ktorí vyučujú angličtinu na stredných školách.

**Projekt:** Ak sa chcete aktívne podieľať na zlepšovaní výuky cudzieho jazyka v regióne, môžete sa zapojiť do zaujímavého výskumného projektu v spolupráci s Nottingham University. Viac sa dozviete na konferencii alebo na emailovej adrese: [aexmk1@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:aexmk1@nottingham.ac.uk) (aj po slovensky!).

**School of English Studies, University of Nottingham** patrí spolu s Univerzitou v Lancasteri k najlepším centráм aplikovanej lingvistiky vo Veľkej Británii so svetoznámyimi odborníkmi, vrátane mien ako Ronald Carter, Michael McCarthy a Zoltán Dörnyei.

**Speakers:**

Prof. Zoltán Dörnyei (University of Nottingham), Chaz Pugliese (Catholic University Paris) a Magdaléna Kubányiová (University of Nottingham)

**Zoltán Dörnyei** získal PhD v psycholingvistike v roku 1988 na Eötvös univerzite v Budapešti, kde pôsobil 10 rokov ako metodik a lingvista. V roku 1998 sa presťahoval do Veľkej Británie, kde v súčasnosti pôsobí na Univerzite v Nottinghamu ako Profesor Psycholingvistiky. Zároveň je jeden z vedúcich Centra pre výskum v aplikovanej lingvistike (Centre for Research in Applied Linguistics). Jeho publikačnú činnosť zahŕňa vyše 50 odborných článkov o rôznych aspektoch osvojovania si cudzieho jazyka a metodológie vyučovania. Je autorom/editorom niekoľkých kníh, vrátane *Teaching and Researching Motivation* (2001, Longman), *Motivation and Second Language Acquisition* (2001, University of Hawaii Press; spoluautor Richard Schmidt), *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom* (2001, Cambridge University Press), *Questionnaires in Second Language Research* (2003, Lawrence Erlbaum), *Attitudes, Orientations and Motivations in Language Learning* (2003, Blackwell) and *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom* (2003, Cambridge University Press; spoluautor Tim Murphey).



**Chaz Pugliese, MA TESOL**

V súčasnosti pôsobí ako učiteľ a metodik v Paríži, v minulosti učil a pracoval s učiteľmi v USA, Taliansku, Českej republike a Veľkej Británii. V rokoch 1992-2002 posobil na jednej z najprestížnejších jazykových škôl v Paríži, kde založil a riadil program TESOL Diploma v spolupráci s TESOL Centrom na South Hampton University vo Veľkej Británii. Od roku 2001 spolupracuje s najznámejším centrom pre vzdelávanie učiteľov jazykov - Pilgrims v Canterbury (Veľká Británia), ktoré je známe svojim humanistickým prístupom k vyučovaniu a ešte známejšie svojim zakladateľom (Mario Rinvolucri). Chaz tam vyučuje kurzy so zameraním na humanistickú metodológiu a Multiple Intelligences for Language Teachers a o tejto problematike prednášal na konferenciách (IATEFL, TESOL, British Council) a publikoval množstvo článkov (ETprofesional, [www.hltmag.co.uk](http://www.hltmag.co.uk), The Teacher Trainer a pod.). V súčasnosti je editorom pre sekciu "Activities" v IATEFL newsletter (Issues) a venuje sa doktorandskému výskumnému projektu "Creativity and language teaching" na univerzite v Nottinghamu.

**Magdaléna Kubányiová** získala magisterský titul na Katedre anglistiky a amerikanistiky, FF UKF Nitra v roku 2000. Hneď na to dostala ponuku pracovať na vysokej škole pre učiteľov v Thajsku ako lektorka angličtiny. O rok neskôr začala pracovať na prestížnom Institute for English Language Education (Assumption University, Thailand), dekanom ktorého bol Prof. Alan Maley (známy svojou Drama Techniques in Language Learning, či sériou OUP, Resource Books for Teachers). Tu sa venovala vyučovaniu angličtiny prostredníctvom literatúry a drámy, autonómii žiaka a humanistickým prístupom k vyučovaniu. Bola zodpovedná za prípravu budúcich učiteľov a školiteľkou učiteľskej praxe. Pracovala i ako editorka sekcie Hints and Ideas pre medzinárodný odborný časopis pre učiteľov "The English Teacher". Prednášala na medzinárodných konferenciách v Thajsku (Thai TESOL), Malajzii (MICELT a MELTA) a Veľkej Británii (IATEFL). Spolupracuje s Oxford University Press ako ELT konzultant. V roku 2003 získala prestížne PhD štipendium na univerzite v Nottinghamu, kde sa v súčasnosti venuje výskumnému projektu "Group dynamics and motivational strategies for language teachers".

Keďže kapacity sú obmedzené, nenechajte si ujsť túto jedinečnú príležitosť a zaistite si svoje miesto včas! Svoju účasť prosíme potvrdíte zaslaním vyplnenej návratky najneskôr do **23.4.2004** poštou, faxom alebo emailom na adresu:

KONFERENCIA, KAaA FF UKF, Štefánikova 67, 949 74 Nitra,  
Fax: 037 77 54 261

Email: [kangl@ff.ukf.sk](mailto:kangl@ff.ukf.sk)

Ďalšie informácie môžete získať na našom tel.čísle 037 77 54 209.

KONFERENCIA, KAaA FF UKF, Štefánikova 67, 949 74 Nitra, Fax: 037 77 54 261,  
Email: [kangl@ff.ukf.sk](mailto:kangl@ff.ukf.sk)

Ak chcete prihlásiť viacerých účastníkov, je možné použiť fotokópie tejto návratky.

### Návratka

Meno:

.....

Adresa školy/**Vaše pracovné zaradenie:**.....

.....

Počet rokov (mesiacov) praxe: .....

Kontakt (poštová adresa): .....

.....

email: .....  : .....

Pomôžte nám čo najlepšie pripraviť obsah príspevkov, aby sme mohli adresovať vaše problémy a stručne popíšte, v čom vidíte najväčšie ťažkosti vyučovania angličtiny vo Vašej konkrétnej situácii.  
(pozn. - táto položka nie je povinná)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Svojim podpisom potvrdzujem, že sa zúčastním na konferencii

**"Revitalising Your Classroom" dňa 14.5.2004 na UKF v Nitre.**

Účastnícky poplatok za konferenciu, materiály a občerstvenie sú hrazené organizátormi. Cestovné náklady a obed\* si hradím z vlastných zdrojov.

Dňa: ..... Podpis: .....

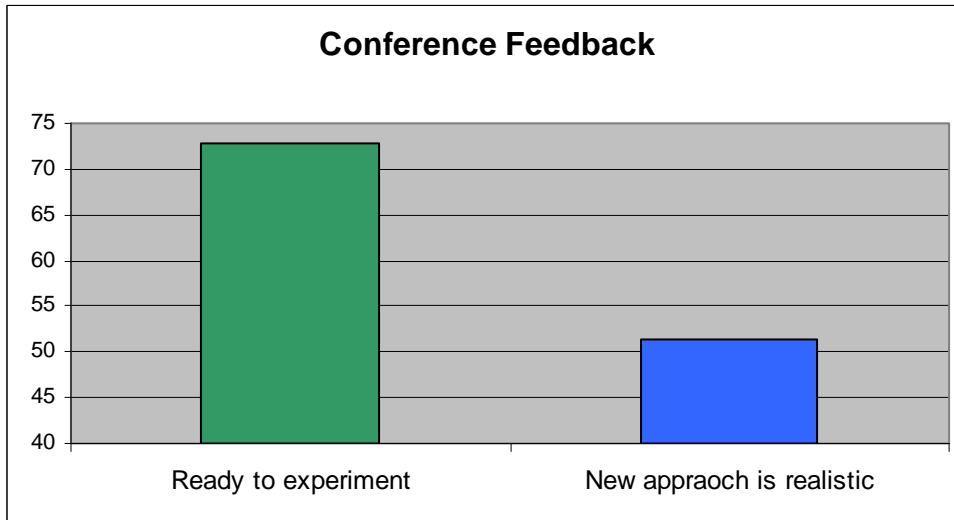
\*účasť na spoločnom obede pre účastníkov (cca 100 Sk na osobu - platí sa pri registrácii)

## Appendix B

### CONFERENCE FEEDBACK FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

**Q1: To what extent are you ready to experiment?** (M= 73%)

**Q2: To what extent is the approach realistic in your context?** (M= 51%)



### SAMPLE QUOTES FROM THE FEEDBACK:

Thank you for *restarting* my “teaching engine”.

