Learning beyond boundaries: voices from the European Centre for Modern Languages

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Abstract

The ECML has been supporting the professional growth of language teacher educators for just over 25 years. Underpinning this work is a commitment to Europe's linguistic and cultural diversity and a belief in education which values all languages in an individual's repertoire.

I set out to understand how professional growth, plurilingual education and the ECML converge, with a view to optimising ECML learning opportunities. Through an analysis of why the professional growth of language teacher educators matters, and what it looks like, I engage with the complex and problematic construct of plurilingual education, arguing for its rightful place at the heart of this learning. I adopt a qualitative, narrative-based methodology, foregrounding the voices of six language teacher educators through semi-structured interviews and a focused group conversation. I present the analysis in the form of narrative vignettes leading into key themes, reviewed through various complementary theoretical lenses, nesting within the overarching framework of complexity theory.

The study reveals that language teacher educators struggle to articulate their own learning needs; it identifies critical features that best support this learning; it acknowledges the challenges in implementing plurilingual education and the importance of differentiated pedagogies within a holistic, value-based approach to language education. It indicates that plurilingual education has reached a crossroads: needed more than ever in a climate of growing nationalism and xenophobia, yet widely misunderstood – seen by some as a dogma, by others as a threat to their professional identity.

I demonstrate that just as plurilingual education cannot be reduced to a content domain, nor can the ECML be considered simply a context for learning. Instead, it is a transnational mediator, crossing boundaries between languages, cultures and pedagogic traditions, between research, policy and practice. I conclude by urging the ECML to exploit more fully its unique boundary-crossing characteristics and engender transformative learning.

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Declaration

I, Sarah Breslin, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

Chapter 1: Rationale, context and purpose

1.1 Introduction

> Professional development of teacher educators is too important not only to teacher education, but also to the educational system as a whole, to be left in a virginal state regarding research and documentation. (Smith, 2003, p.213-4)

In the intervening years, the research community has responded to Smith's plea and a growing body of literature is starting to emerge which focuses on the professional growth of teacher educators (Brody and Hadar, 2018), recognising them as a distinct professional group (Boei *et al.*, 2015). At the same time but in parallel, teachers are wrestling with the increasing diversity and complexity of today's classrooms (Ben-Peretz and Flores, 2018). This study considers the contribution of the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (hereafter, ECML or the Centre), to the professional growth of language teacher educators. As an integral part of this, it also considers the Centre's role in developing mindsets which understand the need for, and value of, approaches to learning and teaching which are culturally and linguistically responsive, and which view all the languages in a learner's repertoire as a resource (hereafter referred to as plurilingual education, defined and problematised below). This study therefore lies at the intersection of these two critical fields of inquiry.

In this first chapter I begin with the rationale for this study and a suggestion of its timeliness in the current socio-political climate. I then summarise the main arguments from the two critical fields before providing the reader with a description of the very specific context of my study, the ECML. I address my motivation for undertaking this research, describing my place within it, not as the outsider looking in but as a subjective co-constructor, in line with my interpretivist stance. I then sharpen the reader's understanding of the specific aims and objectives of the study and of the actual research questions by prefacing them with a detailed problematisation of certain key terms therein, before concluding with the parameters and limitations of my research and an overview of the subsequent chapters.

By the end of the chapter, my wish is not only to have convinced the reader of the importance of such a study, but to have stimulated their intellectual curiosity and desire to continue to accompany me on this journey of discovery, towards what I hope will be a small, but meaningful, contribution to knowledge.

1.2 Rationale

In 2005, and originally with specific reference to the high levels of population mix in British urban areas as a result of post-cold war migration, the sociologist Steven Vertovec (2007), coined the term "superdiversity"; a decade later and the term has come to characterise large areas of Europe, affected by unprecedented levels of immigration. This crisis, coming as it did when the impact of the 2008 financial crash could still be felt, has fuelled a toxic mix of increased intolerance, xenophobia, radicalisation and a retreat into nationalism, which together pose a serious threat to the democratic foundations of the entire European project (Carnegie Europe, 2016; Council of Europe, 2017c). Such a socio-political context creates a dilemma for education: an enormous challenge on the one hand, with teachers across Europe feeling ill-equipped to deal with the social, linguistic and cultural heterogeneity it brings to their classrooms (Van Der Wildt *et al*., 2017), hindered further by policies and curricula which are no longer fit-for-purpose (Gkaintartzi *et al*., 2015); on the other, an opportunity, as the importance of education's contribution towards the building of more inclusive societies is recognised (Eurydice, 2016; Council of Europe, 2017b). Against this backdrop, the foregrounding in current education research of the professional development needs of teachers in the area of language education should come as no surprise. In a scan across the latest editions and most read articles of nearly twenty peer-reviewed education journals, questions of inclusion (Flecha and Soler, 2013), of pedagogical approaches such as translanguaging (Melo-Pfeifer and de Araújo E Sá, 2018) or pluriliteracies (Coyle *et al.*, 2018), of the kind of language policies needed (Zuniga *et al*., 2018) at a time when these are often "based on monolingual ideologies" (Pulinx *et al*., 2017, p.542), and of the importance of understanding and challenging teachers' beliefs about multilingualism (Haukås, 2016), all emerge as dominant themes.

The same cannot be said, however, of the professional learning needs of language teacher educators, who rarely feature in current research (Sharkey, 2018). We pay scant attention to how they develop, forgetting that they too are learners (Yuan and Lee, 2014), and know little of the features that contribute to their effectiveness (Yuan and Hu, 2017). Moreover, in the broader field of research on the professional growth of teacher educators, of which language teacher educators are a subset and which itself is still in its infancy, recent cries have been heard for further investigation which focuses on teacher educators' attitudes and beliefs (Boei *et al.*, 2015; Meeus *et al*., 2018) and on their "negotiation of dissonance" (Brody and Hadar, 2018, p.51). This neglect is striking in view of the critical role played by teacher educators, and in particular by language teacher educators, in supporting teachers to address current challenges. It is all the more striking if we pause for a moment to consider the implications for society of failing to do so: the social isolation of many

young people who are unable to reach their academic potential, access employment or actively participate as citizens will only lead to the further fragmentation of Europe and a rise in social unrest.

Plurilingual education underpins the work of the ECML, whose main target group are language teacher educators. The timing and focus, therefore, of my own small contribution to this lacuna, given the ECML's ability to cross the boundary between these two fields, seems ripe.

1.3 Summary of key insights from the literature

Given the scarcity of research focusing specifically on language teacher educators, it is necessary to widen the focus and draw on two contingent fields: the professional growth of language teachers themselves, on the one hand, and of teacher educators in general, on the other. In this section I will briefly outline the main insights from these bodies of literature as well as key insights on plurilingual education. A more detailed analysis, which crosses boundaries and draws on insights from other related fields, will be addressed in **Chapter 2, the Literature Review**.

1.3.1 The professional growth of language teachers and teacher educators

There is a considerable amount of overlap in the insights from research on both language teachers and teacher educators: learning together in communities of practice seems to be the preferred medium (Pinho and Andrade, 2015; Van der Klink *et al.*, 2017); beliefs and attitudes are recognised as key, but as difficult to influence without ample opportunity to discuss and challenge them (Golombek, 2015); both groups are committed to "praxis", a principle which Pennycook (1999) defines as "the mutually constitutive roles of theory grounded in practice and practice grounded in theory" (p.342), with language teachers more focused on concrete, contextualised examples (Johnson, 2015), and teacher educators on reflection and inquiry (Meijer *et al.*, 2017), and on looking beyond the local to the global (Snoek *et al.*, 2011). Teacher educators, however, not only have far fewer opportunities for professional growth (Dengerink *et al.*, 2015), but also have different learning needs in relation to their multifaceted role (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2017), with the resultant demand for a specific pedagogy of teacher education (Loughran, 2011).

1.3.2 Plurilingual education

The extensive body of literature on different aspects of plurilingual education is indicative of a growing awareness of this construct and of increasing efforts to implement it in a range of educational contexts (Dakin, 2017; Starkey-Perret and Narcy-Combes, 2017). Yet despite, or perhaps because of this, related terminology has also multiplied (García, 2018), and confusion abounds

(Castellotti, 2010). The confusion goes beyond the terminological, with fundamental misunderstandings around aims, around individual and societal benefits and around appropriate pedagogical approaches. These challenges are intensified by the breadth and complexity of a construct which reaches far beyond the language classroom, affecting as it does, all teachers and all learning (Kirwan, 2013; Council of Europe, 2015). An unintended consequence of the all-encompassing nature of plurilingual education, is the unsettling effect it is having on language teachers' sense of professional identity (Larsen-Freeman and Freeman, 2008). In an era of globalisation and mass migration, where many European classrooms are multilingual and multicultural, this confusion and complexity risk undermining plurilingual education precisely when it is most needed.

1.3.3 Identifying the gap

By combining both sets of insights – the need for, and the kind of, professional learning opportunities for (language) teacher educators (Vanassche *et al.*, 2015) with the challenges faced by (language) teachers in understanding and enacting plurilingual education (Tanghe and Park, 2016), a clear and worrying gap emerges; it is this gap that this small-scale study focused on the ECML, hopes to bridge.

The reader may be wondering why I have chosen to bracket the word "language" when combined with either "teachers" or "teacher educators", a linguistic device I will use repeatedly throughout this thesis. There are three reasons for this: firstly, because language teachers, like language teacher educators, represent a subset of the wider group; secondly, because the ECML involves people working in education, such as inspectors, whose responsibilities go beyond languages education; and thirdly, because of the aforementioned scarcity of research focusing solely on language teacher educators.

1.4 The specific context of the ECML

Given that the ECML is the only institution of its kind in Europe, it is important to provide the reader with a brief description of what the Centre is and how it operates, so that the context of the research can be better understood. It is an Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe. This means that although it is part of the Council's programme of activities, it is funded solely by those member states who wish to participate in this specific area of cooperation. New member states can join at any time, hence the adjective "enlarged". It currently has thirty-three member states, is hosted by Austria and based in the city of Graz.

The Council of Europe is the largest European intergovernmental organisation whose three founding principles are democracy, human rights and the rule of law (Council of Europe, 2017d). These broader objectives matter: the Council's "principles on language and education… their legitimacy is derived from (these) higher political principles" (Council of Europe, 2007, p. 31) and the Centre's activities are contextualised within "the framework of cultural co-operation […] respecting the rich linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe" (Council of Europe, 1998b, article 1). Within this wider political frame, it has a specific mission to support the implementation of language policies and promote innovative approaches to language learning and teaching (ibid.), and currently does so by organising a four-year programme of development projects, think tanks, conferences and in-country training events.

The focus and structure of the programme are fluid, continuously evolving in response to changing needs in member states, though development projects have long been a key feature. These are led by a team of between four and six experts, usually language teacher educators, who, over a 3-4-year period, work together to produce research-informed, innovative and practical resources focused on a specific area of language education, such as early language learning. Unique to these projects is the organisation of one project workshop, in which the team shares its ideas and draws on the feedback and expertise of a wide pool of language professionals from all thirty-thee member states. These language professionals assume a variety of roles, depending on the nature of the project and the stage of the project at which the workshop takes place. These roles include debating the relevance and applicability of the planned resource in their individual national contexts; making team members aware of related developments and/or research; and piloting and disseminating the planned resource.

There remains, however, a marked gap between the level of engagement with the ECML of the project team members and the workshop participants, even if the greater involvement of the former is still secondary to their main professional activity and rarely amounts to more than ten days a year. This distinction needs to be borne in mind when considering the contribution of the Centre to language teacher educators' professional growth. Moreover, although project team members usually volunteer as individual experts to take part, others who participate in project workshops are nominated by their national authorities or by the international non-governmental organisation (INGO) to which they belong, based on a participant profile produced by the project team. It is the same national authorities, usually through a ministerial representative from each member state, (education, culture or foreign affairs) who make up the Centre's Governing Board, the ultimate decision-making body, responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Centre's work and its finances.

Project workshops, together with a range of other activities including think tanks or colloquia, represent one example of how the ECML realises its mission to ensure collaboration and exchange among "the various actors in the field" and to organise the "training of multipliers" (Council of Europe, 1998b). Who are these "various actors" and what is understood by "multipliers"? The first question highlights one of the unique features of the ECML: while language teacher educators remain its key target group, the Centre also involves a broad spectrum of education professionals with an interest in language education in its activities, including teachers, inspectors, curriculum developers, researchers and policy-makers, who learn from each other in a community of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). If the first term defines their roles, the second defines their responsibilities: when they return to their countries they become "multipliers", mediating between the European experience and their own contexts in whatever way they consider most appropriate; for example, by organising a similar professional learning opportunity for colleagues, by writing an academic article or through other activities focusing on dissemination, adaptation or implementation.

As I hope to demonstrate in the coming chapters, these contextual elements, part of the multifaceted nature of the Centre, do more than just set the scene: in accordance with sociocultural theory, the starting point for my theoretical framework, they contribute to the dynamic interplay of "historically situated cultural tools and artefacts" (University of Glasgow, 2013), which in turn mediate this entire research process, impacting on my role as researcher and on the insights which emerge from the data around the kind of professional growth engendered by the ECML. They also evidence the boundary-crossing nature of the Centre: across nations, languages, professional roles and sectors, pedagogical traditions and across policy, research, teacher education and practice.

1.5 My place in the research

> […] the biographical journeys of researchers greatly influence their values, their research questions, and the knowledge they construct. (Banks, 1998, p.4)

Over the last five years I have often asked myself what motivated me to undertake this study and as my reflexivity developed, I became increasingly aware that my motivation was operating on two distinct yet inextricably linked levels – the professional and the personal. In fact, as the reader will quickly discover, this interweaving of personal and professional, both for myself and for my research participants, runs like a leitmotif through the study. Let me begin with the personal, all-the-time conscious that this reflexivity must not become "self-indulgent, narcissistic and tiresome" (Pillow, 2003, p.176). Looking back, I feel there are two key moments that contributed to my motivation, one of extreme joy; the other, of extreme despair. The moment of joy is too long ago to relate directly to

my research, but it marks the beginning of my passion for languages, my belief in teachers as agents of change and my subsequent career path. Foreign languages were not part of the primary curriculum in Scotland in the nineteen-seventies, but an inspirational teacher decided to introduce her ten year old pupils to the delights of "*Mme Slack, Monsieur Patapouf et le chien Cliquot*", courtesy of Glasgow Educational Television Service (Kirkland, 2015). A seed was planted in me which grew and blossomed, with the personal merging into the professional. Becoming Executive Director of the ECML in October 2013 felt like my dream job, allowing me to continue in my chosen field of language education, now at European level, in a role that meant I could use my languages on a daily basis. Instead, however, it triggered a rather disabling case of imposter syndrome as I found myself responsible for a programme of activities where many of the experts involved were from the university sector, mainly from the fields of education and applied linguistics. Despite more than a quarter of a century in both language teaching and management roles in different sectors and in different countries, I found myself surrounded by academic researchers for the first time in my professional life. And even though I was not directly involved in their ECML activities, activities which are not considered research activities as such, but are rather focused on the production of practical resources or on policy implementation, I oscillated in that first year from feelings of confidence in my own knowledge-base which was rooted in policy and practice, to being overwhelmed by a sense of my own ignorance. As time went by and I got to know and understand the workings of the Centre and its stakeholders better, the pendulum began to steady a little but the nagging sensation that familiarity with research insights and with the research process itself constituted a missing element in my repertoire, never went away.

At the same time, doubts about the ECML itself began to crystallise in my mind and therein lies the purely professional motivation: with the Centre approaching its 25th anniversary, I found myself questioning if it actually embodied the conviction expressed by the Committee of Ministers when they agreed to its continuation after an initial 3-year trial period, and wondered if the evidence might be found by attempting to answer the questions they themselves posed:

> Convinced that […] the European Centre for Modern Languages will contribute significantly and specifically […] to respect for the rich linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe, which leads to questions around the kind of learning the centre wishes to engender. (Council of Europe, 1998b)

I already had substantial evidence from a number of sources that learning was taking place and that overall satisfaction rates were high, such as from my own observation of ECML activities, from ongoing participant feedback, from reports from ECML external consultants and from a recent end-of-programme evaluation (ECML, 2017b). However I felt that if I could identify the nature of that

learning or any key contributing features, I would be better placed to consider how to optimise it and to respond to challenges around long-term impact (King *et al.*, 2011), challenges which could, in the current turbulent political times, threaten the sustainability of the Centre. So it was that concerns of both a personal and professional nature merged, motivating me to embark on the EdD and providing me with that all-important justification for undertaking research (Clandinin *et al.*, 2007). Wellington and Sikes (2006) suggest that doing a doctorate impacts on "two domains of personal growth: the cognitive and the affective" (p.733), with the affective relating to "respect, confidence and self-esteem" (ibid.); in my case it is difficult to see where one domain stops and the other one starts.

In the two initial years of the EdD programme I came to recognise and articulate my interpretivist positionality and to understand that I could not be separate from the research I was about to embark on; given my desire to further my professional expertise, it was no coincidence that I wanted to investigate professional growth at the ECML and my own learning became an intrinsic part of this process, woven into the very fabric of my study. Macalister (2016) reminds us that much of the research on cognition is concerned with the influence of prior learning experiences, so it is understandable that when I began to read around this topic, the teacher in me was instinctively attracted to teacher research which gives "legitimacy" to "teachers' ways of knowing" (Johnson, 2006, p.241) and to research on teacher beliefs. From there, conscious of the typical profile of those involved in ECML activities, I widened the search to include teacher educators, seeking out where possible, studies related to the field of language education. The journey led me to explore narrative-based methodologies, often applied in these fields of research (Barkhuizen *et al.*, 2014). From these meanderings, and not without regular and often painful soul-searching and self-doubt, I developed a concrete research proposal resulting in this study, a study which fuses my love of languages, my belief in the importance of quality (language) education and my commitment to the values of the Council of Europe.

It has been, and continues to be, a learning experience in which the construction of my new identity as a researcher has grown out of and feeds back into, my other professional identities, with the entire "configuration of meanings" constantly evolving (Geijsel and Meijers, 2005, p.425).

1.6 The study itself

1.6.1 Terminology

This section will focus on the aims and objectives of my study and how I hope these are realised through an analysis of the data generated by my research questions. First of all, however, I would like to elucidate my interpretation and usage of three potentially ambiguous and often contested terms as I believe this will add clarity and precision to the reader's understanding of my aims and objectives and of the research questions themselves. Neither my usage nor my interpretation is random; both are embedded in, and emergent from, the specific context of the study.

Let me begin with "professional growth" and related terms such as "professional or in-service training", "professional development" or "professional learning". All are used in the literature, sometimes interchangeably, often with nuanced, rather than "watertight" differences (Mann, 2005, p.104). For some, the term "training" is suggestive of a "top-down" model while the term "development" is indicative of a continuous process (ibid.); for others, "development" has its limitations because it implies "more and better" of the same, therefore excluding the possibility of fundamental change (Easton, 2008, p.755). Fraser *et al.* (2007) make a further distinction between "learning" and "development" when collocated with the word "professional", using "professional learning" to indicate specific changes in teachers' beliefs, knowledge or skills and "professional development" for more general changes occurring over longer periods of time. When it comes to teacher educators, Czerniawski *et al.* (2017) use both "development" and "learning" as "terms to describe the formal and informal processes that enable teacher educators to improve their professional practice throughout their careers" (p.128).

After wrestling with these nuanced differences for many months, I finally opted for "professional growth" because it can be considered a more holistic term which encompasses both learning and development (Taylor, 2017), one which sits more comfortably with the ecological nature of my study, in that the context is central and all elements are "inherently relational" (Casanave, 2012, p.646). I recognise, however, that my preferred term is not always applicable, a problem further compounded by the fact that I undertook some of my data generation in French. In preparation for this, I spoke to several native speaker colleagues who all agreed that "développement professionel" was the most commonly used French term. However, in the course of one of my research interviews, a discussion arose in which terminology in both languages was briefly compared. When I explained how I differentiated between "development" and "learning" in English, my participant, Robert wisely remarked:

> Ah, well, I would have understood them exactly the other way round! Because in French "development" is really what comes from you. You are growing...."Professional learning" - I would rather have imagined as what I have to learn because I am being asked to learn it. There, you see, maybe it's this sort of thing that sometimes prevents Francophones and Anglophones from understanding each other. (2018)

At the time, I logged this merely as an interesting aside; little did I know that by the end of my data analysis, not only would other linguistic challenges around terminology have arisen, but the notion of different pedagogic traditions and the resultant tensions, would emerge as a key insight from the data. These tensions will be considered in more detail in **Chapter Five**.

Let me now turn to the term "language teacher educator". Whilst it is true that the ECML is unique in bringing together different actors in the field of language education at European level, the focus on "language" is not the only unifying factor. Most are in "a second order role" (Murray and Male, 2005, p.138), somewhat removed from in-school teaching, with limited direct impact on classroom practice. This is particularly the case while they are involved with the ECML, given its European and supranational nature. Where classroom teachers do participate, they usually have an additional responsibility for organising or supporting professional development activities. I needed a collective noun for these individuals and could have chosen Perry and Boylan's "professional development facilitators" (2018); instead, I chose "language teacher educators" because the Latin roots of the word "educator" combine the notion of development and growth ("educere" meaning to "lead out" and "educare" meaning "to raise, to nourish"), (EDUHUTCH, 2018). This choice is not without its challenges because the term "teacher educator" is usually restricted to professionals in higher education teacher training institutions, working with pre- or in-service teachers (Dengerink *et al.*, 2015), though sometimes it is expanded to include school-based staff carrying out similar roles (Vanassche *et al.*, 2015). My use of the term, however, is not restricted to either of these definitions but reflects the much broader definition which emerged from a series of peer-learning activities organised by the European Commission (2013b), a definition which more adequately accounts for the wide range of education professionals involved in the work of the Centre:

> Teacher Educators are all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers. (p.8)

At times, even this broader definition is not broad enough because the adverb "actively" cannot be applied to every single participant in ECML activities. There are, therefore, a few instances within this report where I use the all-encompassing term "language professionals" instead.

The third term I will problematise, and probably the most contested terms of all, is one which is key to my research because it embodies the Council of Europe's values and underpins its entire

approach to language education - "plurilingualism". A Google search of online dictionaries already reveals inconsistencies: sometimes it is defined as fluency in several languages or as the ability to draw on different languages to communicate, or simply as a synonym for multilingualism. While these definitions may be sufficient in certain contexts, neither individually nor combined do they manage to capture the complexities of what the Council intended when it first defined the term in the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001):

> […] the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent, has proficiency of varying degrees, in several languages, and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw. (p. 168)

The emphasis is on the individual, on his or her agency and ability to develop competences to different degrees and in different languages, in part by understanding how these interrelate, but this same individual also has a social responsibility to use these competences to communicate across linguistic and cultural divides. The Council differentiates between plurilingualism and multilingualism, with the latter simply referring to a place or an institution where more than one language is present – the crossing of linguistic and cultural boundaries may be completely absent. In the literature, however, the term "multilingualism" is often used to cover both definitions, though even here inconsistencies abound: "the term 'multilingualism' is itself a contested one. Usage is not settled or universal." (Kelly, 2009, p.iv). If the values in the original definition of plurilingualism are only implicit, by the time the Council published the final version of language policy guidelines for its member states (2007), plurilingualism had become an explicit "educational value" (ibid., p.17), with implications reaching far beyond the classroom:

> Plurilingualism is at once connected to the legal protection of minority groups, the preservation of Europe's linguistic heritage […] and the creation of a feeling of belonging to Europe in the context of democratic citizenship. (ibid., p.31)

The same publication uses the umbrella term "plurilingual education"; where my references to plurilingualism relate directly to education, I also use this umbrella term, except where I am citing literature or quoting from my data.

1.6.2 Aims and objectives

My overall aim was to uncover, explore and gain a critical insight into the professional growth of language teacher educators, as the ECML's key target group (Breslin, 2017), including the role played by plurilingual education, and to do so through the prism of the Centre. In order to achieve these aims, I needed to analyse and deconstruct the complex construct of professional growth and to

identify the factors that support the process of professional growth. I also needed to deconstruct the notion of plurilingual education and identity how beliefs around its value are impacted, assuming that "the enactment of plurilingual and intercultural education demands […] the ability to […] interpret and revise previous mindsets" (Pinho and Andrade, 2015, p.22).

Of course much of that evidence can be found in the vast amounts of participant and wider stakeholder survey responses collected on an on-going basis, but while these methods yield important quantitative and qualitative data, they lend themselves more easily to a focus on the Centre itself, leaving little space for the kind of in-depth questioning and reflection I wanted to undertake with individuals, in line with my interpretivist stance and with recent research trends in the field that demonstrate a shift towards a focus more on teacher educators themselves than on their institutions (Kelchtermans *et al.*, 2018).

In order to give voice to different perspectives, I adopted a narrative-based methodology, an approach which is comfortable with a "plurality of understanding" (Allwright, 2005, p.361) and methods which created the time and space for deep reflection and engagement in a "reciprocal, interpretive meaning-making" exercise (Scarino, 2014, p.386).

I began my data generation with six individual semi-structured interviews with language teacher educators who have different "second-order roles" (Murray and Male, 2005) in different countries, focusing primarily on their personal professional stories, including their experience of the ECML and the wider Council of Europe; key data from these interviews then provided the basis for a rich discussion and exchange of different opinions, when the same participants took part in a focused group conversation, a term borrowed from Lamb (2005) and explained in more detail in **Section 3.4.6 Determining the methods.**

I hope that recommendations from this study will help optimise the learning opportunities provided by the Centre in the future so that it functions as a true "mediational space" (Golombek and Johnson, 2004, p.307) that renders boundaries permeable and results in transformative learning that goes beyond these boundaries.

1.6.3 Research questions

My aims and objectives were ultimately reconfigured in my research questions; "ultimately", because, like the study itself, the initial research questions generated further questions and evolved in an iterative process of refinement. If at times unsettling, I came to understand this constant change process as the hallmark of qualitative research (Walliman, 2006) that involves

"understanding the unfolding lives and perspectives of others" (Agee, 2009, p.432), a process which resulted in the following final research questions:

How do language teacher educators perceive involvement in ECML activities in relation to their professional growth?

- *What role does plurilingual education play?*
- *How might professional learning opportunities at the ECML be optimised?*

I chose to organise my research questions into one broad overarching question and two specific sub-questions. The overarching question was formulated to ensure it does not assume that the ECML contributes to the professional growth of language teacher educators; in a similar vein, the first sub-question was designed to leave room for critical engagement with the construct of plurilingual education and for different understandings of it, including ones that do not necessarily equate to the notion of "plurilingualism as an educational value" (Council of Europe, 2007, p.17). I believe it is helpful at this point to indicate some of the limitations in terms of the scope of these questions: my study involves six research participants and such a small sample cannot be considered representative of all language teacher educators; they are all very familiar with plurilingual education from the perspective of the Council of Europe and have each experienced the ECML in varying ways. My aim, however, was not to generalise, but instead, to privilege their voices and their lived experiences, in the hope that these "resonate in ways that help us to learn and form connections with others" (Caine *et al.*, 2013, p.583).

1.7 Scope

This study concerns the professional growth of language teacher educators, with a specific focus on the ECML and the ways in which the Centre has influenced six individuals, including their perception of how it has influenced others. Given the context, there is less emphasis on certain aspects of "what forms high-quality learning" (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2017, p.560) according to the literature, such as practice-based learning (Snoek *et al.*, 2011), or continuous career-long learning (Cochran-Smith, 2003). The same is true for domains within the different conceptual models of professional growth considered in this study, domains which are more directly related to impact on classroom practice, such as Clarke and Hollingsworth's "domain of consequence" (2002, p.950). In a similar vein, the range of fields of literature tangential to the work of the ECML – philosophies of education, professional identity, cognition or teacher research, to name but a few – makes it impossible to engage with all of these comprehensively; instead, I focus in on those aspects most directly relevant to the study, allowing the fuller range to provide a broad framework for analysis and interpretation.

1.8 Organisation

I have organised this thesis in six chapters; in this first introductory chapter I have outlined the purpose and the context for my research. **Chapter Two, The Literature Review,** summarises the latest trends and burning issues from a range of relevant fields, including language education and policy at the Council of Europe and its mediation in national contexts, a critical engagement with the construct of plurilingual education and an exploration of the professional growth of language teachers and teacher educators. In **Chapter Three, Methodology,** I consider the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of my chosen methodology, detailing and justifying the practical procedures and specific methods used for generating my data and the ways in which these data were analysed and interpreted. I present, interpret and question my analysis in two distinct but complementary ways, firstly through participant vignettes in **Chapter Four** and from there to a focus on themes in **Chapter Five**.

I draw my thesis to a close in **Chapter Six** by returning to my research questions and my most significant insights, considering the relation between the two. I then outline what I believe to be my contribution to knowledge and practice, taking account of its limitations. I discuss the implications for future research, as well as the resultant challenges and implications for the ECML. I conclude by reflecting on what this doctoral journey has meant for my own professional growth.