\*\*\*

It’s been very refreshing and motivating, to see other people with the same problems, but who are all eager to do something about it, and to see some ways as well, how it can be done. I’m looking forward to the follow-up seminar because this topic really needs to be discussed better and no time spent on it is too much...

\*\*\*

The presenters have been wonderful, I’m very happy to have been here and to have experienced it.

\*\*\*

Since I finished school (i.e. Nitra studies), thanks to having had some really inspiring teachers and to having attended their “alternative seminars” (i.e. Drama etc.) I’ve tried – been trying to use these new methods in my classroom. Today you’ve convinced me that my struggle is not an impossible one. In fact, I have won some little battles. Thanks for today.

\*\*\*

Thank you very much for inspiration. I sometimes really have problems with warmers and motivation activities, so I think that a follow-up would help me to solve this problem. I wish I could take part in the next seminars. And I wish you much success with the organisation of the course. Thanks.

\*\*\*

I'd like to continue and make this a tradition.

\*\*\*

Thank you for giving me support and intellectual curiosity. You've confirmed for me that my personal "road" towards understanding what's happening in children's minds is good.

\*\*\*

At the beginning I thought we would discuss the problems Slovak teachers have to face in Slovakia. However, we started the same way as we worked at university. A *theory* ... but it was very (7x) inspiring. The aim of a university and also of this course was not to *feed you* but to teach you *how to catch fish*...  
So now, time for me to think to take advantage of the course and of kicking me off, motivating me. Now I know that all the problems we can't discuss at 1 session but thanks for giving me more enthusiasm and forcing me not to hesitate but start solving problems myself. I can do it myself – thank you that you made me understand it again.

\*\*\*

Somebody has to take care also of teachers' knowledge. Thanks for that. We are starving for more inspiring and valuable ideas.

I absolutely agree with the approaches and ideas, with the humanistic pedagogy,...However, perceiving education today realistically, WHO CARES ABOUT THE TEACHERS? Where is the humanistic approach to teachers?  
Enjoyed it very much, very practical and useful! Thank you.

\*\*\*

I teach this way (better said I try), but the problem comes from my older colleagues who don't agree with these methods and they believe that the best way is traditional way of teaching (drills, grammar, vocabulary, translation)

\*\*\*

My low rating is - as I see it –thanks to the system as I have experienced it at Secondary School where I have taught. 45 min time during which you must convey all the prescribed things

23 February 2005

### Creating a motivating learning environment – Session 4

Dear

This is to invite you to Session 4, details of which please see below.

**Date:** 12 March 2005 (**Saturday**)  
**Time:** 10.00  
**Venue:** Zasadačka Dekanátu FF UKF  
**Topic:** Group responsibility (cont.)

In addition to some of your very useful feedback, our newsletter contains the problems you wrote about in the last session. Perhaps you've got similar experience and/or suggestions, in which case please feel free to share them with the group on Saturday.

I have also enclosed two short articles this time (sorry!). Although it's not compulsory (as nothing of course is) to read them in advance, doing so might give you a better starting point for discussion and a bit of food for thought.

As you have noticed, we are going to continue in the same topic, it will, therefore, be useful if you could bring all the last session's handouts.

It's very important for me to have all your classwork materials and whatever else you may have written in the meantime, so if you haven't done so yet, I would very much appreciate if you could bring those (especially activity reflection sheets from session 2) and give them to me even if I again forget to ask you ☺.

I am very much looking forward to seeing you soon.

Warm wishes

Maggie Kubanyiova



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# NEWSLETTER

**Creating a motivating classroom environment - Session 1**

25 September 2004

Dear All,

Congratulations on your perseverance! I know it was such a long and tiring session, but we did it! Time to look back at the tremendous amount of things we covered. I wonder whether the following pictures evoke any associations to topics, people, etc.



I found your feedback extremely valuable – lots of food for thought and thought you might be interested, too. So here it is.

I am very much looking forward to our November session! In the meantime, enjoy reading.

Best wishes

*Maggie*

## What We Say

I was very positively surprised to see how quickly we broke barriers (not knowing each other) and I perceived us as a group rather than individuals very soon after the beginning of the seminar. (Was it due to a very smart choice of the introductory activity or was there anything else ?) I think we felt we had a lot in common! And the rules helped a great deal too! Especially, when they were OUR rules!

We were talking about listening to each other and what is going on in our head. It was a new thing which I learnt and I will think about it when I do listening with my kids.

**I have a feeling that thanks to our meeting I somehow cope with stress in school better. Don't know what the reason for that is – perhaps it's the feeling that I'm not alone, but I also think that the fact that I have joined the project gives me more confidence. Perhaps this seems to have no connection, but I feel that I am doing something for myself**

The topic of my lesson was "Jobs" and I found it fantastically fitting to use the story In Your Hands at the end. The lesson was

great and very moving, the kids were just fantastic and loved it. So in this regard, I think that any material can be adapted to one's own requirements and needs – this is what I learnt in our session.

**It's invaluable for me to speak English for at least one full day with other teachers. I mostly teach beginners or lower-intermediate learners and you can't really discuss things with them that much. Most of the time they learn from me, and not the other way round. At our seminars, I can learn from others, whether it's vocabulary, pronunciation or teaching methods – new activities, great ideas, motivation...**

We were involved in all of the activities and our performance was important so we felt WE were important (at least I felt I did).

I started to write my feedback on almost every class I teach – something you asked me in the interview, e.g. how and why I met my objectives, but also everything I want to do differently next time. I know that we were recommended to do something like this in our methodology seminars, but, alas, I have been too lazy up until now and there was no time for that, too. I know that during that interview I realised things about that class that didn't even



cross my mind during the class itself. And it helped quite a lot. So I now try to reflect on each class for about 15 minutes (even if it means it has to be done before sleep) and I write it down so I don't forget it. It is just great. I have known for some time that I want to teach, but only during the interview it came to me how much it means to me. That's why this reflection writing does not seem to me a wasted time, time that I could perhaps spend on lesson preparation, but rather it's time I devote to myself.

I liked the BUTTERFLY activity a lot (persuading and being persuaded to become one). I was surprised at a number of reasons I was able to give. It gave me a new, higher perspective of what I want to do/ be. Moreover, I was faced with an inevitable truth – the direction we chose is the hard one but it brings a lot of benefits with itself.

I liked the first activity with the toilet paper. It was a good idea for the students that are meeting first time, very funny.

*So far I have only "pushed" my class to arrange the chairs so that we always sit in circle. The first time – we spent some 20 minutes just on this "task", the second time – 15 and now they can manage to arrange the chairs within 5 minutes.*

## We didn't like

Sometimes I had a feeling that there is too much to take but we were so tired that we couldn't. I would prefer less activities and theory because my brain isn't working later anyway.

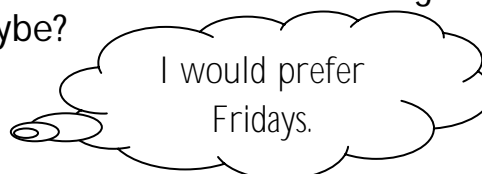
I didn't like when we had to write or draw on butterfly it wasn't the activity I liked.

## We suggested

Perhaps it would not be a bad idea to focus on particular cases and what the possible solutions could be.

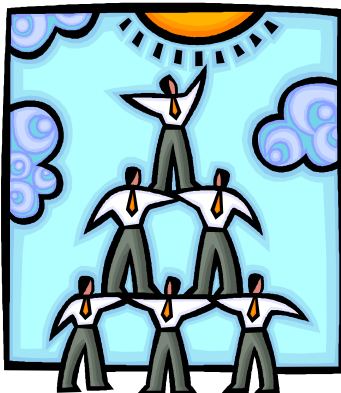
As for the future seminars ( and I think we talked about this) it would be great if we all had our own activities to present too ( to see each other in action and share things that work with our students).

For me, it was not very comfortable to write on my lap. Can we think of some other classroom setting maybe?



*I t would be great if we could share our materials, articles, exercises, lesson plans as I think we all have great ideas and resources and it would be a pity not to share them.*





# NEWSLETTER

Creating a motivating classroom environment - Session 2

13 November 2004

Dear All,

I'm sure you all look wonderful today!! How do I know? Well, I just do! ☺

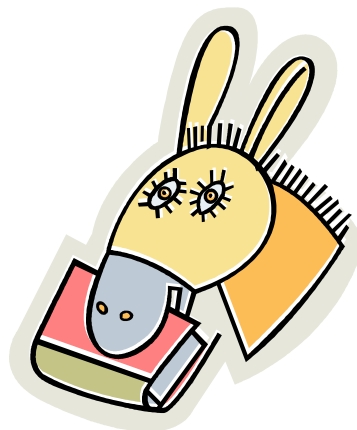
A bit different session it was this time, wasn't it! Glad to hear it offered a lot of inspiring thoughts to some of you.