As narrative research, I have chosen to present it as such, as "the unfolding of the research process over time, presenting not only the processes involved in the planning, design and implementation of the project, but also the researcher's involvement (including their practices and reflections) at every step of the way" (Barkhuizen *et al*., 2014, p.108-9), with ethical considerations, critical (re)-engagement with literature and with theory, woven through and across the chapters in an iterative and reflective manner.

1.9 Conclusion

I concluded the introduction to this chapter by expressing the hope that the reader would want to join me on my "journey", a metaphor commonly used in contexts of professional growth (Jasman, 2010). I now end this chapter by extending that metaphor: I hope I have now completed my role as travel agent, with the reader clear about the destination and equipped with the roadmap to reach it. I look forward to my forthcoming role as cartographer.

Chapter 2: The Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Given the dearth of literature on the target group in focus, language teacher educators (Yuan, 2015), and the multifaceted and unique nature of the locus, the ECML, it is difficult to situate this study within a "coherent body of literature" (Wellington *et al.*, 2005, p.61); instead, it sits not only within the complexities of research into multi/plurilingualism, but at a crossroads of a range of different, but interrelated fields, each with its own sub-fields and all in constant flux. In this chapter I begin from the inside, taking the multiple strands of the ECML's mission and objectives as my starting point to identify related bodies of literature. I then move outwards to engage in a "rich dialectic" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p.9), crossing multiple boundaries within and between these fields, in order to extract the elements of greatest relevance, before drawing the threads back together and revealing a gap in this tapestry, which my research will attempt to bridge.

2.2 Identifying the fields: from the Centre outwards and back again

In **Chapter One** I provided the reader with an introduction to the context of the ECML by drawing on Resolution 98 (11) of the Committee of Ministers (Council of Europe, 1998b). I now return to this Resolution because, as the cornerstone reference document, it also details the specific mission and objectives of the Centre, both strategic and operational (ibid.). Taken together, these range from the very concrete – "to collect and disseminate examples of good practice" and "to focus on the practice of language learning and teaching" through the specific – "to support programme-related networks and research projects" and "to train multipliers" (appendix, article 1), towards the less tangible and more value-laden – "[…] respecting the rich linguistic and cultural diversity in Europe" (ibid.), reminding us of the broader political aims of the Council of Europe itself. Moreover, the document makes explicit reference to the ongoing work of the Council in Strasbourg in the field of languages, in order to stress that while the specific nature of the Centre's activities may be new, they do not exist in a vacuum. How does this translate into identifiable bodies of knowledge? In addition to the obvious need to review the Council's contribution to language education, it also points us towards research on the implementation of these developments at national level, and more broadly towards research on aspects of language pedagogies. It also points us to research on the professional growth of both (language) teachers and teacher educators, and in particular the place therein, of values, philosophies of education and communities of practice. **Figure 1** on the following page provides a visualisation of these interconnected domains.
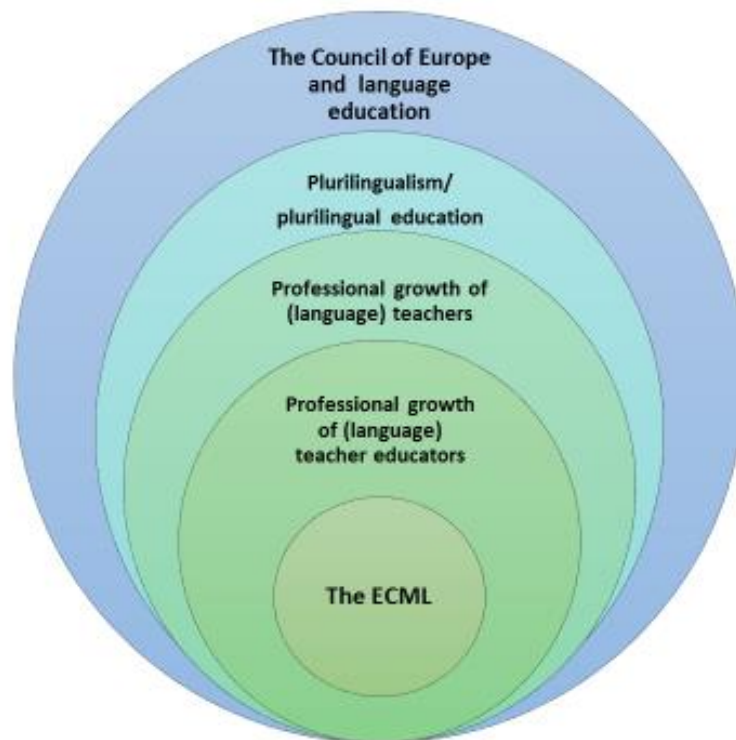
Figure 1: Interconnected domains and the ECML

I will begin with the wider Council of Europe and its work in the field of language education, then move in ever decreasing circles until I reach the epicentre – that "point of intersection" referred to in **Chapter One** where plurilingual education meets the professional growth of language teacher educators taking part in ECML activities.

2.3 The Council of Europe and language education

2.3.1 Introduction

> The changes in academic discourse on language in education responding to fundamental transformations in geopolitics and in society are to a certain extent echoed in policymaking on the European level, mainly by the Council of Europe (CoE) which plays a leading part in this field. (Busch, 2011, p. 544)

As an Enlarged Partial Agreement of the Council of Europe, the ECML is strongly influenced by the mothership in Strasbourg; in order to understand how the Centre's activities are perceived by language teacher educators it is therefore important to provide the reader with a brief exposé of key Council initiatives in language education since it first featured in the Intergovernmental Programme almost sixty years ago (Trim, 2002), and in particular, the development of plurilingual education. The purpose of such an exposé is twofold: it provides the reader with the conceptual and contextual

background and at the same time presages certain complex and often contested themes which will emerge in related fields of literature, and then re-emerge, foregrounded in my research data.

2.3.2 Constants and challenges in a changing landscape

Already in the early days when developments focused purely on applied linguistics and teaching methods for foreign languages (Little and King, 2014), certain constants are evident: Europe's linguistic and cultural diversity is viewed as a rich resource to be valued and promoted (Council of Europe, 1969); languages belong to the learner and are first and foremost a tool for genuine interaction and communication; language learning is considered a life-long process in which the learner/user needs to be able to exercise autonomy and function as a socially responsible agent "in a participatory, pluralist democratic society" (Trim, 2002, p.18); different methodologies reflect national traditions and these are enriched through shared learning opportunities; teacher educators are considered essential in bringing about change (ibid.) Together, these constants represent a radical shift in the way in which language learning and teaching had previously been viewed.

These constants continue through the seventies, eighties and into the nineties, with the Council leading the way in developing and disseminating communicative approaches to learning and teaching. Keeping in mind that the ECML was established in 1994, it is unsurprising that many of the topics addressed through workshops and colloquia in the early years of the Centre reflect the innovation that such approaches engendered, such as the defining of learning objectives, the adaptation of text books, the use of new digital tools or the development of learner autonomy and learning strategies (ECML, 2017a). These early activities focused on language teacher education which reinforces the centrality of teacher beliefs and values, and on the importance of action research which combines practice with both reflection and theoretical considerations (Newby, 2003b).

As the century turns, Europe once again finds itself in a period of economic and political turmoil: ethnic tensions are high as war rages in the Former Yugoslavia; linguistic and cultural diversity is on the rise within Western European countries; and the European Union is opening up to Eastern Europe (Busch, 2011). This leads to a shift in focus within language education at the Council in Strasbourg towards language policy with more openly political aims. The shift is reflected in a Recommendation from the Committee of Ministers to Member States concerning modern languages (Council of Europe, 1998a), in which an explicit reference to the promotion of plurilingualism is made. This Recommendation is agreed shortly after the publication of the draft version of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages in 1997 (hereafter, CEFR), a tool for

reflection on teaching methodologies, curricula and approaches to assessment, designed to create greater coherence and transparency and within which the complex construct of plurilingualism is first defined (Council of Europe, 2001). References to international communication and international mobility are gradually displaced by more overt references to language education as a vector for strengthening social cohesion and democratic citizenship; plurilingualism is adopted as an "educational value" (Council of Europe, 2007, p.17), resulting in the umbrella term, plurilingual education. The tile of the publication just referenced, captures this major shift – *From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education: guide for the development of language education policies in Europe* (ibid.), work on which began as early as 1997, with a draft version published in 2003 and the final version four years later. In the intervening years, a series of accompanying guides on key policy issues were also published and together these were used as the basis for the Council's first Language Education Policy Profiles (Council of Europe, 2017a), a service offered from 2002 until 2017 to member states (or regions/cities within them), who wished to carry out a process of self-evaluation of language education policies with support from Council of Europe appointed experts.

By placing plurilingual education at the heart of language policy and thereby significantly broadening this policy remit to include all languages in society, the Council was attempting to bring about a paradigm shift in language education. Within this holistic perspective (Anderson, 2011), language education is no longer restricted to the teaching and learning of foreign languages within school systems, but open to all languages present in a learner's repertoire within a lifelong learning perspective. This shift impacts on operational aspects such as the organisation of curricula and teacher education, both pre- and in-service, and on the kind of pedagogical approaches needed to support these wider aims. The *Guide* calls for member states to adopt such a holistic and innovative approach to policy development which must be evidence-based and take account of "local ecologies" (Coffield *et al.*, 2007, p.735). At the same time, it recognises the enormity of the challenge:

> It cannot be implemented in the absence of political continuity, medium or long-term financial planning, and a timetable for reform that enables implementation to be assessed and its cultural and social benefits identified. (2007, p.85)

In turn, it is for the ECML, with its focus on implementation, to attempt to address the challenges resulting from such a radical shift. This is reflected in the title of the Centre's 1998 Colloquium "*Living together in Europe in the 21st century: the challenge of plurilingual and multicultural communication and dialogue*" and in the themes addressed through ECML workshops in the late nineties: intercultural competences; European citizenship; the importance of lesser-used languages;

languages and peace; and diversification of languages in school systems (Newby, 2003a; ECML, 2017a).

The first decade of the 21st century represents a particularly active period for the Council of Europe in promoting and supporting plurilingual education: together with the European Union (Busch, 2011), it declares 2001 the European Year of Languages, a year which also marks the launch of both the final version of the CEFR and the European Language Portfolio (hereafter, ELP). The ELP is another reflective tool which complements the CEFR but is owned by the learner and designed to foster learner autonomy, by providing a means of recording all of the languages in the learner's repertoire (Council of Europe, 2018b). As we move into the second half of the decade, greater emphasis is placed on languages as a tool for integration, both for young people through developments in the language/s of schooling, (Council of Europe, 2006), (also referred to in the literature as the language of instruction or the language of the host country), and for adults through the LIAM (Linguistic integration of adult migrants) project (Council of Europe, 2018a). It is important to note that the term "integration" as used by the Council of Europe, refers to a two-way process, rather than one of assimilation (Council of Europe, 2008): migrants are supported to participate in all aspects of life in their host country, while at the same time the host country acknowledges and respects the different cultural heritages and the ways of life migrants bring with them.

2.3.3 From European to national; from rhetoric to reality

More than fifteen years later, and despite these major developments in language education, developments supported by all forty-seven member states of the Council of Europe, there appears to be a significant disconnect in terms of language policy between what happens at European level and the reality at national level. To some degree this is inevitable, given that Council of Europe language policy, which in reality amounts to nothing more than non-binding intergovernmental policy guidance, is an ideal untarnished by political exigencies, but the following examples of research undertaken on language policy documents in several European countries reveal trends that run counter to plurilingual education. In England, the word "diversity", frequently used in the pre-2010 National Curriculum, has all but disappeared from the post-2010 version and "all references to 'language' are within a monolingual, subject-related context" (Flynn and Curdt-Christiansen, 2018, p.10); in the autonomous region of Andalucía, the plan for promoting plurilingualism introduced ten years ago, today amounts to nothing more than bilingual programmes in Spanish and English (Galiardo López, 2015); and a Dutch-only policy emanating from the Flemish Ministry of Education in Belgium has teachers convinced that banning learners with a migrant background from using their home languages in the classroom, will accelerate their learning of Dutch (Jaspers, 2015). Meanwhile,

in my native Scotland, the development of stand-alone language plans for modern languages, or for Gaelic or Scots, without an overarching all-inclusive language policy is creating power struggles and divisions; this is "language policy based on a zero-sum game" (Phipps, 2015, p.6), with competition between the different languages for political prominence and for funding.

Even in contexts where language policies are more explicit in their promotion of plurilingualism, complexities and tensions emerge. This is the case in Switzerland, where, according to Berthele (2020), language policies reveal a "selective celebration of linguistic diversity" (p.1). He outlines the different status accorded to the use of dialect in the minority language, Romansch, compared with the majority language, German: for the former, language policy emphasises the importance of the different regional varieties; for the latter, it is standardised German which should be used in compulsory schooling. This in turn contradicts recent changes in the law for kindergartens, where the use of Swiss German is actively encouraged. Berthele warns of the dangers for education of language policies which "are based on impressionistic perceptions of the problems rather than robust empirical evidence" (p.11). In the case of Catalonia, where guidelines for plurilingual education were published in October 2018, Dooly and Vallejo (2020) point out that policy changes need to be preceded and accompanied by extensive stakeholder engagement and sustained opportunities for professional development which can foster changes in practice. They also remind us that because of the "multifaceted" and "highly complex" nature of these change processes (P.83), and the resistance they will inevitably meet at individual, institutional and societal levels, they cannot happen quickly.

When it comes to implementation, it is still unclear if we can answer Newby's question, posed as part of a review of the ECML's first medium-term programme 2000-2003, with a resounding "yes":

> Political, social, cultural goal of FL teaching vs. communicative language goals – do teachers understand and accept this broadening of parameters? (2003b, p.40)

As my data will demonstrate, one of the reasons for this gap between rhetoric and reality is the lack of clarity around the construct of plurilingual education – what it is exactly, why it matters and how it can be put into practice – and it is precisely this precision which the next section of this literature review will attempt to address.

2.4 Plurilingual education: the what, the why and the how

2.4.1 Introduction

Given the political nature of the Council, with its founding principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law (Council of Europe, 2017d), one might be tempted to dismiss the idea of plurilingual education as naïve idealism, with little in terms of underpinning research. In fact, there is an ever-expanding and extremely rich body of literature on plurilingualism and plurilingual approaches, but this richness is somewhat obscured by fundamental misunderstandings in relation to both principles and aims (Forlot, 2012), not helped by the plethora of different terms used (Castellotti, 2010). There are warnings about the challenges of implementation (Mendoza and Parba, 2018) as well as questions about the underpinning ideology (Flores, 2013; Kubota, 2016). Right now, when there is mounting evidence of the need for pedagogical approaches tailored to the reality of increasingly multicultural and multilingual classrooms on the one hand (e.g. Hennebry, 2014; Pinho, 2015; European Commission, 2017), and on the other, evidence of rising nationalistic tendencies across Europe (BBC, 2019), this otherwise healthy debate on plurilingual education runs the risk of playing into the hands of policy-makers who wish to foment nationalism and anti-immigration policies. It also presents a risk to the ECML - one that emerges clearly from my data (see **Section 5.5.2**).