And let's not forget how energising it was to exercise not only our minds, but our bodies, too! Thanks, [REDACTED], for that!

Two pictures here as a reminder of the session. One of them is easy peasy! The other one ... can you guess how it relates to session 2?



**Ya-ta-ti-ta, Ya-ta-ti-ta, Ya-ta-ti-ta Tam,**



## What We Say...

The very first thing I remembered and wanted to write about were feelings! So, no specific activities, or physical things, but atmosphere – I remember it was a cold, dark day and I remember I felt very excited to see you all!

As for the theory, we didn't talk about it so much. To be honest, I missed it this time. but don't ask me why because I REALLY DON'T KNOW.

\_\_\_\_\_s activity helped me to concentrate. I had to focus on the rhythm and steps and so I then found it easier to concentrate on the things we did later.

What I liked is that we really talked a lot about our problems we have, about our experiences. It is very inspiring when you hear how other teachers try to solve the problems they have. The idea of sharing the activities is great. I would compare it to growing the seed. You get an inspiration from somebody and then it goes. The inspiration grows and grows and you get other ideas how to improve your teaching style and the process itself.

It's quite important for people to feel relaxed with each other to want to talk about (personal) things.

**The first seminar was full of ideas and inspiration, etc. The second one was more about thinking. So after, I had to think a lot about the way I**


**teach. But this time not about what kind of activities I use, but the process as whole. In this way, the last seminar was more difficult. Yeah, many people say that thinking hurts.**

Personal questions activity – I do not remember all the questions during this activity but I can describe my feelings. I recollect a situation when I was supposed to talk about what made me feel good/happy and I felt pretty comfortable to give an honest answer which was connected with my very intimate part of life. I would not normally talk about this to someone whose attitudes I don't know, but here, in our group, I felt so comfortable that I did not even think about whether to say it or not – I felt trust!

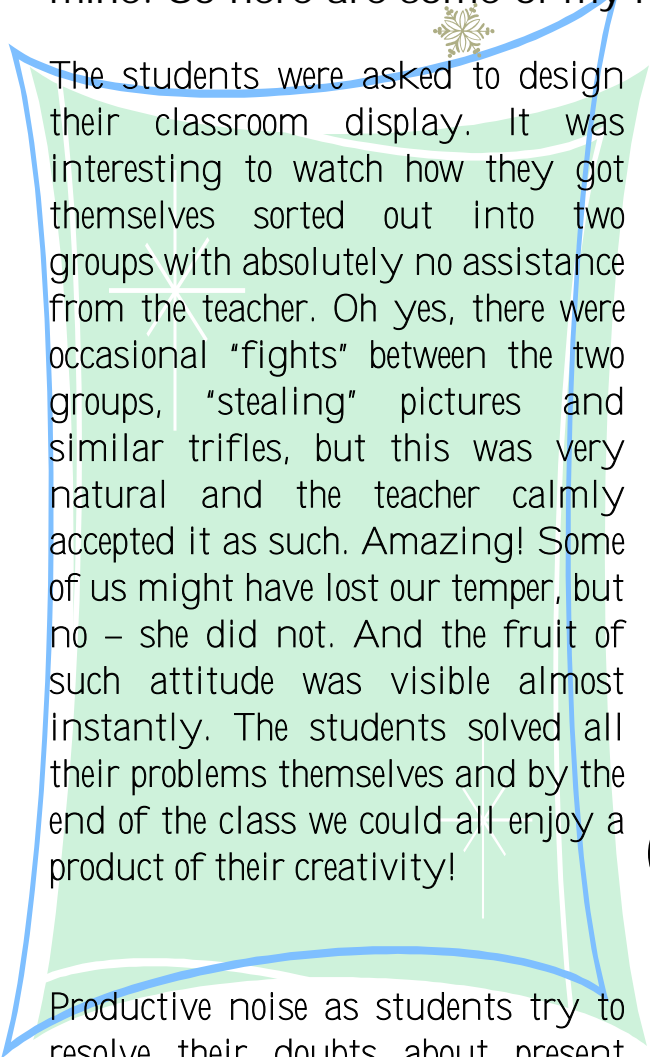
## We Suggest...

Why don't we, at the beginning of each session, describe on a sheet of paper a problem we had in the last month, e.g. discipline with 3B, or whatever. And whoever would like to could write their suggestions on that sheet during coffee breaks. And it would be up to that person what to choose from the suggestions. Perhaps there could be a discussion based on the most interesting ones...

Let's set a deadline for writing a feedback not later than a week after each seminar. I have a tendency to put it off (unless I am motivated in other way ) which is not very good because then I forget a lot of important information! What do you think?




As I was browsing through my notes and reflections from our sessions, feedback, observed classes and conversations with you, I was amazed at how incredibly skilful we are as a group! Thank you that you allow me to learn from you! And because you share your learning with me, I thought it would only be fair to share mine. So here are some of my notes.



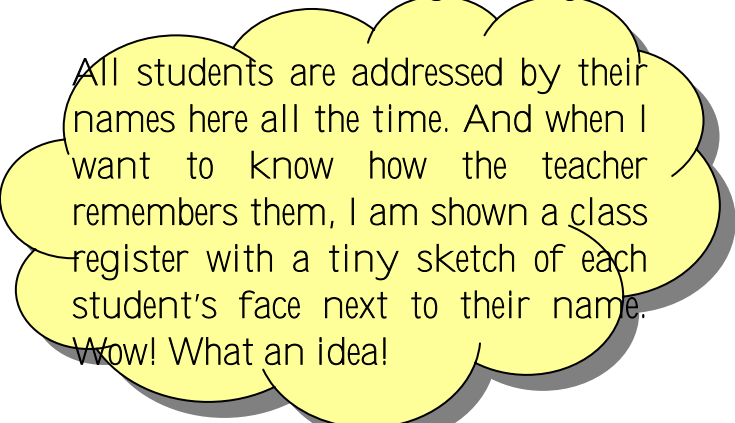
The students were asked to design their classroom display. It was interesting to watch how they got themselves sorted out into two groups with absolutely no assistance from the teacher. Oh yes, there were occasional "fights" between the two groups, "stealing" pictures and similar trifles, but this was very natural and the teacher calmly accepted it as such. Amazing! Some of us might have lost our temper, but no – she did not. And the fruit of such attitude was visible almost instantly. The students solved all their problems themselves and by the end of the class we could all enjoy a product of their creativity!

Productive noise as students try to resolve their doubts about present perfect and past simple. I hear students speculating, trying out possibilities and shouting out questions to the teacher. In English!



The students in charge of the class had chosen their own article, given a copy to the teacher, produced copies

for others and prepared the vocabulary in advance. In class, they were in charge of explaining it to the others in the group. Then they worked in small groups. The teacher prompted when necessary, suggested them a better way of doing an activity to which they had some objections. They negotiated, the students explained their reasons why their original way was better. The teacher accepted that and let them continue their original way.



All students are addressed by their names here all the time. And when I want to know how the teacher remembers them, I am shown a class register with a tiny sketch of each student's face next to their name. Wow! What an idea!

The teacher starts by greeting the students as part of routine. Students clap their hands spontaneously after each has got their turn. In the middle of the class, the students start losing concentration. All of a sudden, the teacher asks them to stand up and

jump and count and jump again, etc. Just a couple of seconds and the students are back on task again.

At the end of an obviously enjoyable class, the teacher says: "Oh, this has been a pretty nice class, hasn't it?" The students agreed enthusiastically. I just thought, gosh, yes, what a lovely way of letting them know that you too enjoy the classes, that you too are glad when they participated.

"Oh well, I've brought this tape recorder, so yes, let's at least have some nice background music as I'm sure we will not have the time for the exercise again! You know very well what a poor time manager I am!" Not all of us would be ready to admit such things in front of the students. Yet, what a great signal it is to them that we're just human beings, too. And how much easier for me it was

to trust those human-being teachers when I was at school myself.

The teacher discusses a topic with a small group of students. They are relaxed, speak English and simply use a Slovak word in the middle of an English sentence if they don't know the English equivalent. The teacher provides the equivalent. A student asks her to repeat it. It is repeated and written on the blackboard. The students copy all the words on the board (as they are gradually being added there) without being told to.