I shall now turn to this debate, beginning with a closer analysis of the concept itself, the "what", followed by an overview of research insights on the benefits of plurilingual education, the "why", before focusing in on the "how", that is, concrete examples of plurilingual pedagogies. The concluding section will summarise the implications from the "what", "why" and "how", leading me into the body of literature on how (language) teachers learn and ultimately to my focal point, the professional growth of language teacher educators through the ECML. This structural logic, however, should not lull the reader into a false sense of security with the promise of a smooth journey; instead, counter arguments and challenges will create bumps along the way, as I engage with the construct in a critical and reflexive manner. By unsettling the reader, I hope to deepen their understanding of the gap between the holistic vision of the Council and the rather more fragmented reality on the ground, as well as point forwards to the insights from my research.

2.4.2 The "what": central tenets of plurilingual education

> The plurilingual approach emphasises the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples, he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.13)

As indicated in **Section 1.6.1 Terminology**, the Council differentiates between "multilingualism" and "plurilingualism", with the former used to referred to a situation (an institution or geographical location) in which two or more languages are present, while the latter focuses on the individual and on valuing all of the languages, including dialects, within that individual's repertoire, irrespective of degree of competence (ibid.). These competences, which are often partial, feed into each other, with the individual exercising agency as he/she draws on different linguistic and intercultural competences as required (Moore and Gajo, 2009). This legitimisation of different competences has implications at many levels, not least of all political, because it embraces diversity, both linguistic and cultural (Marshall and Moore, 2018) and promotes the Council's view of integration as a reciprocal process (Council of Europe, 2008). It challenges the "one-language-one-nation" approach still adopted in many schools (Young, 2014), raises questions around "who has the right to speak" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.75, cited in Norton, 1997, p.411) and acknowledges that valorisation of the individual's entire repertoire is fundamental to a positive sense of identity (ibid.). If social justice and emotional well-being are central tenets of plurilingual education, so too is the belief that learning is enriched when, through appropriate pedagogy, both teacher and learner can draw on the different languages and cultures present in the classroom (e.g. Auger, 2009; Kirwan, 2013; Stille and Cummins, 2013). Linguistic and cultural boundaries become permeable; crossing these boundaries facilitates learning.

For some scholars this attempt to challenge power relations and existing linguistic hierarchies both in wider society and within education systems (Cronin, 1996), is undermined by plurilingualism's own emphasis on the *agency* of the individual to develop his or her *plurilingual* repertoire on a continuous basis: since agency often depends on status and is limited by social inequalities, this emphasis can appear elitist (Kubota, 2016), and the notion that a person's linguistic repertoire should be fluid and plural could imply a neoliberalist view of languages as a marketable commodity (García, 2018; Maurer, 2012). Marshall and Moore (2018) however, strongly reject these accusations by demonstrating that agency in plurilingual education does not only refer to the learner but also to the teacher who, by deploying plurilingual pedagogies, creates opportunities for learners to develop criticality and reflexivity, including in relation to their own agency or the constraints upon it (ibid., p.31).

If the notion that languages are linked to power and have a market value is not a new one (Bourdieu, 1977), globalisation has meant that the value of certain languages, particularly English, has hugely increased, often at the expense of other languages (Busch, 2011; Eisenchlas *et al*., 2015). The paradox of globalisation is that it can reinforce monolingualism or a "monolingual habitus" (Gogolin,

2002); by adopting Bourdieu's concept of habitus, Gogolin is insinuating the link between languages and power; Lamb (2015), goes a step further and suggests that the monolingual habitus results not only from power relations but from "a complex web of experiences, structures and practices" (p.156).

The research thus exposes the need to continue to subject the notion of plurilingualism to rigorous scientific scrutiny (Forlot, 2012), lest Castellotti's hypothesis becomes reality:

> On peut se demander […] si "plurilinguisme" […] ne contribue pas plutôt […] à brouiller les cartes, à se conformer à une nouvelle doxa, ni moins ni plus stimulante que les précédentes. (2010, p.13)

> *We need to ask ourselves if "plurilingualism" is not in fact contributing to muddying the waters and becoming a new dogma, no less and no more stimulating than the previous ones.* (my translation)

2.4.3 The "why": the benefits of being or becoming plurilingual

> Each language reflects a particular way of thinking, carries a memory, a literary heritage, and is the legitimate basis of cultural identity. (Häggman, 2010, p.191)

Given the current complex linguistic and cultural configuration of European societies, it is unsurprising that research into the generic benefits of plurilingualism has proliferated. These can be summarised as follows: in addition to the personal advantages of being able to communicate in more than one language and the concomitant benefits in terms of employability (Kelly, 2012; Araújo *et al.*, 2015), being plurilingual contributes to increased cultural sensitivity (Demuro and Gurney, 2018), to improved metalinguistic skills (Cromdal, 1999), and to a more discriminating and contextually appropriate use of language (Li, 2011). Cognitive abilities of both children and adults are strengthened (Barac and Bialystok, 2011; Vega-Mendoza *et al.*, 2015), a contributing factor in delaying age-related dementia (Bak and Suvarna, 2014).

When it comes to plurilingual education, the seminal works of Cummins, one of the most prolific writers in the field who began publishing in the seventies, demonstrate the potential for learners to thrive when appropriate plurilingual pedagogies are applied. Through a series of studies on bilingual programmes in his native Canada, Cummins exposes the fallacies underpinning what had been the dominant paradigm in SLA (second language acquisition) research until the middle of the last century. Among these was the belief that competences were related to specific languages, each totally separate from the other within the human brain, which could only cope with one language at a time. This in turn led to the notion of subtractive bilingualism (Macnamara, 1966), in which any attempt to learn an additional language was considered as "subtracting" from languages already learnt, including first languages.

Cummins constructed his "developmental interdependence hypothesis" (1979) which posits that highly developed competences in a first language, often referred to as L1, make acquiring a second language (L2) easier and that second language acquisition strengthens literacy skills in the L1. He showed that "additive" bilingualism (ibid., p.246) is not only possible, but cognitively advantageous (Cummins, 1981). There is now a considerable body of research confirming this theory (e.g. Swain *et al.*, 1990; Bialystok, 2001; Eisenchlas *et al.*, 2013). Cognition, emotion, language and motivation – the boundaries of these domains are fluid with each influencing the other, so that learners whose plurilingual and pluricultural identities are affirmed and supported, develop stronger self-esteem, which impacts positively on their learning (e.g. Wright and Taylor, 1995; Van Der Wildt *et al.*, 2017).

These insights contribute to a gradual paradigm shift in the field of language research: from the eighties onwards, the "multi/plural turn" (Kubota, 2016, p.474) gradually takes hold (Ludi and Py, 2009), with linguistic competences now recognised as interrelated (Kachru, 1994; Marshall and Moore, 2013) and viewed as "multiple, dynamic, integrated, contextualised and individualised" (Daryai-Hansen *et al.*, 2015, p.109). The shift challenges traditional notions of linguistic purism (Lin, 2006; Cummins, 2007; Canagarajah, 2011) and of the learner as "deficient communicator" (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p.285); meaning-making (Byrnes, 2012; Scarino, 2014), rather than striving for the native speaker norm, becomes the key purpose in developing language competences. and the fitness-for-purpose of the communicative methodology, which had revolutionised language learning and teaching, begins to be questioned:

> These changes call for a more reflective, interpretive, historically grounded, and politically engaged pedagogy than was called for by the communicative language teaching of the eighties. (Kramsch, 2014, p.296)

Cummins (1980) also demonstrates the clear distinction between what he calls "basic interpersonal communicative skills" (BICS) and "cognitive academic language proficiency" (CALP), the latter referring to the kind of language needed to access the school curriculum (Coste and Simon, 2009), with different subject matters having their own distinct discourses (Coffin, 2006; Meyer *et al.*, 2015). His research shows that CALP, now usually referred to as "academic" language or as the "language of schooling", is not absorbed automatically but requires explicit teaching. Learners need support to progress from understanding concepts, through verbalising these concepts and from there towards articulating them appropriately in written form (Beacco *et al.*, 2016). Without well-developed competences in the language of schooling, young people cannot reach their academic potential (Byram, 1996). This is an issue for vulnerable learners, such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds who are likely to have limited exposure to academic language outside school

(Thürmann *et al.*, 2010), but it is particularly important today where the home languages of many young people in Europe's classrooms are different from the language of schooling.

Given that the monolingual bias continues to dominate policy and practice in the fields of language and literacy (Eisenchlas *et al.*, 2015), professional learning opportunities are needed which help teachers understand the importance of home languages on the one hand, and the need to render accessible the language element within their subjects on the other (Little, 2010). Without such opportunities, they are more likely to underestimate their learners' abilities and unwittingly contribute towards poorer achievement (Macleroy, 2013; Cummins, 2014).

Ironically, it is precisely the current need for language education to focus on the language of schooling that is proving to be fertile ground for the myth of subtractive bilingualism to flourish once again (European Commission, 2013a), with migrant parents being incorrectly advised to speak to their children in the language of the host country and schools encouraged to limit or even ban children from using their home languages (Pulinx *et al.*, 2017). This inconsistent approach to plurilingual education can be demonstrated in the ECML's host country of Austria, with huge advances on the one hand, such as the development of a plurilingual curriculum (Krumm and Reich, 2011), dedicated resources for both the language of schooling and language-sensitive teaching, including modules for initial teacher education courses (Österreichisches Sprachenkompetenzzentrum, 2013), yet, on the other, the fact that neither this curriculum nor the training module has been made compulsory. More recently, newly arrived migrant children have been segregated for the teaching of many school subjects, counter to the insights from research on how best to support their linguistic integration (Little, 2010).

While such developments may stem from genuine misunderstandings about language acquisition and literacy development, they form part of a more worrying trend in which the attitude to integration is at best one of "benign neglect" (Cummins, 2015b, p.458) and at worst, one which considers multilingualism a barrier to integration (May, 2014; Nonaka, 2017), with citizenship rights dependent on the mastery of the language of the host country (Mar-Molinero and Stevenson, 2006). This view of languages feeds an increasingly prevalent public discourse across Europe in which globalisation and migration are presented as the enemy of the "nation-state" (ibid.) and a threat to a supposedly coherent national culture (Vertovec, 2010). Learners are often forgotten in this complex political debate and we are grateful to researchers like Fassetta whose study of adolescent Ghanaian migrants in Italy gives them a voice, one we ought to heed:

> The goal of speaking a common language should not come at the price of months, even years, of loneliness and apprehension that can impact directly on the children's attainment

and, crucially, on their perception of their own value as learners and as individuals. (2014, p.335)

2.4.4 The "how": implementing plurilingualism through plurilingual education

If the concept of plurilingual education is complex and its aims multifarious, so too are the terms used by different authors to describe plurilingual pedagogies (Forlot, 2012). Sometimes the differences are intended to emphasise a particular aspect, as can be seen in the terms "linguistically inclusive" (Taylor *et al.*, 2008) and "culturally responsive" (Santoro and Kennedy, 2016); the term "pluralistic approaches" (Candelier *et al.*, 2007), defined as "didactic approaches which use teaching/learning activities involving several (i.e. more than one) varieties of languages or cultures" (ibid. p.7-8), refers specifically to four approaches outlined in *FREPA* (A Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches) (ibid.): *awakening to languages, integrated didactics, intercomprehension and the intercultural approach*. This framework contains a comprehensive set of descriptors covering the knowledge, skills and attitudes that comprise plurilingual and pluricultural competences.

 I will now briefly describe these approaches and at the same time provide the reader with some examples of implementation and of challenges. *Awakening to languages* is an approach designed with younger children in mind, where educators undertake activities to raise awareness of the linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom and in wider society. There is a tendency, however, for pre-primary and primary teachers, possibly because of a lack of professional confidence in linguistic matters, to focus more on culture than on language, thereby missing an opportunity to begin to develop children's metalinguistic awareness.

In *integrated didactics*, an approach which can also be found in bilingual and CLIL (content-and-language-integrated-learning) programmes, teachers of different languages, including the language of schooling, actively collaborate, drawing their learners' attention to the differences and similarities between these languages (Cenoz and Gorter, 2013). The aim is to draw on what has already been learned in one language to support the learning of another language, in line with the plurilingual idea of a "communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (Council of Europe, 2001, p.13). This approach is exemplified through the Swiss project, *Passepartout* where, across six German-speaking cantons, school leaders, curriculum developers and teachers have worked together to produce and implement one coherent syllabus for the teaching of different foreign languages across primary and secondary, with a strong emphasis on the development of metalinguistic skills and intercultural understanding (Egli Cuenat, 2011). It is a small, rare yet promising example of plurilingual education being applied across the more traditional foreign language classrooms, including at secondary level,

rather than in second language learning contexts more typical of migration. More such examples of plurilingual education in practice are needed, examples which are supportive of, and beneficial to, the learning of individual foreign languages, if we are to address the difficulties facing language teachers across Europe, and the reality of school pupils' relatively low competence levels in foreign languages (Council of the European Union, 2019). Such examples also help counter the negative perception of plurilingualism, such as that held by Maurer, who views it as a dogma which belittles the learning of languages for their own sake (2012).

FREPA distinguishes between *intercomprehension*, a term it uses to refer to the methodology of developing comprehension skills within families of languages where one of these languages is already known to the learner, and *the intercultural approach*, where culture and cultural difference are used as a basis for understanding diversity. This form of *intercomprehension* has been applied successfully with adult learners involving the Slav and Romance families of languages, but there is little evidence of it being used exclusively for language learning in schools (ECML, 2012). Perhaps this is because it is more often used in combination with other approaches such as *the intercultural approach*.

For the Council of Europe, the intercultural dimension is an essential part of language learning where learners become "intercultural speakers or mediators", open to and accepting of difference, and able to see beyond national stereotypes (2002, p.9). In a similar vein, Pinho (2015) applies a broader definition to the term "intercomprehension", one which encompasses the intercultural and goes beyond languages to include questions of identity and cultural sensitivity. Based on this broader definition, she provides evidence of its usage as part of a language teacher initial education programme in Portugal which helps develop future teachers' intercultural sensitivity as a basis for successful implementation of plurilingual education (ibid.).

FREPA was originally developed as part of the ECML's 2nd medium-term programme 2004-2007 and since then teacher training modules and examples of classroom activities have been developed to complement this framework. Daryai-Hansen *et al*. (2015) provide evidence of its positive influence at the level of language policy and curricular guidelines in three different national contexts, but the twenty-three national *FREPA* pages on the ECML website and the additional translations of the framework into Arabic and Japanese, together with the constant demand from ECML members states for in-country training events using *FREPA*, suggest that its impact is considerably greater (ECML, 2015). Daryai-Hansen *et al*. (2015), however, recognise that there is less evidence of impact at the level of actual classroom practice.

"Translanguaging" has become the new buzzword in the field of SLA research (García and Sylvan, 2011). The term is used to convey the notion of drawing on one's full linguistic repertoire to communicate or to make sense of a situation or task. It originates from studies into English-Welsh bilingual education in the 1980s (Marshall and Moore, 2018), and its rebirth is largely attributable to research emanating from similar bilingual contexts where teachers often have competences in both languages (Little and Kirwan, 2018). In such contexts it could be replaced with the term "code-switching" which "implies both the presence of discrete codes and the act of 'switching' between them" (Anderson, 2018, p.27). This is the case in a French/German kindergarten in Alsace, where teachers use translanguaging techniques, in ways similar to *intercomprehension* as defined in *FREPA*, to support young children in becoming biliterate (Velasco and Fialais, 2018). But its usage now goes beyond bilingual contexts: in trilingual Luxembourg, for example, where many pupils do not have Luxembourgish as their home language, it is being used successfully in a nursery/primary context, together with digital story books to help young children "communicate, construct knowledge and enact a multilingual identity" (Kirsch, 2018, p.52). By "*trans*cending traditional understandings of separate languages" (Anderson, 2018, p.27), it is very similar to the original definition of plurilingualism in the CEFR; what is new, is the inclusion of multimodal resources for online communication (ibid.).

Concerns around the use of translanguaging practices have emerged in contexts of regional minority languages, where such usage can also represent a threat if the minority languages are used purely to scaffold the majority language (Cenoz and Gorter, 2017). This kind of translanguaging needs to be accompanied by genuine occasions or "spaces" where regional minority languages can be practised and sustained (ibid.). For scholars such as Garcia (2014), translanguaging has political and social justice aims that go even further than plurilingualism because its usage is "without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages" (Otheguy *et al*., 2015, p.283); for others, it is precisely this combination of multiplicity of meanings and very ambitious aims that risks it "becoming a dominating rather than a liberating force" (Jaspers, 2018, p.1). Mendoza and Parba (2018), writing about the learning environment of a Filipino class at Hawai'i's State University, wisely remind us that translanguaging must be understood from the perspective of the learner, who may not want or be ready to challenge "normative practices and discourses" (p.13) and that the ultimate aim, as for any pedagogy, must be to help the learner, rather than simply to promote bi- or plurilingualism per se.

Learners' needs come first and foremost in a comparative ethnographic study involving five primary schools in France and Canada, where teachers, learners and family members work together to create

plurilingual multimodal books (Prasad, 2015). Prasad uses a term which reveals both content focus and long-term aims, that of "Transformative Multiliteracies Pedagogy", first coined by Cummins (2009). She outlines five "preliminary tenets" (p.511) for ensuring its success, tenets which have a broad evidence-base, as indicated by my use of multiple references: using all of the languages present in the classroom as "meaning-making resources" (Lin, 2013, p. 537); creating tasks which encourage learners to express their own experiences either in speech or in writing (Coste and Simon, 2009; Cummins, 2015); collaborating with parents and the wider community (Taylor *et al.*, 2008; Mary and Young, 2017); ensuring that academic tasks become a vehicle for expressing creativity (Anderson *et al.*, 2018); and considering all students as "ever evolving plurilingual learners" (Prasad, 2015, p.511).

The true meaning of such pedagogical approaches, irrespective of the chosen terminology, comes into play in the multilingual classrooms found in many parts of Europe today where teachers have no knowledge of their pupils' varied home languages. In a similar vein to Prasad's "tenets", Little and Kirwan (2018) credit the success of one primary school in a Dublin suburb, where around eighty per cent of pupils do not have English as their home language, to an overarching philosophy of education based on five key principles: an ethos of inclusion; a language policy which allows learners to use their home languages at any time; the placing of great importance on language awareness and literacy development in English, Irish, French (introduced as a foreign language towards the end of primary) as well as in the children's home languages, supported by their parents; explicit teaching methods which encourage pupils to reflect on their learning; and recognition and support for teacher professionalism. It is a philosophy which highlights the need to move beyond consideration of effective techniques (Kubanyiova and Crookes, 2016).

This longitudinal research provides ample evidence of social, emotional and cognitive benefits; the children are motivated to learn, proud of their plurilingual identities and able to exploit their highly developed literacy and metalinguistic skills. Moreover, these benefits are enjoyed by all learners, including native pupils who originally consider themselves monolingual, but who soon want to develop their plurilingual repertoires alongside their fellow pupils from a migrant background. In such contexts, the development of learner autonomy becomes crucial, so that learners can access and fully exploit their own linguistic repertoires. Yet unless there is support at the level of national policy and regular access to quality professional learning opportunities for staff, the authors themselves cast doubt on the replicability and sustainability of this philosophy. The same could be said for most of the examples outlined here; successful implementation is rarely systemic, and all too often depends on the commitment of individuals (Galiardo López, 2015). More worrying still is a

recent statement by the principal researcher in the Dublin school, on the occasion of a think tank held at the ECML to revisit the theme of learner autonomy:

> Whatever language learners bring with them to school and whatever languages school sets out to teach them, a pedagogical revolution is clearly needed if the ideal of plurilingual education is to become a reality. (Little, 2017, p.7)

Our circles are decreasing, and we are moving towards our focal point: the professional growth of (language) teacher educators. We have navigated the history and evolution of language education at the Council of Europe and have wrestled with the construct of plurilingualism (and how this is understood within the umbrella term, plurilingual education), in all its complexity and apparent contradictions. But before we are ready to home in on our target group, we need to take stock of the key insights and debates in the well-established, large and dynamic body of literature on the professional growth of (language) teachers, not simply because it is related and therefore relevant, but because it embodies the component parts of "(language) teacher educator" and represents the profession from which most teacher educators emerge. This is not to suggest however, that one field maps perfectly onto the other but rather that they are intricately intertwined:

> […] the choices and decisions we as teacher educators make about the content, pedagogies, and institutional forms of delivery in teacher education reflect our conceptions of how people learn to do the work of teaching in this profession. (Freeman and Johnson, 1998, p.403)

2.5: The professional growth of (language) teachers

2.5.1 Introduction

Since the latter part of the twentieth century, a large and ever-increasing body of research has emerged which focuses on teacher knowledge and behaviours and the ways in which these impact on learners and learning (e.g. Hargreaves, 1994; Day, 2000), accompanied by a general acceptance of the importance of continued professional learning opportunities for teachers. This in turn has led to extensive research into how teachers learn and the development of different models of professional growth, with endless debates ensuing on the construct itself (reflected in the plethora of terminology used to describe it), on the overall aims and constituent elements, on questions of effectiveness and how this can be measured, and on the identification of features that appear to contribute to its success (Fraser *et al.*, 2007).

As the research has evolved, so too has the perception of the role of the teacher, from technical expert through reflective practitioner (Schön, 1999) to moral agent of change (Kubanyiova and Crookes, 2016). According to Thorne (2015), developments in language teacher education reflect

developments in education more broadly, so that while much of this literature is neither sector- nor subject-specific, many of the insights are pertinent to language education. These can then be complemented by insights from the small but rich body of research in this specific field.

It is neither possible nor desirable within the scope of this study to cover all aspects of research on teacher professional growth. Instead, I will extract key messages from those insights which I believe are of particular relevance to the ECML and to my research, because they are appropriate in terms of content (i.e. language education where values play an important part), of context (i.e. collaborative learning which does not constitute a formal component of a professional development programme), and of target group (i.e. teacher educators and others involved in language education). I hope to take the reader on an aspirational journey which will eventually converge with my own research analysis of what should characterise professional learning opportunities through the ECML.

2.5.2 Terminology

In **Chapter 1** I indicated my preference for the term "professional growth" because like Taylor (2017), I consider it an umbrella term covering both "professional learning" and "professional development". Drawing on Timperley (2011), Taylor distinguishes between learning and development, suggesting that the former is more powerful as it implies serious engagement in a meaning-making exercise (ibid.). My preference however, does not mean that I use the term "professional growth" exclusively; I recognise that it does not work when used as an adjective phrase, for example before nouns such as "opportunity"; when referring to specific research, I respect the term used by the author/s, at the same time acknowledging that the exact meaning ascribed in each instance will often not conform to the nuanced differentiation suggested by Taylor.

Whatever term is used, it is often prefaced with "continuing" or "career-long"; implicit in these semantics is both the idea of greater individual responsibility and the need for teachers to be prepared for the constant imperative of change (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1998; Friedman and Phillips, 2002). If this imperative of change was already the case at the turn of the century, it is even more acute in today's multilingual and multicultural Europe (Kelly, 2011; Santoro and Kennedy, 2016), resulting in a constant re-evaluation of pedagogical approaches and raising ever more complex questions "of what languages and language teachers are for" (Kubanyiova and Crookes, 2016, p.120).

2.5.3 Key characteristics of effective (language) teacher professional growth

Even though there is a recognised need "to develop sophisticated but accessible means of understanding continuing professional learning more deeply" (Kennedy, 2014b, p.690), and to take account of the different drivers for engaging in professional learning opportunities (from intrinsic motivation, through a willingness to respond to policy or curricular changes, to an externally imposed obligation), (Guskey, 2002), certain clearly identifiable and often interrelated characteristics emerge from the literature which appear to enhance the possibility of teacher learning (Fraser *et al.*, 2007). This broad consensus on characteristics is predicated on a shared view of learning as a dynamic process which is socially and culturally embedded.

One of these characteristics is a focus on praxis, the intersection of theory and practice. This is closely linked to the notion of the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1999) who engages in a "dialogic process" (Newby, 2003b, p.33), whereby pedagogical approaches are critically examined in the light of underlying theories and principles, and the same theories and principles are critically examined in the light of classroom practice. For Newby (ibid.) and Farrell (2016), this critical reflection should extend to include beliefs and how they align with, differ from and interact with, both theory and practice. Johnson (2006) meanwhile, exhorts language teachers to consider underlying ideologies and the impact these may have on broader social issues. Kubanyiova and Crookes (2016) go even further by stressing the importance of reflection on "philosophies, values and moral purposes" (p.124) in language education. With learning understood as social practice (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002), reflection as "inner dialogue" (Mann, 2005) is not enough; transformative learning can only be engendered if this reflection is externalised and shared, creating the conditions in which it can evolve into "critical and praxiological reflexivity" (Pinho, 2015, p.162).

The safe spaces (King, 2004) created by communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) or professional learning communities (DuFour, 2004) lend themselves to this "collaborative, professional inquiry" (Kennedy, 2014b, p.693). Although the terms "community of practice" and "professional learning communities" are often used interchangeably, the literature suggests certain technical differences between them: for example, both are used in educational contexts but "community of practice", which originates from the workplace, can also refer to other domains. It also suggests a more informal structure whereas the term "professional learning community" puts a stronger emphasis on learning and shared learning goals. However, at the heart of both terms lies the notion of "community", bringing with it a sense of inclusion and belonging (Stoll *et al.*, 2006), and the legitimacy of teacher knowledge (Johnson and Golombek, 2003). By generating these positive emotions and that all-important sense of agency (Mann, 2005; Ben-Peretz and Flores, 2018)

which is considered essential for learning (Golombek and Johnson, 2004), such communities act as "powerful mechanisms for teacher growth" (Desimone, 2009, p.182).

By fostering collaboration through social and dialogic interaction, such communities also support the development of a professional identity, which for Bullough (1997) is central to teacher education and "the basis for meaning making and decision making" (p.21). A professional identity is also key to one's sense of belonging and of professional worth; it is constantly evolving, "personally and individually perceived, but socially and culturally negotiated" (Davey, 2013, p.31, cited in Thorne, 2015, p.83). Kennedy, (2014a) however, wisely reminds us that power struggles can also play out in such communities and that we cannot assume "equality and agency for all" (p.345).

However just as there is consensus that characteristics such as reflecting on praxis, contextualised learning, collaborating through learning communities, valuing teacher knowledge and creating a sense of ownership or agency all contribute to professional learning, so too is there a recognition of their limitations and of the much more critical role played by teacher attitudes and beliefs. It is both poignant and ironic that many of these characteristics appear in a report on one of the first ever ECML workshops which took place in 1995, a report which forms part of an evaluation of the first five years of the Centre (Newby, 2003a), and one I would never have come across, had it not been for this review of the literature.

2.5.4 The place of teacher cognition

Research on teacher cognition, defined by Borg (2003) as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" (p.81), renders more complex the question of how teachers learn by shifting the focus away from the characteristics of professional learning activities towards teacher "orientations" as the possible mediating factor between learning, and learning that leads to change (Opfer *et al.*, 2011). It is a constant in the range of teacher learning models which have been developed over the last thirty years or so (e.g. Guskey *et al.*, 1995; Kennedy, 2005; Farrell, 2016), and while there is disagreement between those who posit that changes in practice need to precede changes in beliefs (Guskey, 2002), and those who suggest it is the other way round (Desimone, 2009), most models recognise that teacher learning and change is "multicausal" and "multidimensional" (Opfer and Pedder, 2011, p.394), a complex cyclical process (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002) in which beliefs and practices interact in different ways, often contingent on the particular context and dependent on the kind of learning opportunity, its overall aim and the individual teacher's response to it (Taylor, 2017).

This expanded view of cognition in which thinking is inseparable from emotions and is socially and culturally embedded, assumes an even more important place in the research on language teacher professional growth (e.g. Borg, 2011; Golombek and Doran, 2014), be that with reference to primary teachers working in multilingual schools (Lundberg, 2019), to CLIL teachers (Lo, 2019) or teachers on bilingual programmes (Fitzsimmons-Doolan *et al.*, 2017). The results suggest that while teacher beliefs are notoriously difficult to change (Kagan, 1992; Klein, 2008; Phipps, 2009), this can be facilitated through the kind of professional learning which creates opportunities for teachers to recognise and articulate their beliefs by relating them to concrete examples from their practice (Pulinx *et al.*, 2017), to have them challenged through examples of different approaches, including through international collaboration (Kissock and Richardson, 2010; Macalister, 2016), and to be given support as they experiment with these approaches in their own classes (Auger, 2009). If, as previously noted, the successful implementation of plurilingual education rests on the ability and willingness to think differently (Pinho and Andrade, 2015), and language teachers have a "pivotal role" to play in the context of increased cultural and linguistic diversity (Kelly, 2011, p.39), such opportunities become an indispensable part of both pre- and in-service teacher education (Ziegler, 2013; Karatsiori, 2013; Liu *et al.*, 2017).