***Merry Christmas***

***and***

***Best Wishes for the New Year***

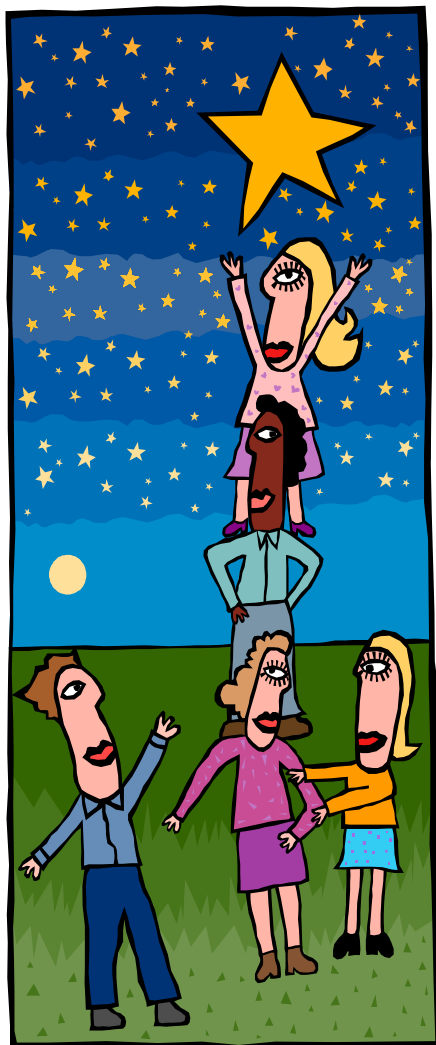
# NEWSLETTER

## Creating a motivating learning environment - Session 3

7 January 2005



Reading your feedback I was reminded of a recent conversation with one of you who said that by reading the newsletter she realises how different people are. Indeed, that's precisely what struck me upon looking at your



feedback on session 3. Each of us brings in different experience, different knowledge, different skills, different preferences, different feelings, different ways of looking... Isn't it wonderful how rich this can make us as a group?

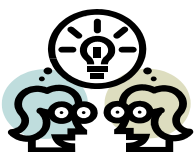
Apart from feedback, you will also find several problems a couple of you are experiencing. Do you think you could help with an idea or two?

And of course, a quick revision of session 3. There is a connection between the two pictures on this page. Can you guess what it is?

Very much looking forward to Session 4.

Maggie

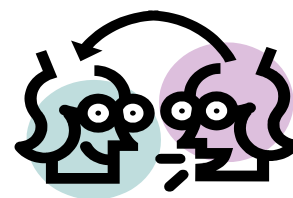




# Can You Help?

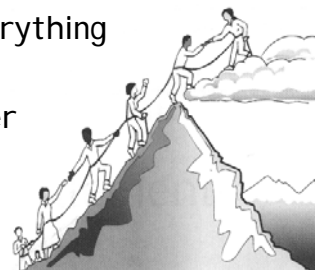
- How do you evaluate students' homework if they haven't done it?
- **How do you deal with students who miss written control works? Do you prepare extra works for them?**
- How can I teach grammar in a way that I can see some progress? Students are too shy, their level of English is not improving.
- **I've got several students in different groups who almost never contribute to peer discussion although they're good English users.**
- We had a chat with students after Christmas and most of them could only talk about alcohol. How do you respond? On the one hand, it's quite clear to me that there is no point in explaining to them that they shouldn't drink. On the other hand, however, as a teacher I probably shouldn't respond with a tolerant smile.
- **I don't know how to build the group. They have been together for 4 months. The work is not very productive, I think because they don't feel to be a group.**
- How do you make students use English in activities? They often switch to Slovak in activities like "Find someone who".

## We said about session 3...



**I really liked the red strings idea to make pairs. When they got tangled up, it was nice to think "who will it be?" They looked like the "red string of destiny" which in Eastern myths connects the two people destined to be together.**

I loved the card activity, that I could be rewarded for everything sensible I said, but I could also be happy for other people, because we didn't compete against each other, but together towards a common goal. It was wonderful when we could share our cards – it was like people trying to help you, not because of their goals but because of you.



It's really very useful if we always get time to think everyday through it ("to reflect upon it"), if we do it in the seminars, together we come to many interesting ideas.



I actually never realized that motivation includes also striving for having own place and power during the learning process.

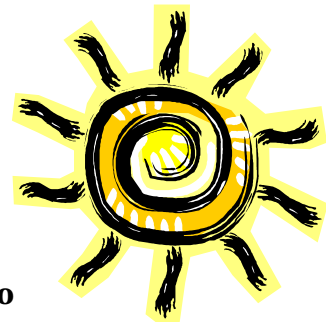
So far, I haven't realised that TRUST is so important, but all the ideas provided made me sure that the students must feel as comfortable as I did during the session.

**For me really enjoyable was the last activity – just talking about our own lives.**

I learned deeper meaning behind some of the activities. They are no more only warm-up activities for me – now I am aware of different purposes I can use them for.

**I liked the activities we did. Especially the one at the beginning (with Elisabeth).**

I think we teachers do a lot of the humanistic "things" automatically without being aware of them – what we need is a system to be able to use them intentionally in different situations.

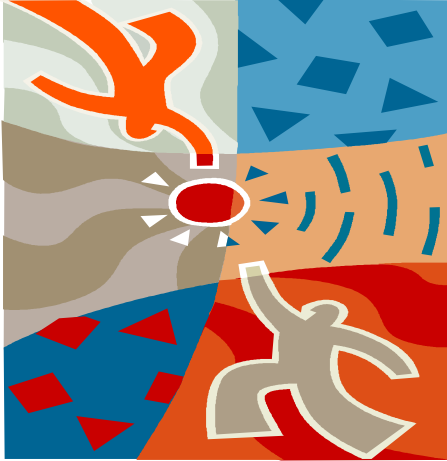


**I liked today's session most of all, but I cannot explain why, I have no idea. But I found out that I also need some theory to be given, because sometimes it's difficult for me to deduct it only from the activities.**

I'm already thinking about the way how I could pass all this "knowledge" of mine to my colleagues because I feel that they DO need it. Maybe I could provide them with a little brochure where I will put all my notes from our seminars. I feel that I want to share this wonderful experience that I'm gaining here with all of you at every one of our sessions. THANK YOU ALL FOR THAT.

The more we know ourselves the better the seminar goes, because we all concentrate on the same things, as we think about motivation, we get motivated through the discussions ourselves; when we talk about trust and group dynamics as such, we build up our group and develop trust and get to know each other – we can experience how it develops, we can intentionally participate in the process.





# NEWSLETTER

Creating a motivating  
learning environment

Session 4

29 April 2005

Dear All,

This is the last newsletter, about the last session, with your last thoughts... I would like to thank you all for your participation, for your fantastic work and great ideas, for your effort and sacrifice, for your humour and open-mindedness, for your good will and friendship... What a privilege it's been to work with you!

I wish you all success, joy and satisfaction not only in your work, but also in your private lives. And although you will notice that [redacted] is, unfortunately, missing in our pictures, I'm sure you will agree that we will be thinking of her more intensely these days!

But as some of you, I, too, believe this is not a goodbye and that we will keep going one way or another (for example, with this newsletter, I'm also passing on to you some of the great materials that I got from our [redacted]. Why not keep the tradition? Thank you, [redacted]!) So let's keep in touch!

But before that you must promise that you will forget about all this for a while and enjoy your well deserved summer break!

All the best

Maggie





# From the walls to practice...

None of the methods...will be effective unless the teacher's genuine desire is to create a climate in which there is freedom to learn.

Rogers, 1983, p. 157

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.

Marcel Proust



*New techniques with old attitudes may amount to no change, while new attitudes even with old techniques can lead to significant change.*

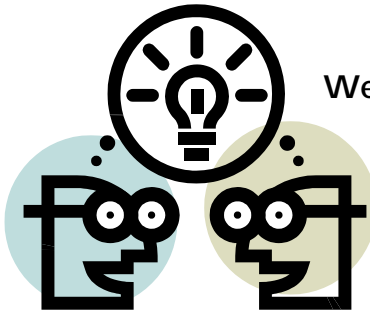
Underhill, 1999

To the extent that you treat students as if they already are eager learners, they are more likely to become eager learners.

Brophy, 1998, p.170

*It is a thousand pities never to say what one feels.*

Virginia Woolf



We each need to cultivate an attitude of inquiry about our practice. We need to approach teaching and learning with wonder and openness. We need to find the courage to question and the discipline to remain with the question. We need to develop the habit of reflectivity. And we need to be passionate enough about what we do to risk sharing with others our understandings.

Larsen-Freeman, 2000

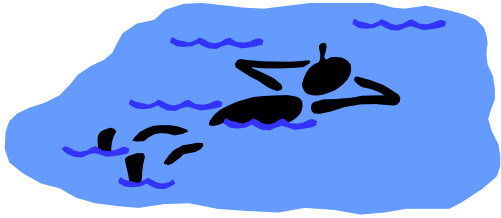
*Instructions to airline passengers: "For those of you travelling with small children, in the event of an oxygen failure, first place the oxygen mask on your own face and then – and only then – place the mask on your child's face." In schools we spend a great deal of time placing oxygen masks on other people's faces while we ourselves are suffocating.*

Barth, 1990, p.42



Don't underestimate students. Give them the tools, the responsibility and the opportunity to teach themselves – and then trust them.

Susan Norman



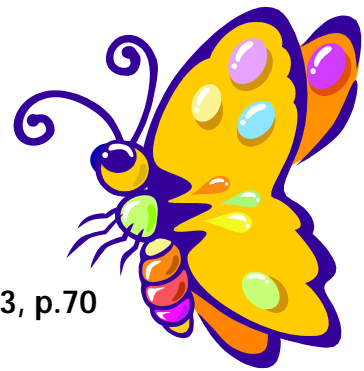
*Change may be gradual: the toe is in the water...it's not too cold...up to the ankles...a bit of success...over the waist...feels good...look at me, I'm swimming!*

Brandes and Ginnis, 2001, p.79

I told a boy he could leap fences and he soared over mountains. I told a boy he was stupid and to his ignorance he was chained.

*A good teacher is someone who knows our NAMES.*

A student



It is clear that this kind of learning process demands a teacher who is continually growing.

Rogers, 1983, p.70

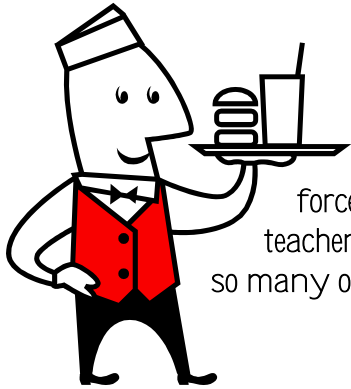
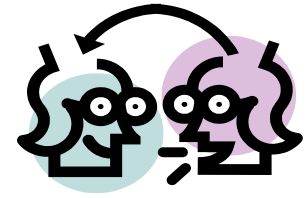
*When the wise teacher teaches, the students are hardly aware that she exists. When her work is finished, the students say, "Amazing! We did it ourselves!"*

If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain.  
If you want ten years of prosperity, grow trees.  
If you want one hundred years of prosperity, grow people.

We see the L2 teacher as a juggler rushing to keep the various plates of "skills", "pace", "variety", "activities", "competences", etc. all spinning on their sticks. Yet their job is doomed to failure if the affective ground in which the sticks are planted is not firm.

Dörnyei and Malderez, 1997, p.65

# We said about session 4...



We teachers are like waiters. Not paid a lot, but we do everything for our students. Then they don't appreciate the education and are not forced to work hard on themselves. Not to mention that very often the teachers are the waiters in the restaurant of the worst category and don't have so many opportunities and good conditions and equipment.

**I often feel too much under pressure that I am responsible for everything. Thus, the last session was a kind of therapy for me in this sense.**

I was really looking forward to his session...but my feelings somehow changed the next day in the morning and the enthusiasm from the previous day was gone. I was simply too tired to be thinking positively. I would, therefore, like to use this opportunity and apologize to all of you. I know how painful it is to work with someone always complaining about everything. I would also like to stress that this does not have anything to do with my general positive attitude to humanistic way of teaching. I do still want to try hard, even though it did not look so the last time.

**P h o t o**

**P h o t o**

**I was very pleased with the way we analysed the "Teacher's voice" activity – I felt very safe talking about it in a group and very pleased to see how much we have learned! I was proud of ourselves! I suppose, some time ago I would not probably see anything unusual about that situation and the way the teacher solved it! So my next observation is, being aware of it or not, we ARE changing!**

Thanks for the great tip - „if students do not start discussing – JUST WAIT“. I tried it – and it helped. I think I will really have to withdraw sometimes and put the responsibility on students.

**P h o t o**

**The seminar started just great. We could express the level of our stress and let it go by releasing our balloon. The level of my stress was enormous, that was why my balloon was the biggest. What a relief it was after the balloon was gone!!!! That was just what I needed.**

I liked the balloon activity at the beginning. I have used it a few times with my adults and they liked it very much. Moreover, there was one group

who themselves asked this Monday, if it is possible to blow the balloons again. Fortunately, I had last six balloons in my plastic bag, which was enough.

**One of the things I liked very much was the balance between the theory and practice. I think all the theory you spoke about could have been done a bit earlier. Why? Well, for me, after knowing all these things you told us, I got clearer idea about the humanistic approach and what to do at the lesson. It helped me to understand all the activities we did much better and to understand what their purpose is.**

**P h o t o**

I always have the feeling that I regularly don't manage to include everything in my classes, that there are always some missed opportunities. But when we are discussing these things in our group, I realize that some things simply happen and that I need to persevere and keep on fighting. As a result of our seminars, I tend to think about my classes more, I look at them in more detail and also more positively. Before, I took things for granted.

**P h o t o**

**I think we were a great TEAM – we achieved together so much more than we would have done on our own! I'm so glad I got to be part of this!**

The TEAM idea presented through group product and group responsibility activities as well as "it is in your hands" is something that should hang on

the wall of every classroom! Moreover, during the seminar I got an idea of distributing the sayings in our English office for all of my colleagues! Maybe some of them would feel that somebody is taking care of them! ☺

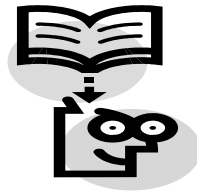
**I am very happy I have met all those great people and personalities. All of them gave me a lot and I have learned so much from them. I really do appreciate that. MAY ALL THE TEACHERS BE LIKE THEM.**



**P h o t o**

**HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL AGAIN!**

# Useful stuff...



Arnold, J. (Ed.) 1999. Affect in Language Learning. CUP

Dörnyei, Z . and Murphey, T. 2003. Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom

Dörnyei, Z . 2001. Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom

Hadfield, J. 1992. Classroom Dynamics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rogers, C. 1983. Freedom to Learn for the '80's. Columbus, OH: Charles Merrill

Stevick, E.W. 1990. Humanism in Language Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, M. and R. Burden. 1996. Psychology for Language Teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

 The University of Nottingham	<h1>CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE</h1>
<p>This certificate is awarded to</p> <p><b>COURSE PARTICIPANT'S NAME</b></p>	
<p>for completion of the 20-hour English teacher development course</p> <p><b>CREATING A MOTIVATING LEARNING ENVIRONMENT</b></p> <p>delivered between September 2004 and May 2005</p>	
Signature	Date
Signature	Date



## Appendix I

### Group product

#### GROUP POEM

Brainstorm adjectives that the group members associate with teaching. Write them all on the blackboard.

Ask individuals to choose 4 adjectives which best describe teaching for them and write them down.

Point to each adjective on the blackboard and find out how many chose it by show of hands. Keep the 4 winners, the rest is rubbed off.

Now ask the members to forget about teaching and elicit new associations. "What else is 'wonderful' for you (more than one word, specify – e.g. smell of fresh black coffee in the morning)?" Elicit 3-4 new associations for each of the 4 adjectives on the blackboard.

Have the members vote for the best.

Reveal the poem to the group (you were completing it "on the go" without the group knowing it).

Teaching is as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching is as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching is as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_

Teaching is as \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_

Display it on the wall (you could have the group illustrate it, etc.)

#### GROUP PICTURE EXERCISE

- In this technique the teacher rubs the blackboard clean and tells the group they are going to draw a "group picture". Anybody can go to the board and draw in one element of the picture, but not more. You can draw a tree, but not a bird's nest in the tree.  
The activity happens in silence and the teacher calls a halt when a sufficiently complex image has been created.
- In this random pairing technique, the teacher holds up folded strips of paper and each student is asked to take one end of a strip of paper. There needs to be one strip of paper for every two students in the group.  
When the teacher lets go of the papers, each student finds she has a partner. They can choose and do one of the following:
  - Produce a dialogue between two OBJECTS in the picture (this I was very nervous about and, on the journey to work, questioned why I would even suggest it! Yet it worked best!)
  - Produce a dialogue between two of the people in the picture.
  - Freely write your own story from the picture.

#### GROUP TELLS A STORY

Dictate a sentence or two that sets up an ambiguous situation and ask each student to write the sentence at the top of a blank piece of paper. One that works for me is:

*I usually caught the six o'clock train home, but that night I missed it and had to wait for the six-fifteen train.*

Then in groups (four works best for me) I have each student add another sentence to the story and pass it around the circle - each student adding a new sentence and passing it on so that there are four different stories circulating in each group.