2.6 The professional growth of (language) teacher educators

2.6.1 Introduction

We have now reached the final body of literature for review and are fast approaching the epicentre of our circles and the point at which these bodies of literature intersect with the ECML. As we get nearer, the literature becomes sparser, particularly if we remove the brackets and restrict it to language teacher educators, the core target group of the ECML. While this presents a challenge in terms of insights or debates of direct relevance, it also exposes a gap which suggests that studies like this one are needed.

Research on teacher educators represents a burgeoning field (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2014), one which rests on a broad consensus regarding the influence of teacher educators on the quality of teachers (ibid.). There is also growing interest in how teacher educators learn (Dengerink *et al.*, 2015) and a recognition of the "increasing complexity of the profession" (ibid., p.79). Teacher educators may be teachers of teachers, but their role, and therefore their identity, is distinct (ibid.), resulting in the need for a distinctive pedagogy (Loughran, 2011), appropriate to teaching adults and involving "a knowledge of teaching about teaching and a knowledge of learning about teaching and how the two influence one another" (Loughran, 2008, p.1180, cited in Goodwin and Kosnik, 2013, p.337). In

contrast to teachers, however, professional learning opportunities to develop this specific knowledge-base and professional expertise (Smith, 2003; Kelchtermans *et al*., 2018), are extremely limited (Dengerink *et al.,* 2015).

2.6.2 Critical features of effective (language) teacher educator professional growth

Although the roles of teachers and teacher educators clearly differ, there are marked similarities for both when it comes to characteristics that contribute to "high-quality" learning (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2017, p.560). For teacher educators, these characteristics become "critical features" (ibid.), each one intensified and expanded through the specificities of the role.

These features include ownership of the learning (Koster *et al.*, 2008; Karagiorgi and Nicolaidou, 2013), despite the constraints of professional standards (Santoro and Kennedy, 2016); the need to develop a distinct professional identity (Thorne, 2015; Yuan, 2015), a challenge compounded not only by the multifaceted nature of their role (Lunenberg *et al*., 2014), but also by tensions between generic aspects and allegiance to specific fields, such as languages (Zeichner, 2005; Pinho and Andrade, 2015); critical engagement with beliefs and attitudes (Koster *et al*., 2008; Boei *et al*., 2015; Meeus *et al*., 2018); a focus on praxis which is both relevant to, yet goes beyond, the local context, and reflection which leads to inquiry and research (King, 2004; Jasman, 2010; Meijer *et al*., 2017). While Cochran-Smith urges teacher educators to engage in a "rich dialectic" between scholarship and practice (2003, p.9), Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) challenge teacher educators to question the purpose of their research and, through the concept of "intentionality" (p.440), to remember the ultimate beneficiary, the language learner. Collaboration in professional learning communities is also key, but these should be cross-sectoral (Margolin, 2011; Snoek *et al*., 2011) and transnational (Goodwin and Kosnik, 2013; Czerniawski *et al*., 2017; Meijer *et al*., 2017).

Such "high-quality" learning is essential if teacher educators are to assume the role of "expert others" (Golombek and Doran, 2014, p.104), based on Vygotsky's notion of "more capable peers" who show respect for teacher knowledge (Xu and Connelly, 2009) and can exploit Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (ZDP), which he defines as:

> The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers. (1978, p.86)

Boundary crossing, using Akkerman and Bakker's (2011) definition of boundary as "a sociocultural difference leading to discontinuity in action or interaction" (p.133), emerges as characteristic of both their roles and their professional growth.

Akkerman and Bakker in their review of the literature on boundary crossing (ibid.), identify four "potential learning mechanisms that can take place at boundaries: identification, coordination, reflection, and transformation" (p.132). Identification refers to the process of recognising individual identities and the ways in which they differ; coordination is the next stage whereby efforts are made to overcome the differences or boundaries through a process of dialogic engagement; reflection is a creative process in which one's own perspective is reviewed through the prism of the other perspectives. The result should be "a new construction of identity that informs future practice" (p.146). When significant and long-lasting change is engendered, the last stage of transformation has been reached (ibid.). The notion of boundary crossing and the learning it engenders will later emerge as a central theme from my data.

2.6.3 Language teacher educators

From my extensive reading in the field, I came across a total of only eight references to the professional growth of language teacher educators, five from the same Hong Kong-based author. I am sure there is more literature to be found and that my search results are limited by my off-campus status which means I concentrate mainly on articles and books available online, but the number is striking, nonetheless. The earliest of these describes an innovative attempt to set up a "Language Teacher Educators' Collaborative", (Bailey *et al.*, 1998), emphasising the added-value of shared learning in a small-scale community of practice; others stress the importance of learning through inquiry, either by undertaking narrative writing (Golombek, 2015) or through action research (Sharkey, 2018), whilst the most prolific writer in the field seeks to improve modelling techniques by investigating the practice of an experienced language teacher educator and gathering constructive feedback from her student teachers (Yuan and Hu, 2017).

2.7 Conceptual models/frameworks of professional growth: considering the added value

As I grappled with the extensive literature on teacher professional growth and progressed from there to the smaller body of literature focusing on teacher educators, I became increasingly aware of the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the topic and appreciative of the attempts made by scholars to capture this complexity by creating or further developing conceptual models or frameworks. I decided to explore these further, aware that a detailed analysis was worthy of a study in its own right, but that such a study did not align with the key purpose of my research. I nevertheless felt a somewhat smaller-scale engagement was justified, even though I was unsure at this stage of the place of such models in my own study. I wondered if such an engagement might

provide me with an explorative tool or lens through which to consider and perhaps ultimately strengthen the professional growth engendered by the ECML.

Through my reading I came across sixteen models, only three of which focused specifically on teacher educators. This was unsurprising, given that research on teacher educator professional growth remains a relatively new and underexplored field (Perry and Boylan, 2018). It was tempting at first to consider only the three created for my own target group, and although in the end I did opt for one of these, this was only after consideration of all sixteen: my review of the literature had repeatedly demonstrated how the two areas are interlinked and in fact, the co-author of one of the models for teacher educators clearly indicates the relevance and usefulness of models for teachers as a starting point (Smith, 2003). Of the sixteen, I selected seven to examine in closer detail, having eliminated the others either for one, or both of the following reasons: they had been subsumed into later models; they focused on one specific aspect of professional growth, be that an aspect of content (e.g. values), of format (e.g. communities of practice or classroom observation) or of context (e.g. school-based).

As I reviewed each of the remaining models, my thinking was guided by two key questions: what did the authors consider to be their key purpose and how much agency did the intended target group (teachers or teacher educators) have, both in terms of the development and subsequent usage of the model in question? I was particularly interested in this aspect of agency, with its related concepts of ownership and empowerment, because these had emerged from the literature as essential pre-requisites to genuine professional growth. It was this same interest in agency, in teacher educator voice, which determined my research methodology and methods, as outlined in **Section 1.6.2 Aims and objectives**, and further developed in **Chapter Three**, and my focus on the perspectives of six individuals in relation to the ECML, rather than on any kind of systematic evaluation of the work of the Centre.

This same focus on the individual, combined with the fact that involvement in the ECML is often arbitrary, an add-on to, rather than a replacement for, any kind of professional development undertaken at national level, meant that several of the remaining models considered could not be adopted whole-scale, as they were intended for use in either evaluating or developing complete programmes. That said, the process of thinking through the potential applicability of each one in turn, even where this led to eventual rejection, both challenged and ultimately crystallised my ideas, so that my early identification with Kelchtermans *et al.*'s InFo-TED *Conceptual Model of Teacher Educators' Professional Development* (2018), (hereafter referred to simply as the InFo-TED Model), on a somewhat instinctive and possibly emotional level, was reinforced on an intellectual and

evidence-based level. Moreover, when I returned to the InFo-TED Model, I was able to review it more critically, keeping in mind both what had appealed to me in other models, as well as what had left me dissatisfied. In the paragraphs that follow, I will outline key considerations with respect to the different models.

2.7.1 Models of teacher change

Particularly in relation to my research sub-question on plurilingual education and the insights from my literature review of plurilingual education, **Section 2.4**, which emphasise the need for a change of mindset, I found it helpful to consider three models that explicitly focus on teacher change: Guskey's "model of teacher change" (2002), Desimone's "core conceptual framework" (2009) and Clarke and Hollingsworth's "interconnected model for teacher professional growth" (2002), which takes Guskey's model as its starting point and builds on this. Both Guskey and Desimone's models were useful for thinking about how the change process itself comes about, even though the proposed end-users differ, with the former aimed at those who develop programmes of teacher professional development and the latter at researchers attempting to evaluate the impact of such programmes. However although both recognise the important role played by teachers' beliefs, through their respective (and differing) emphases on the sequencing of events, they fail to acknowledge both the ongoing interaction between practice and beliefs, and the ways in which teachers' beliefs are deeply influenced by their own prior life experiences, particularly as learners (Kelchtermans and Vandenberghe, 1994). Their concern with sequencing results in visually linear models which depict teacher change as a series of logical steps that can be externally controlled. I was left dissatisfied by such positivist representations, openly acknowledged as such by Desimone (2009, p.187), but contradictory to what Guskey himself describes as a "cyclical" and "highly complex process" (2002, p.385).

Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) draw on several earlier models, including Guskey's, to develop a more sophisticated model which makes an explicit link between professional growth and the learning theory of communities of practice (p.955). It builds on Guskey's change sequences, breaking change down into four different "domains" – the personal (teacher beliefs), the domain of practice (where teachers try out new approaches in their classrooms), the "domain of consequence" (where teachers witness the positive impact on their learners) and the "external domain - external sources of information or stimulus" (ibid., p.950), and attempts to identify how change in one domain impacts on another. It represents an interpretivist understanding of teacher professional growth, identifying it as "cognitive and situated" (p.955), as "social practice" which is nevertheless "idiosyncratic and individual" (p.947), differentiating between short and long-term change (p.955).

Most importantly, it recognises that successful teacher change is dependent on teacher agency, on "teachers as active learners shaping their professional growth through reflective participation in professional development programs and in practice" (p.948), with the resultant model offering a visual representation of professional growth as cyclical and highly complex. In many ways it chimes with my own understanding of the concept and for a long time I toyed with how it might be applied to my research. In the end, its focus on the design of continuing professional development (hereafter, CPD) programmes and on teachers rather than teacher educators, made it difficult for me to imagine it in the specific context of the ECML; I knew however, that should a model be adopted for the Centre, it would definitely need to feature the cyclical and complex nature of learning, as well as the importance of agency. Moreover, when I came to analyse my data, I returned to this framework, drawing on its categorisation of professional growth into outcomes, conditions and processes.

2.7.2 Frameworks for evaluating aims and outcomes

Teacher agency is central to Kennedy's framework for analysing different forms of teacher professional development (2005). She categorises professional development activities according to their "relative potential capacity for transformative practice and professional autonomy" (p.236) and suggests that those opportunities which maximise this capacity combine agency with collective and inquiry-based learning (p.245); emphasise beliefs and values over knowledge and skills (p.240); and actively encourage the involvement of a range of stakeholders whose views and agendas will differ, so that the resultant tensions can be exploited through a rich dialogic exchange (p.247). Her 2005 framework later becomes part of a composite framework (Fraser *et al.*, 2007) which includes consideration of "personal, social and occupational" aspects of professional learning (p.158) and is then further refined by Kennedy herself (2014b) with the aim of reviewing professional learning in relation to questions of "policy, power and professionalism" (p.689). Yet again, I felt I could not apply these models directly to the ECML, but I noted down conceptual ideas from each of them, such as Kennedy's categorisation of models of professional development into "transmissive, malleable and transformative" (ibid., p.692) or Fraser's consideration of aspects such as motivation or relationships (2007, p.159), to draw up a list of possible conceptual categories which would contribute to the deductive element of my data analysis.

2.7.3 Models giving prominence to teacher/teacher educator voice

If aspects of my positionality were reflected in Clarke and Hollingsworth's model (2002), it was Taylor's "tentative process model" (2017) that really resonated with my own experience and understanding of teacher learning: it originates in teacher narratives and uses the umbrella term "professional growth" to include both learning and development; it builds on previous models, including those of Kennedy (2005) and Fraser (2007), and combines cognitive, sociocultural and situated perspectives on learning with an analysis of the characterisations of "dimensions of opportunity, purpose and response" (p.87); it reflects the complexity of professional growth and recognises the numerous and often interwoven ways in which it can be influenced (p.88). In line with its stated purpose – "to analyse and understand teachers' account of professional growth" (p.87) – it also provided me with yet further potential concepts for my own data analysis. I will discuss how these initial concepts were refined in **Section 3.6;** lists of both initial and refined codes can be found in **Appendices 5 and 6**. Taylor's model also introduced me to complexity theory, and I began to reconsider the proposed theoretical lens for my study. Moreover, his research seemed to mirror my own: an investigation of the professional growth of other people which triggers a simultaneous re-evaluation of the researcher's own.

By this point in my thinking I was becoming more and more convinced of the usefulness of a model for the ECML and felt sure this was an idea worthy of discussion with my research participants. With so much rich material on which to draw, the idea of creating a new model from scratch did not occur to me, though with hindsight I suspect a lack of confidence may also have played its part. Instead, I wondered if our discussions might lead to the development of a model that united the elements I had identified as pertinent from the various models reviewed.

It was only when I came across the InFo-TED Model that I realised that all previous models had certainly enriched my thinking, yet none had satisfactorily addressed the question of ownership. For the first and only time in my reading I had found a model *for* teacher educators developed *by* teacher educators, a model that was not intended for programme evaluation but rather "to conceptualise teacher educator development" (Kelchtermans *et al.*, 2018, p.120) and "to provide a common language to frame the issue" (p.125). It seemed to offer me an ideal fit for the ECML; it was developed through a transnational forum; it proposes certain key content domains, including linguistic and cultural diversity, which can change or expand in response to societal needs and it recognises the multiple levels of influence from personal through national to global. It is a model which is dynamic and open-ended, encompassing many of the critical features of professional growth I had already identified in the literature. It attempts to address the complexity of the role of

teacher educator and the related professional development needs through a professional learning community which embraces criticality and "constructive controversy" (Achinstein, 2002, cited in Kelchtermans *et al.*, 2018, p. 130). I was so convinced of its applicability to the ECML that I chose to discuss only this model with my research participants. As my data analysis will reveal, it certainly provoked "constructive controversy"; while there was a willingness to consider it as a possible "orientation to professional learning" (Kennedy, 2014b, p.693), there was a clear rejection of it as a model for the ECML, with a proposal to develop one of our own instead. The reasons for this will be outlined in **Section 5.3.3**. My reflexivity was sharpened, and I was reminded of the dangers of researchers who are "seduced by the beauty of their models of reality and confuse that with the reality of their models" (May, 2011, p.28).