I use it as a highly motivating writing exercise. With my students the theme nearly always ends up related to sex/romance, violence, fears, food or money, usually in that order. Pretty close to the basic drives I'd say.

## Trust

### IDEAL REACTIONS

Go around the circle and have each person answer this question: "What could the people in the group do to make you feel more free to talk in front of them about things that are important to you?" Try to get students to describe specific behaviour that makes them feel more comfortable, such as listening carefully, not laughing, asking questions, smiling sympathetically.

### GETTING ACQUAINTED

Let the members of group pair off with somebody they would like to know better. Ask the pairs to answer these questions:

*What was the most difficult decision you had to make in your life?*

*What was the easiest?*

Give the pair 7 minutes to think them over and discuss them with their partners. Ask the pairs to put themselves in each other's shoes when reporting their reactions to questions. So each starts with " I am \_\_\_\_\_ (the name of the partner)....." Allow a volunteer pair to talk about themselves to the group first. Continue until all pairs have talked.

Processing:

Cognitive:

1. Did you find it difficult to share something about yourself?
2. What did you observe in your partner? Did she/he open up easily or did it take her sometimes before she/he could open up? Why?

Affective:

1. What did you feel after the exercise? Has it made you more comfortable with each other ?
2. Was there something you learned/discovered about yourself? about others?

### HEIGHT LINE-UP

Quiet activity that can be done anywhere. Works on trust and lowering personal barriers. Each group member needs a blindfold.

Objective: To have the entire group line up from tallest to shortest without talking

1. The entire group must have their blindfolds on.
2. No one may make any sounds at all at any time.
3. The group must line up in a single file line from tallest to shortest.

### Variations

1. Whisper the name of an animal to each person and then tell the entire group that they must line up from largest to smallest animal. The only sound each member may make is the sound that their assigned animal makes.
2. With the blindfolds on and no talking or sounds at all, have the entire group line up according to their birth dates starting with January and so on.
3. Without the blindfolds but no talking at all, have the entire group line up alphabetically according to their first names

## **Group Responsibility**

### **THE AVERAGE AGE**

This exercise can be used to introduce students to group-centred interaction.

Arrange the class in a circle. Standing outside the circle, give the following instructions:

“I am going to give you a job to do as a group to see how well and how quickly you can work together. It is a very simple task: you are to calculate the average age in years, months, and days of the members of this class (just years for younger students). You must work together as one group and the group must agree on one answer. When you have the answer, appoint one person to submit it to me.” Step away and observe the group but do not talk to members.

After they submit their answer, lead them in a class discussion of the process they used to solve the problem. (Questions that could be asked: What problems did you have in getting organised? What slowed the group down? Was a leader needed? Did anyone serve as leader? How was the leader chosen? What responsibility did each group member have in solving this problem? How could the group solve the problem faster next time?) Conclude the follow-up discussion by listing on a large sheet of paper the conclusions the group comes to about working together on a group task. Save this list to post the next time you assign a group-centred learning activity. The strength of this exercise lies in the fact that it is inductive – that is, students arrive at their own principles of good group behaviour as a result of experience, rather than having the teacher tell them how to organise for maximum effectiveness. Most groups will be ready to benefit from this activity, but some teachers may wish to give members a chance to put the insights gained from the first trial to work in a similar activity. You may use weight or height as the basis of the second task, or make up a new task. The key is to give students a very simple problem which every student can easily contribute to and for which there is a definite answer.

### **FORCED CONTRIBUTION**

Arrange the group in a circle. Standing outside the circle, assign the group a simple topic to discuss – one that every member will have some ideas about, such as “What changes should be made in our school?” Or use some content-related question that every student can be counted on to respond to.

Give the following directions: “To complete this task satisfactorily, you must meet the following requirements:

Each person in the group must contribute in random order (i.e. you cannot go in order around the circle).

I will call time after ten minutes (adjust as necessary, depending on size of group) and by then every person must have contributed.

Please begin now.”

To keep track of whether each person has contributed to the discussion prepare a list of the names of all the students and put a check next to each contributor’s name.

After the specified time, talk about the activity. Begin by asking the group whether every member contributed. (Other questions may include: Who kept order? What did you do if several persons wanted to talk at the same time? What ways were used to encourage quieter members to participate?)

From a student journal:

*Today we tried a new experiment. Within five minutes everyone in our group had to talk once, and then twice, for everyone in the group to get an “A”. This time I was required to talk for everyone to get a good grade. I wasn’t nervous or embarrassed to talk. The exercises that we’re doing have really helped me and, I think, the rest of the class. It’s made it easier for me to talk without being self-conscious. Everyone feels the same, because we’re all under the same pressure.*

## Learning about each other

### THE SPECIAL PLACE EXERCISE

Here is an exercise that I like to use early on with my group process class after an initial round of introductions, expectations, fears, etc: I have them pair up with another class member that they don't know but would like to know better. One member of the pair takes the other to what is for him/her a \*special place\*, on or off campus. Once there, they talk with each other as meaningfully and honestly as they're willing about what is going on in their lives. When they return to our meeting room at the end of the exercise, they share what the exercise was like for them without revealing confidences shared during the exercise. I've found this to be a good way to get students sharing with each other and to begin building a group field.

### WHO HAS DONE THAT?

Prior to the meeting, make a list of about 25 items relating to work and home life. For example, a list for a group of trainers might have some of the following:

- Developed a computer training course
- Has delivered coaching classes
- Is a mother
- Knows what ... means and can readily discuss it
- Enjoys hiking
- Has performed process improvement
- Served in the Armed Forces
- Is a task analysis expert

Ensure there is plenty of space below each item (3 or 4 lines) and then make enough copies for each person.

Give each person a copy of the list and have them find someone who can sign one of the lines. Also, have them put their job title and phone number next to their names. Allow about 30 minutes for the activity. Give prizes for the first one completed, most names (you can have more than one name next to an item), last one completed, etc. This activity provides participants with a list of special project coaches and helps them to learn about each other.

### FINISH THE SENTENCE

Go around the room and have each person complete one of these sentences (or something similar):

- The best job I ever had was...
- The worst project I ever worked on was...
- The riskiest thing I ever did was...

This is a good technique for moving on to a new topic or subject. For example, when starting a class and you want everyone to introduce themselves, you can have them complete "I am in this class because..."

You can also move on to a new subject by asking a leading question. For example if you are instructing time management, "The one time I felt most stressed because I did not have enough time was ..."

## Appendix J

### Mini Scenarios: Introduction to Session 4

You are in the middle of the HW check when you find out a student doesn't have his/her HW. *What would your most typical response be?*

No one in the class have their HW. You are quite sure there was one, but the students are trying persuade you there was no HW. *What would your most typical response be?*

You have a mixed-abilities class. While one group of students is very fast, another needs a very close attention which means boredom for the good students. *What would your most typical response be?*

A student is reporting on his results/group results, etc. when you realise a couple of students are chatting away. *What would your most typical response be?*

Martin says something. You ask Andrea whether she agrees. She wasn't listening (you knew it) and so can't answer. *What would your most typical response be?*

During a discussion students express an opinion which is in contrast with what you think and what others think and they begin to show it quite strongly. *What would your most typical response be?*

You ask a question, but there is silence in the classroom. *What would your most typical response be?*

## Appendix K

### A CASE STUDY: Renata's Approach to Learner Autonomy

**Please read the following description carefully of how Renata feels about learner autonomy in her classroom and after you have finished, discuss the questions provided below the text.**

I'll tell you something about this learner autonomy business. It's like a fairy tale to me, you know, it simply doesn't work in the real classroom. You see I've got this problem with some of my classes: The students are of mixed abilities and so naturally, you've got students who are faster than others. I wanted the weaker students to understand something properly, but this would, of course, bore the better students to death. So I decided I would give them some extra work. My idea was that while going over the easy exercises with the weaker students, the good ones would be working on their own, you know, as "autonomous learners" should. Great idea, but what happens? When I told them what exercises to do and that they were going to work alone, they gave me this awfully silly look like they had no clue what I wanted them to do. I had to come to them several times and even scold them because they just could not get started. I explained to them and had to repeat it several times that they were now an autonomous group, so they were going to work on their own. Up to this very day, they haven't done a single exercise. And I just wanted them not to suffer with these weak students, I wanted them to learn something extra...But they don't understand this, they simply don't want it. Learner autonomy can't be done in schools like mine. My experience shows it very clearly.

**Please discuss the following issues in your groups and make sure each of you has got notes of what you have agreed in Q3:**

- 1. Do you have similar experience to that of Renata?**
- 2. Do you agree/disagree with Renata's solution? Why/why not?**
- 3. Think of all the possible reasons that may have contributed to Renata's unsuccessful implementation of the concept of learner autonomy in her classroom.**

## Appendix L

Look at these snippets from *real* English lessons. Choose your "favourite" and discuss in pairs/groups what you find good/problematic about it.

<b>T</b> = teacher <b>S</b> = student
--

①

T: "You don't have your homework? What can we do about it?"

②

Peter is asked to read a sentence. He does it.

T: "Alena, did you hear? No, of course, she didn't. She's been having fun with her neighbour. Peter, read it again, please."

Peter reads the sentence again.

③

T: "Who wants to continue?"

[silence – 2.5 seconds]

T: "Somebody must continue."

[silence – 2 seconds]

T: "So, Betka, tell us..."

④

Answers to a reading exercise are being checked.

T: "So what's the answer to the first one?"

S: "b"

T: "Yes and what was your clue in the text?"

[silence – 3 seconds]

T: "Perhaps the second sentence in the first paragraph?"

⑤

Instructions are being given, but several students are

chatting. T claps her hands and says to one of the students:

"Edita, how can you follow instructions if you're not listening?"

⑥

Students are listening to a tape. After it's finished, T says:

"OK, now listen once again, for the second time."

⑦

Students asked to read a coursebook text for HW. T gives

them a list of words with Slovak equivalents saying: "Here are

the words from the text which are perhaps not the most

important ones, but you may not understand them."

⑧

T: Please, be so kind and finish this exercise for HW.

## **Appendix M**

### **MOTIVATING CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT: SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE SCALES**

#### **Group cohesiveness (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.9, 1.10)**

1. Students in this class get to know each other really well. 1.1
2. Students in this class aren't very interested in getting to know other students. 1.7
3. A lot of friendships have been made in this class. 1.8
4. I could work easily with most of students in this class. 1.3
5. I like most of students in this class. 1.5
6. If I were to participate in another group like this one, I would want it to include people who are very similar to the ones in this group. 1.9
7. This group is composed of people who fit together. 1.6
8. There are some people in this group who do not really like each other. 1.2
9. I am dissatisfied with my group. 1.10
10. Compared to other groups like mine, I feel my group is better than most. 1.4

#### **Group goal-orientedness (3.14, 3.20, 3.22, 3.24, 3.26, 3.28, 3.29, 3.31)**

11. Students put a lot of energy into what they do here. 3.20
12. Students are often "clockwatching" in this class. 3.22
13. Most students in this class really pay attention to what the teacher is saying. 3.24
14. Very few students take part in class discussions or activities. 3.26
15. A lot of students "doodle" or pass notes. 3.28
16. Students sometimes do extra work on their own in the class. 3.29
17. Students don't do much work in this class. 3.14
18. This class is more a social hour than a place to learn something. 3.31
19. It's not a good idea to show what you know in this class. 3.12



- 20. Students fool around a lot in this class 3.9
- 21. The teacher hardly ever has to tell students to calm down. 3.18
- 22. Students in this class don't usually get the work done if the teacher is absent. 3.30
- 23. Students in this class usually stop working if the teacher is not paying attention.  
3.17

### **Attitudes towards teacher**

#### *Competence and Teaching Style*

- 24. This teacher is good at English. 2.23
- 25. This teacher is a really good teacher. 2.2
- 26. Most students in this class do not understand the way this teacher teaches. 2.12
- 27. This teacher is a nice person. 2.20
- 28. This teacher has a good sense of humour. 2.26
- 29. This teacher is patient with students whose English is difficult to understand. 2.10
- 30. This teacher can get angry easily. 2.30
- 31. New ideas are always being tried out here 3.4
- 32. This teacher sometimes experiments with different ways of working in the  
classroom. 3.15
- 33. We don't always follow the coursebook. 3.34
- 34. Students have very little to say about how class time is spent 3.25
- 35. In this class, students are allowed to make up their own projects. 3.21
- 36. Students are often asked to choose how they want to learn. 3.23
- 37. Students in this class are often asked to teach others. 3.27

#### *Rapport and Commitment (2.4, 2.7, 2.16, 2.28, 2.14, 2.18, 2.22)*

- 38. The teacher takes a personal interest in students. 2.16

- 39. The teacher likes all students in this class. 2.28
- 40. This teacher likes picking up on some students in this class. 2.32
- 41. This teacher cares about the students. 2.7
- 42. The teacher goes out of his/her way to help students. 2.14
- 43. If students want to talk about something this teacher will find time to do it. 2.18
- 44. This teacher loves teaching. 2.22

### **Attitudes towards class/course**

#### *Useful/ Attractive* **2.1, 2.17, 2.5, 2.9, 2.13, 2.15, 2.24, 2.27, 2.29**

- 45. We learn things in the English classes that will be useful in the future. 2.1
- 46. I think the material we learn in the English classes will help me to use the language effectively. 2.17
- 47. For me learning English is a hobby. 2.29
- 48. Sometimes learning English is a burden for me. 2.13
- 49. Learning English is an exciting activity. 2.5
- 50. I really like learning English. 2.24
- 51. I wish we had more English classes at school 2.27
- 52. I would rather spend my time on subjects other than English. 2.9
- 53. Learning English is fun in this class. 2.15

#### *Difficult* **2.6, 2.25**

- 54. This class is too difficult for me. 2.25
- 55. Sometimes I feel I can hardly cope with the materials in this course. 2.6

### **Self-confidence/anxiety** **2.3, 2.8, 2.11, 2.19, 2.21, 2.31**

- 56. I am sure that I'll be able to learn English. 2.8
- 57. I am pleased with my current level of English. 2.19

58. I am satisfied with the work I do in the English classes. 2.3
59. When I have to speak in English classes, I often lose confidence 2.11
60. It embarrasses me to volunteer when I am speaking English in our English class.  
2.21
61. I don't contribute to class discussions because I am afraid that I will make a  
mistake. 2.31

**The Norms of Acceptance and Cooperation (3.2, 3.6, 3.3, 3.5, 3.8, 3.11, 3.13, 3.16, 3.19)**

62. Students in this class don't laugh when somebody makes a mistake in English.  
3.33
63. People who work hard usually get called "nerds". 3.6
64. Other students usually laugh at someone who tries to speak with real English  
accent. 3.2
65. When somebody does a good job, other students in this class are happy for  
him/her. 3.8
66. Students don't feel pressured to compete here. 3.16
67. If a student doesn't understand something, others will be happy to help him/her in  
this class. 3.11
68. Students in this class listen to what each of us has to say. 3.3
69. Students in this class respect other students even if their opinions are different. 3.5
70. Students in this class don't pay attention to other students. 3.19
71. It's hard for students in this class to get the attention of others. 3.13
72. Students don't interrupt the teacher when he/she's talking 3.10
73. Students don't interrupt each other when they are talking. 3.32

## Appendix N

# MOJE HODINY ANGLIČTINY



Milý študent/ Milá študentka

Obraciam sa na Vás s prosbou o spoluprácu. Pracujem na doktorandskom výskume (Ph.D.) na Univerzite v Nottinghamu (Veľká Británia) a Váš pán učiteľ/pani učiteľka sa rozhodol/rozhodla zapojiť do špeciálneho vzdelávacieho programu pre učiteľov anglického jazyka, ktorý je súčasťou tohto výskumu. Dôležitou časťou je dotazník, ktorý práve držíte v rukách a jeho cieľom je zistiť Vaše názory na hodiny angličtiny. Je nesmierne dôležité, aby Vaše odpovede boli úprimné, keďže len také

budú mať pre výsledky výskumu hlbší význam. Práve Vašími úprimnými odpoveďami máte Vy sami možnosť ovplyvniť spôsob vyučovania anglického jazyka na Vašej škole. Nejde o žiadny test, a teda v dotazníku neexistujú správne či nesprávne odpovede. Ubezpečujem Vás, že bude zachovaná absolútna anonymita (nemusíte sa podpísať) a Váš pán učiteľ / Vaša pani učiteľka bude informovaný/á len o celkových výsledkoch, ktoré mu/jej pomôžu v ďalšej príprave na hodiny. Ďakujem za Vašu ochotu spolupracovať, a tak sa osobne podieľať na skvalitňovaní výuky anglického jazyka na slovenských školách.