2.8 Conclusions

2.8.1 Implications for the ECML and for my study

I hope this exploration of the fields surrounding the ECML as the focal point, have sharpened the reader's understanding of the complexity of the challenges facing the Centre as it strives to promote plurilingualism as an educational principle underpinning the professional learning opportunities it offers. This review has exposed the benefits of plurilingualism for the individual and for society on the one hand and, on the other, not only dissent when it comes to defining the "what" or the "how" of plurilingual education, but an alarming increase in the questioning of the "why". At the same time, it has revealed the complexity and breadth of the construct itself, a breadth which impacts on both content and target groups – from the language classroom to the entire curriculum, from the language teacher not only to other teachers, but to the wider education community including parents, administrators and head teachers (Council of Europe, 2015; European Commission, 2017). It is a breadth which contrasts with the constraining specificity of language teacher educators as the Centre's key stakeholders, in large part determined by its structures and supranational function, as I indicated in **Chapter One**.

My analysis of the literature on (language) teacher and teacher educator professional growth prompted further questions about the Centre. Which of the critical features identified can it or should it replicate? Given its transnational and cross-sectoral status, can it function as a kind of hybrid between a fully-fledged professional learning community and a more informal community of practice? Could the Centre draw on any of the existing models of professional learning to evaluate its work or might the data from this study feed into further development of any of these models? And when I combined these insights with the insights on plurilingualism and plurilingual education,

further and more complex questions arose: how can the Centre ensure that it exploits its uniqueness and offer professional learning opportunities which challenge mindsets and critically evaluate language policy, research and practice? How can the Centre ensure that its activities directed at language teacher educators enhance their roles as multipliers so that they, in turn, can support, directly or indirectly, the professional growth of others with a stake in language education, by dispelling language-related myths, disseminating insights on the benefits of plurilingual education and supporting (language) teachers to put associated pedagogies into practice?

I was able to draw on the insights from the literature to shape my schedule for the individual interviews with my research participants and for the topics to be discussed in the focused group conversation, more aware than ever of the yawning gap between the speed of change in society and in our schools on the one hand, and the constraints in teacher education programmes, the paucity of professional learning opportunities for teacher educators (Dengerink *et al.*, 2015) and the potential for "fossilisation" (Smith, 2003, p.203), on the other.

2.8.2 Further implications for my study: theoretical beginnings

Much of the research on professional growth, including the subset of research on cognition, draws on Vygotskian sociocultural theory (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996; Van Huizen *et al*., 2005), which emphasises praxis (Van Compernolle and Williams, 2013), and sees learning as dynamic and social, positing that knowledge is co-constructed through quality interaction with others, including "more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). From my own experience, I can broadly concur with this view of learning, so it is unsurprising that I started out assuming I would also use sociocultural theory for my own research. I noted however, that more recent research seemed to be suggesting that sociocultural theory alone does not fully capture the complexity of the construct of professional growth; Golombek and Doran (2014) insist on the importance of emotional aspects in addition to the social and the cultural, whilst Crookes (2015) proposes the addition of criticality, concerned by the instrumental nature of many language teacher professional development programmes which fail to address questions of "ethical knowing" (Scarino, 2005, p.33). Taylor (2017), in his consideration of teacher professional growth, acknowledges the relevance of a number of learning theories, including sociocultural theory and the neo-Vygotskian theory of communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991). He ultimately decides that complexity theory offers a better fit, based as it is on an understanding of both humans and systems as multifaceted, in constant evolution and defined by their inherent, yet non-static contradictions.

In summary, my reading of the literature on professional growth introduced me to the dominant framework of sociocultural theory, but also exposed me to other theoretical frameworks. It is from these early theoretical beginnings that I began to consider if it might not be premature to choose only the dominant theory for my own research; instead, I decided to leave room for the framework to grow and evolve naturally, in line with the project itself. I also wondered if I could apply Taylor's description of teacher professional growth as a "nested, complex system" (2017, p.99) to different theoretical frameworks which are not mutually exclusive but instead build on each other. I will expand on these theoretical beginnings in **Chapter 3: Methodology, Section 3.3 Conceptual and theoretical advancements**, advancements which will then be crystallised and consolidated in **Chapter 5: presenting, interpreting and questioning my data via themes.**

2.8.3 Chapter conclusion

Just as I did in **Chapter One**, I would like to conclude this literature review by returning to the "journey" metaphor, firstly in relation to myself and then in relation to the reader. My compass spun on its axis for a long time before I felt I had found the right location for my study; I knew from early on that it was situated at an intersection, but only gradually did the four fields come into focus, each with an important contribution to make. I could not zoom in on language educators at the ECML without first navigating the historical context into which the Centre was born or the choppy sea of plurilingual education, so fundamental to the Centre's goals and mission. And I needed to explore the vast terrain of (language) teacher professional growth on which the much smaller domain of (language) teacher educator professional growth is built. I sometimes doubted my sense of direction, but this journey of discovery was part of my own professional growth and the further I travelled, the better I understood that such growth is "not only about learning, but also entails unlearning" (Van der Klink *et al.*, 2017, p.167). I recognise that I am not observing from afar, but instead am an intrinsic part of this constant flux, "entangled" in my study (Davis and Sumara, 2008, p.174) and exerting influence upon it. It is a complicity which pervades every aspect of this report, including my choice of literature in this review and the analysis of my data, distilled as they are through the prism of my interpretivist values.

For my reader, I hope that this review can be considered an in-depth, if subjective travel guide to this varied and challenging terrain, crossing as it does the boundaries of a range of different territories, each with their own unique landscapes and history. I suspect it has not always been an easy read, but I hope that it has led not only to a deeper understanding of the focus of my study, but to a heightened interest in discovering my contribution to the field.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with both my rationale for a narrative-based methodology as well as a detailed description of the methods used. The word "rationale", however, risks misleading the reader into believing that my decisions around methodology and method can be presented as a neat and tidy package, perfectly aligned to a particular theoretical framework, with choice of methodology and methods then extending in a linear and logical fashion into the stages of data analysis and interpretation. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have already described the entire process leading to this research report as a journey; reaching the point where I finally felt comfortable, though never entirely free-of-doubt about my methodological and theoretical choices, represents a stage of that journey full of detours and dead-ends, an uphill struggle against the elements. So it is, that I will begin this chapter by returning to my positionality, briefly touched upon in **Section 1.5: My place in the research**. I will also return to theory, first addressed in **Section 2.8.2** of the literature review, outlining further evolutions in my thinking. The search for a theoretical framework will be connected to, and mirrored in, my subsequent reflections on methodology, where I describe in detail the narrative-based approach I adopted. This will include consideration of the theoretical, epistemological, ontological and philosophical assumptions underpinning my chosen methodology and engagement with the ethical challenges it poses, particularly in relation to the role of the researcher.

I will then take the reader through the actual process of putting my chosen methodology into practice, step by step, from the selection of the participants, through the application of the specific methods adopted for generating the data, to the transcription of the data and the subsequent approaches to data analysis. An ethical and reflexive lens remains a constant throughout. I conclude the chapter with some reflections on the limitations of the methodology and associated methods as well as the difficulties encountered, before providing an introduction to the presentation and interpretation of my data in **Chapters Four** and **Five**.

3.2 Researcher positionality

I believe in social justice, in the power of education to improve lives and in the intrinsic link between language and identity. I adhere to the interpretivist paradigm and consider that our understandings and experiences of the world are subjective and contextually embedded. This also applies to human learning which I view as social and dynamic, and which cannot be considered in isolation from the context in which it occurs (Thorne, 2005). My positionality aligns with sociocultural and

constructivist theories of learning which are based on an epistemology that considers knowledge as socially constructed and on an ontology, a view of reality, which "envisions a practical process of construction where people shape the social world, and in doing so are themselves transformed" (Packer and Goicoechea, 2000, p.234). I view the entire research endeavour as a learning and meaning-making process and have therefore chosen a qualitative, interpretive and narrative-based methodology which allows me to engage intensively with a small group of individuals in a bottom-up process, in order to try and understand the world through their eyes (Thorne, 2015).

I recognise that my positionality and my values underpin both my career in language education and my decision to undertake research in this area and that their influence can be seen in every stage of the research process I am about to describe. And whilst I acknowledge that without values there would be no educational research (Carr, 2000), and that all research begins with an opinion (May, 2011), I hope the process I adopted demonstrates my recognition of the need for constant reflexivity to avoid the temptation to look only for evidence which endorses that opinion.

3.3 Conceptual and theoretical advancements

3.3.1 Introduction

Since the sociocultural turn (Johnson, 2006), a Vygotskian theoretical approach has frequently been used both in research on second language acquisition and for research on language teacher and teacher educator professional learning (Van Huizen *et al.*, 2005; Kleinsasser, 2013). It has also been highlighted as particularly relevant in culturally and linguistically diverse environments (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996; Hennebry, 2014). It seemed fitting, then, that it should represent the starting point and bedrock for an exploration of theoretical frameworks for my own research, which attempts to answer the following main question and sub-questions:

How do language teacher educators perceive involvement in ECML activities in relation to their professional growth?

- *What role does plurilingual education play?*
- *How might professional learning opportunities at the ECML be optimised?*

Allow me now to first consider its relevance and then, through critical examination, to recognise its limitations before reaching out to additional theoretical perspectives, ones which more adequately represent not only the complexities of the ECML and the specificities of the professional growth of language teacher educators, but also help conceptualise my own learning journey through this research experience.

3.3.2 Finding sociocultural theory

It was through my reading for assignment three of the EdD, where I was tasked with critically reviewing a research methodology of my choice, that I came across Vygotsky and sociocultural theory for the first time. I found I could immediately relate to the two fundamental principles which underpin this theory: that cognitive development depends on social interaction and that educators need to target a specific range (Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development", defined on p.44), to ensure that this development is most effective. Moreover, when I think about the opportunities for professional learning offered by the ECML, I can clearly see his social development theory of learning in action – the learning takes place within a community, but the events are led by experts in a particular field of language education. The most successful events evidence scaffolded development which begins with an understanding of where the participants' learning is currently at, then guides them out of their comfort zone into a ZPD. Where feedback from events is less positive, this often indicates that the gap has simply been too great (ECML, 2017b).

There are other features of sociocultural theory which chime with my research: it considers the quality of relationships and interaction between individuals within a group, taking us to neo-Vygotskian learning theories such as the theory of communities of practice (Van Lare and Brazer, 2013); it insists on the interlinking of theory and practice (Lantolf and Poehner, 2014); and considers learning not simply as the acquisition of knowledge but rather as a process which should lead to "new ways of conceptualizing the world" (ibid., p.11). Moreover, it views language as 'the most ubiquitous, flexible and creative of the meaning-making tools available' (Mercer and Littleton 2007, p.2, cited in Swart *et al.*, 2018, p.412).

3.3.3 Finding sociocultural theory wanting

As I indicated in **Section 2.8.2,** my reading on teacher and teacher educator learning brought me into contact with a more critical use of sociocultural theory, together with other learning theories and theoretical frameworks which I decided needed further exploration. The first of these is social constructivism. Social constructivism is rooted in sociocultural theory, with Vygotsky considered the father of both (Nind and Lewthwaite, 2018), but while the latter places greater emphasis on the context of learning, and on learning as historically and culturally situated, the former places considerably greater emphasis on the learner, on the learner taking responsibility for the learning and on the negotiation of meaning. At first, I naively assumed that social constructivism was less relevant to the ECML, given the importance the Centre places on its learning community; when it came to data analysis, however, my thinking was rightly challenged.

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I also discovered another learning theory, that of "cognitive dissonance" (Festinger, 1962) which also chimed with my own experience. Cognitive dissonance arises when a person experiences conflicting thoughts, attitudes or behaviours and this results in an uncomfortable feeling of tension (ibid.). Research suggests that it is precisely this tension which can motivate an individual to engage in professional learning (Golombek and Johnson, 2004); in the case of teacher educators, this exercising of agency in relation to their own professional learning appears to be of paramount importance (Koster *et al.*, 2008; Ben-Peretz *et al.*, 2010; Karagiorgi and Nicolaidou, 2013). Clear parallels can be drawn between Festinger and Vygotsky in the sense that the former's cognitive tension seeks resolution through the latter's ZPD; the learning theories are complementary. Moreover, the emphasis on beliefs in the concept of cognitive dissonance struck me as being of particular relevance for the first of my research sub-questions on the place of plurilingual education.

I also discovered CHAT, Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Engeström, 2001), another learning theory, which stresses the role played by "activity systems", complex institutions in which learning takes place. I could see how this might be pertinent to the ECML, particularly given that the notion of boundary crossing as conducive to learning is key to this theory (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011), even though it is more often applied in the context of work-based learning. In addition, I found myself attracted to complexity theory, which, despite its name, I admit to finding more accessible than CHAT.

Viewing professional growth through a complexity lens allows us to accept the multiplicity of influencing factors and apparently contradictory ideas, such as contextualised learning which can also reveal generalisable principles (Opfer and Pedder, 2011). It also allows us to view professional growth in a more holistic way and regard the constant interaction between professionals and their environments, both local, such as the school or university, and national, such as the wider policy context, as "self-organising and emergent features of complex systems" (Keay *et al*., 2019, p.129). However, like sociocultural theory and social constructivism, it would require an analysis and interpretation of my data before I felt better placed to appreciate the complementarity of CHAT and complexity theory.

3.3.4 Theoretical framework or conceptual model?

> There is nothing as practical as a good theory (Lewin, 1943, p.118).

For a long time, it felt as if I was trapped in a confusing entanglement of theories until I realised that in my attempts to find the perfect fit for my study, I had lost sight of the purpose of theory: I needed to see it as a "sense-making tool" (Sfard, 1998, p.11) which would help me discover new insights

(ibid.). I also began to wonder if something more concrete such as one of the conceptual models or frameworks I had been reviewing in the literature (**Section 2.7**), which all draw on theoretical approaches, might not in fact be more suitable than a purely theoretical framework, particularly in the context of a professional doctorate which should impact on practice. The place of theory, after all, and the notion of praxis, dominate the literature on the professional growth of (language) teachers and teacher educators alike:

> [...] the value of theory is not that it is persuasive but that it is provocative. You do not apply it, you appraise it. You use it as a catalyst for reflection on your own teaching circumstances, or, to change the metaphor, as a point of reference from which to take bearings on your own practice" (Widdowson, 2003, p.27).

With Widdowson's words in mind, I therefore returned to the model I had already identified as having most in common with my research context, the InFo-TED Model, presented with permission from the authors on **p.118** and as **Appendix 2**.