S vdakou

Magdaléna Kubányiová

School of English Studies, University of Nottingham, UK

**Teraz si, prosím, pozorne preštudujte pokyny, ako vyplňať dotazník.**

### Vysvetlivky:

- 1- Úplne nesúhlasím
- 2- Nesúhlasím
- 3- Nevieť sa vyjadriť
- 4- Súhlasím
- 5- Úplne súhlasím

### VZOR:

Žiaci tejto skupiny sa navzájom veľmi dobre poznajú.	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

Vyberte, prosím, vždy **jednu** odpoveď od 1-5 podľa toho, do akej miery súhlasíte/nesúhlasíte s daným tvrdením. Všetky tvrdenia v dotazníku sa týkajú **Vašich hodín angličtiny v tejto skupine v tomto školskom roku**. Ak sa na hodinách angličtiny v tejto skupine všetci veľmi dobre poznáte, Vaša odpoveď bude vyzeráť nasledovne:

Žiaci tejto skupiny sa navzájom veľmi dobre poznajú.	1	2	3	4	⑤
--	---	---	---	---	---

Ak si myslíte, že je len málo takých, ktorí sa navzájom poznajú, Vaša odpoveď môže vyzeráť nasledovne:

Žiaci tejto skupiny sa navzájom veľmi dobre poznajú.	1	②	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

Ak máte pocit, že sa v tejto skupine vôbec nepoznate, zakrúžkujte nasledovnú odpoveď:

Žiaci tejto skupiny sa navzájom veľmi dobre poznajú.	①	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

**Ak máte nejaké ďalšie otázky, prihláste sa, prosím, teraz, keďže v záujme zachovania dôveryhodnosti a objektivity výskumu nie je po začatí práce na dotazníku dovolená akákoľvek komunikácia s okolím.**

**Ak je Vám všetko jasné, čakajte, prosím, na pokyn obrátiť stranu.**

### Ja a moji spolužiaci

	Úplne nesúhlasím	Nesúhlasím	Neviem sa vyjadriť	Súhlasím	Úplne súhlasím
1. Žiaci tejto skupiny sa navzájom veľmi dobre poznajú.	1	2	3	4	5
2. V tejto skupine je zopár takých, ktorí sa nemajú v láske.	1	2	3	4	5
3. S väčšinou spolužiakov v tejto skupine by som dokázal(a) pracovať bez problémov.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Keď porovnávam, mám pocit, že moja skupina je lepšia než ostatné	1	2	3	4	5
5. Väčšinu žiakov tejto skupiny mám rád (rada).	1	2	3	4	5
6. Táto skupina pozostáva z ľudí, ktorí sa dobre dopĺňajú.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Žiaci v tejto skupine nemajú príliš veľký záujem navzájom sa spoznávať.	1	2	3	4	5
8. V tejto skupine sa nadviazalo veľa priateľstiev.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Keby som mal(a) byť v inej skupine, chcel(a) by som, aby tam boli ľudia podobní týmto.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Nie som spokojný(á) so svojou skupinou.	1	2	3	4	5

### Ja a hodiny angličtiny

1. Na hodinách angličtiny sa učíme veci, ktoré mi budú užitočné v budúcnosti.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Môj angličtinár je veľmi dobrý učiteľ.	1	2	3	4	5
3. So svojou prácou na hodinách angličtiny som spokojný(á).	1	2	3	4	5
4. Môj angličtinár sa málokedy „len tak“ rozpráva so žiakmi.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Učiť sa po anglicky je vzrušujúce.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Niekedy mám pocit, že materiály, ktoré používame na hodinách, sú pre mňa ťažké.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Môjmu učiteľovi na nás záleží.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Som si istý(á), že sa dokážem naučiť po anglicky.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Radšej by som venoval(a) viac času iným predmetom ako angličtine.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Môj angličtinár má trpezlivosť so žiakmi, ktorým je ťažko rozumieť po anglicky.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Keď mám na hodine niečo povedať po anglicky, často strácam odvahu.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Väčšine žiakov tejto skupiny nesedí štýl tohto učiteľa.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Učiť sa po anglicky je pre mňa niekedy záťažou.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Môj angličtinár sa ide roztrhať, aby pomohol svojim žiakom.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Na týchto hodinách je učenie sa po anglicky zábavou.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Môj angličtinár sa osobne zaujíma o žiakov v tejto skupine.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Učivo, ktoré na hodinách preberáme, mi pomôže efektívne používať angličtinu.	1	2	3	4	5

### Ja a hodiny angličtiny (pokračovanie)

	Úplne nesúhlasím	Nesúhlasím	Neviem sa vyjadriť	Súhlasím	Úplne súhlasím
18. Keď žiaci niečo potrebujú, môj angličtinár si nájde na nich čas.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Som spokojný(á) s úrovňou mojej angličtiny.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Môj angličtinár je taký dobrák.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Cítim sa trápne, keď sa mám prihlásiť povedať niečo po anglicky.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Môj angličtinár má rád svoju prácu.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Môj učiteľ je dobrý v angličtine.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Veľmi rád (rada) sa učím po anglicky.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Tieto hodiny sú pre mňa príliš ťažké.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Môj učiteľ má dobrý zmysel pre humor.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Chcel(a) by som, aby sme mali viac hodín angličtiny.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Môj učiteľ nás má všetkých rád.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Angličtina je pre mňa hobby.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Môj učiteľ sa vie ľahko nahnevať.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Nezapájam sa do diskusií na hodinách, pretože mám strach, že urobím chybu.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Mám pocit, že na niektorých žiakoch môj angličtinár sedí.	1	2	3	4	5

### Ako to tu chodí

1. Angličtinár nás vždy opravuje, keď hovoríme po anglicky.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Keď sa niekto snaží rozprávať ako rodený Angličan, ostatní sa mu väčšinou smejú.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Žiaci v tejto skupine sa zaujímajú o názor druhých.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Na angličtine zvykneme skúšať nové veci.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Žiaci sa vzájomne rešpektujú aj keď ich názory sú odlišné	1	2	3	4	5
6. Tí, čo sa snažia, sú „bifľoši“.	1	2	3	4	5
7. V tejto skupine je pomýliť sa normálne.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Keď sa niekomu niečo podarí, ostatní sa z toho tešia.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Žiaci na angličtine robia všetko možné, len nie to, čo majú	1	2	3	4	5
10. Žiaci neskáču angličtinárovi do reči.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Ak niekto niečomu nerozumie, ostatní mu ochotne pomôžu.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Ukázať čo vieš na týchto hodinách neletí.	1	2	3	4	5
13. V tejto skupine je ťažké získať si pozornosť spolužiakov.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Na týchto hodinách nič nerobíme.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Naš angličtinár občas experimentuje s novými spôsobmi práce na hodinách.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Žiaci tu nie sú pod tlakom medzi sebou súťažiť.	1	2	3	4	5

**Ako to tu chodí (pokračovanie)**

	Úplne nesúhlasím	Nesúhlasím	Neviem sa vyjadriť	Súhlasím	Úplne súhlasím
17. Keď učiteľ nedáva pozor, žiaci zvyčajne prestanú pracovať.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Naš angličtinár nás len málokedy musí napomínať, aby sme boli ticho.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Žiaci v tejto skupine si nevšímajú jeden druhého.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Žiaci vynakladajú veľa úsilia pri práci na hodinách angličtiny.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Na týchto hodinách si žiaci môžu vymýšľať svoje vlastné úlohy.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Žiaci tu často pozerajú na hodinky.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Často si môžeme vybrať ako sa chceme učiť.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Väčšina študentov dáva na angličtine pozor.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Žiaci takmer vôbec nerozhodujú o tom, čo sa robí na hodinách.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Len málo žiakov sa na angličtine zapája do aktivít a diskusií.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Žiaci majú na angličtine často za úlohu vysvetliť učivo iným.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Veľa žiakov si na hodinách len tak čmára alebo posielajú lístočky.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Žiaci občas aj sami od seba urobia na hodinách niečo navyše.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Žiaci obyčajne nerobia nič, keď v triede nie je učiteľ.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Chodíme sem viac preto, aby sme sa stretli s kamarátmi než sa učili.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Žiaci si navzájom neskáču do reči.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Žiaci sa na týchto hodinách nesmejú, keď sa niekto pomýli.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Na týchto hodinách nejdeme vždy len podľa knihy.	1	2	3	4	5

**Moje údaje:**

Vek: .....

Pohlavie: Muž / Žena

**ĎAKUJEM ZA VAŠE ÚPRIMNÉ ODPOVEDE.**

## Appendix O

### TRANSCRIPTION NOTES:

- T = Teacher
- S = Student; Ss = Students.
- Teacher and/or students speak L1
- (2) Silence in seconds.
- *(field notes in italics and parenthesis)*
- - at the end of one turn and - at the beginning of the following one refers to interruption.
- |simultaneous speaking|
- [insertion of contextual information that is needed in order to understand some references]
- Timing of the recording is given in minutes and seconds
- xxx – inaudible content