This practical approach to theory, however, was doomed to fail as my data analysis will reveal. Once again I had tried to impose a framework on my study rather than let one evolve; with hindsight, I also recognise a degree of personal indulgence and my own need for some kind of guiding principle, not only for the research project but for my ongoing leadership of the ECML. This I found in the InFo-TED Model, labelled by the authors as "professional stance":

> [...] critical and inquiry-oriented (reflective, looking for evidence, critically making explicit one's stance); self-regulated; caring; contextual responsiveness; and being research informed. (Kelchtermans *et al.*, 2018, p.126).

3.3.5 Interim conclusion to the theoretical perspective

I embarked on this study, confident that in sociocultural theory I had found the theoretical framework which would successfully encapsulate (language) teacher educator professional growth, including an engagement with plurilingual education, through the ECML. Before long, however, and given the multifaceted and quite unique nature of the Centre (its structures, its stakeholders, its range of activity types), it became apparent that I would have to take a rather more eclectic approach to theory.

At first I was troubled by the absence of the perfect theory but as my reading expanded and my criticality grew, I began to embrace this principled eclecticism (Widdowson, 1990, cited in Newby, 2003, p.16) and to be comforted by Sfard's claim that "theoretical exclusivity and didactic single-mindedness can be trusted to make even the best of educational ideas fail" (1998, p.11).

By considering a range of theoretical and conceptual frameworks, I was able to step back and view the learning at the ECML in a more abstract manner, to connect it to several, interrelated bodies of literature, and to view my data critically through multiple lenses (Wellington *et al.*, 2005). The seed planted by the notion of professional growth as a "nested, complex system" (Taylor, 2017, p.99) had germinated and grown, and the idea of nested complementary theories, combined with different conceptual frames to help me make sense of my data, had by now taken hold. It would only be by working through the actual stages of generating, analysing and presenting the analysis of my data, however, that I would come to see more clearly exactly where and how to apply which particular theories or conceptual frames. I will therefore demonstrate the practical application of this eclectic approach when I come to describe these stages: data generation in **Section 3.5 Implementing the methodology**; data analysis in **Section 3.6** and data analysis presentation in **Chapters 4 and 5;** I will then use the concluding section of **Chapter 5, Section 5.6 Conceptual and theoretical consolidation,** to bring the different strands together**.**

3.4 In search of a methodology

In Section **1.5 My place in the research**, I indicated that I had discovered the methodology of narrative inquiry through my reading on (language) teacher and teacher educator professional growth. In the following paragraphs I will attempt to define narrative inquiry and to explain why this methodology both appealed to me and why it seemed appropriate for my own research. I will then outline the doubts I began to have and how these took me on a detour in search of possible alternatives, based on the misguided belief that I had to find and adopt a named methodology such as narrative inquiry or case study, wholesale. Once I realised that as long as my methodology was consistent with my interpretivist positionality and provided me with a coherent strategy to generate the knowledge needed to answer my research questions, I was able to return to narrative methodology and to where I had begun.

3.4.1 Defining a narrative-based approach

> […] narrative inquiry is a deliberative research process founded on a set of ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that are at play from the first narrative imaginings of a research puzzle through to the representation of the narrative inquiry in research text. (Clandinin *et al.*, 2007, p.33)

Narrative inquiry as a research methodology is generally attributed to two Canadian researchers, Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin, who first used the term in 1990 when describing a project on school reform (ibid.). There is no single, definitive definition (Barkhuizen and Wette, 2008) and the methodology encompasses a range of approaches to data generation, analysis and presentation

(Barkhuizen, 2016), but the key defining feature of all narrative research is that it ''uses or analyzes narrative materials'' (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998, p.2).

Narrative inquiry begins by acknowledging that human beings are storytellers who "individually and socially, lead storied lives" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p.2). It is through story that we think about and interpret our experience of the world and it is this experience which becomes the "phenomenon under study" (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007, p.45). By moving from "story telling" to "narrative inquiry", we make "the known and familiar strange" (Clandinin *et al.*, 2007, p.33), accepting that this process will result in a multiplicity of meanings (Gallagher, 2011). Narrative inquirers are urged to pay special attention to what Connelly and Clandinin describe as "three commonplaces of narrative inquiry—temporality, sociality, and place" (2006, p.479), in recognition of the fact that stories of human experience are socially and culturally embedded. Moreover, researcher and researched are in a dynamic relationship, one which should contribute to the learning of both (Doyle, 1997; Norton and Early, 2011). Narrative becomes both the method and phenomena of study (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007) so that in this holistic approach "the writing of a research text becomes a narrative act", (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p.485). The ultimate defining feature relates to the overall aim: to improve human life through education (Xu and Connelly, 2009).

3.4.2 Suitability of narrative inquiry for my research

As a methodology, narrative inquiry is in consonance with the different but complementary theories considered in **Section 3.3,** all of which build on sociocultural theory; narrative meaning-making is inextricably linked to the social, historical and cultural context in which it is embedded (Johnson, 2006). The intention is to use this meaning-making process as a development tool, (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007), with those involved "actively engaged in constructing the terms and conditions of their own learning" (Lantolf and Pavlenko, 2001, p.145), and to generate "the kind of data that are essential for research as praxis" (Norton and Early, 2011, p.417). As a "powerful pedagogical tool" (Doyle, 1997, p.94), it is in harmony with Vygotsky's, Festinger's and neo-Vygotskian theories of learning and is often the methodology of choice for teacher research, research on cognition and research on the professional learning of both teachers and teacher educators (Borg, 2006; Johnson, 2006; Kleinsasser, 2013). As my literature review demonstrated, these interrelated research fields all feed into my niche area, the professional growth of language teacher educators, which in turn builds on research specific to language teacher development. Moreover, I found evidence not only of its suitability for accessing collective knowledge in communities (McDrury and Alterio, 2003), but for promoting the role of values and intercultural communication within language education, further reinforcing its suitability for my research context:

A narrative approach to foreign language teacher development has the potential and power to help shape global values on the contributions and gifts that cultures have for one another. (Xu and Connelly, 2009, p.226)

The more I read of Connelly and Clandinin's work, the more closely I identified with their approach, not only in terms of my research project, but also in relation to my own professional learning and professional identity, as my roles within language education evolved from teacher to Director to researcher.

3.4.3 Challenges of narrative inquiry for my research

Just as Connelly and Clandinin's work inspired me, so too did it cause me to question my choice of methodology. I realised my small-scale investigation did not conform to their comprehensive model of narrative inquiry, as their definition of the term indicates:

[…] a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.20)

I had a relatively small window within which to generate my data; the entire process would take place in one location at the ECML and although I very much wanted my participants' personal stories, I also wanted them to use these as the basis for a meta-level discussion of key constructs. For a time I could not decide if I needed to change my approach so that it conformed to a given methodology or if I needed to find the methodology that would somehow "match" what I wanted to do; I looked for the answer in other theses and even went as far as exploring "bricolage", an approach which draws on different methodologies and methods in a process of "trial and error" (Holt and Littlewood, 2017, p.258). But even this eclectic approach did not work because unlike my research, it uses data from a range of different sources (ibid.). It was only when I went back to early generic reading material on research and found Wellington's definition of methodology which I had either missed or, more likely, misunderstood the first time round – "the activity or business of choosing, reflecting upon, evaluating and justifying the methods you use" (2015, Chapter 2, Section 2) – that I realised I had been trying to solve the wrong problem. Just how fundamental narrative is to my research will become even more apparent through the insights as presented in **Chapter 4**; I had finally understood that I could base my approach on Connelly and Clandinin's, adapting it as necessary to suit this small-scale research project. In acknowledgment of these modifications, I have chosen to describe my approach as "narrative-based", rather than as "narrative inquiry".

3.4.4 Ethics of a narrative-based approach

> Ethical considerations permeate narrative inquiries from start to finish: at the outset as ends-in-view are imagined; as inquirer-participant relationships unfold, and as participants are represented in research texts. (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p.483)

As indicated in the introduction, I recognise the constant presence of ethical concerns and agree with Tracy (2010) who argues for ethics to be included as a criterion against which to judge the quality of research. Where "ethically significant moments" (Kubanyiova, 2008, p.516) relate to specific stages of implementation of the methods, these will be contextualised and addressed at that point, but it is important to first consider the ethical implications of the choice of methodology in itself.

Just as the decision to undertake narrative research reflects a conscious choice of methodology that aligns with my positionality, so too does this choice reveal a particular ethical stance, one which rejects a single authoritative voice in favour of the co-existence of multiple interpretations. But this is no simple dichotomy, because as researcher I remain the holder of "narrative privilege" (Adams, 2008, p.180), privilege to choose the participants and whose stories to hear. With this privilege, comes a dual and sometimes conflicting responsibility (Josselson, 2007): on the one hand, a responsibility to protect the participants by telling their stories as respectfully and honestly as possible, and on the other, towards the academic community with the need to ensure the production of "sound knowledge" (Hammersley and Traianou, 2014, p.6) which should have potential value to wider society (Kvale, 2007). I also recognise that ultimately, this report is less about the participants themselves and more about my own interpretation (Josselson, 2007), which links us back to the earlier section on researcher positionality and values, and forward to the section on the role of the researcher.

3.4.5 Methodology, ethics and the role of the researcher

Of all the defining features of narrative methodology, it is the dynamic relationship between researcher and researched which is central to the context of my study and reflected in my particular choice of methods. I recognise, however, that it is this very centrality which requires me to think reflexively and to problematise this relationship. Having chosen to undertake research on the Centre which I lead, I found myself immediately facing a double moral dilemma: that of the "thorny ethical problem" of power (Howe and Moses, 1999, p.44) on the one hand, and of the insider researcher on the other, in danger of assuming that my research participants share my beliefs and values (Court and Abbas, 2013). I also recognised that through my passion for language education and my commitment to the ECML, I ran the risk of being fiercely over-protective of the Centre I love. It was

therefore incumbent upon me to be "attentive to issues of power, influence, coercion, and manipulation" (Haverkamp, 2005, p.152) and to try and limit the influence of my own values, (Greenbank, 2003). These ethical considerations and a desire to create a more equal relationship between researcher and researched, influenced my choice of particular methods, of approaches to data analysis and of the format used for presenting my insights, the details of which will follow shortly.

Issues of power, of identity and of values, however, were not the only reason for these choices. They were also based on the conviction that if we wish to produce research to improve education, then we need to ensure its relevance and this can only be achieved through direct involvement of the people concerned (Bronkhorst *et al.*, 2013), which in turn contributes to the "truth value" of the research (ibid., p.97), because the participants can corroborate the insights (Tracy, 2010). Moreover, there is strong evidence to suggest that narrative inquiry produces the type of data needed for "research as praxis" (Norton and Early, 2011, p.417), a principle which "seeks to integrate theory and practice in the interests of educational and social change" (ibid., p.435.) These latter two aspects were of particular importance to me in the context of the ECML: I wanted to devise a research process which mirrored, as far as possible, the philosophy of the Centre, one of a pro-active learning community of different but equal contributors, focusing on praxis. Where possible I also involved my participants in the different stages of the research process, from commenting on my proposal, through discussing the format and structure of the interview and focused group conversation, to giving feedback on the transcripts.

3.4.6 Determining the methods

As reflected in my research questions, I wanted to gain insight into both individual and collective experiences of professional growth and plurilingual education and the relationship of these constructs to the ECML. I therefore opted for one individual method of data generation, a semi-structured interview with each participant, in which they would be free to tell their own stories within an overall framework of guiding questions, and one collective method, a focused group conversation involving the same six participants. This dual approach aligns with sociocultural/social constructivist theories which highlight the interdependence of individual and collective learning processes (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996). I hoped the focused group conversation would provide an opportunity to explore further any key themes emerging from the individual interviews and might also act as a vehicle for challenging individuals' ideas and creating new knowledge.

The reader will no doubt by now be wondering why I always refer to the group discussion as a focused group conversation (Lamb, 2005). On the one hand I hope the meaning is clear from the combination of the individual words: it is a conversation focused on specific topics and involving a group of people. But there is also another reason: I wanted to distinguish it from the term "focus group" which is usually used in research to refer to an exchange among people who have not met before, where the purpose is exploratory, often as the first step towards designing a questionnaire, and at the same time relate it to the term "focused conversation" (Nutbrown, 2014). When I came across Nutbrown's use of this term, I was struck by the clear parallels between my research context and several of its defining characteristics: "familiarity of members of the group", "an agreed topic of shared experience, knowledge and interest", "willingness and desire to, eventually, make this exploration or the outcomes of it public" and "mutual respect for opinions, culture, experience" (ibid., p.10). It is an approach in which the co-construction with the research participants is not limited to the data generation but continues in both the data analysis and in the actual reporting. This corresponds to a more complete form of what Barkhuizen (2011) has called "narrative knowledging" – "the meaning making, learning, or knowledge construction that takes place during the narrative research activities of (co)constructing narratives, analyzing narratives, reporting the insights, and reading/watching/listening to research reports' (ibid., p.395) – which in turn strengthens the validity of the insights (Rajadurai, 2010).

Aware that there were certain defining features of Nutbrown's focused conversations that I would not be able to replicate, such as the repeated long exchanges which developed into fully co-authored writing sessions (Nutbrown, 2014, p.3), I felt I could not use exactly the same term. Despite these limitations, I hoped that my single, focused group conversation would still result in "new points of convergence as we uncover something of our own lives and our own thinking" (ibid., p.5). I was intrigued by the use of "our", unsure at this point of my exact role in my own focused group conversation. I wondered if it might also be an opportunity for me as researcher to become more of an active "working, narrative partner" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2012, p.33), included in the "collective meaning-making" process (Nutbrown, 2014, p.9), through which we would consider how our individual stories "fitted together" (ibid., p.8), in contrast to the individual interview where the lead voice would be the interviewee (Wellington, 2015).

However, it would be both disingenuous and irresponsible of me to suggest that the issues of power were somehow completely resolved through these elements of co-construction. As researcher, ultimate control over the entire process resided with me from determining the nature of the study to deciding how to frame the research report and whose stories to emphasise (Pavlenko, 2002).

I will turn now to the "messiness" of the research process itself (Wellington *et al.*, 2005, p.106) and see how the details of this rich, but complex and ethically challenging methodology played out in practice.

3.5 Implementing the methodology

3.5.1 Introduction

In the following section and sub-sections, I will outline and justify my choice of participants, including questions of access, consent and confidentiality, critically exam the two key methods used, including the planning, piloting and review stages, before describing and problematising both the transcription process(es) and the different approaches to data analysis. I will draw the chapter to a close with some evaluative reflections on my experience of this process.

3.5.2 Identifying and approaching the research participants

In terms of selection criteria for my participants, I devised these to best reflect the nature of my research context: diversity of roles and countries, and therefore of perspectives, and a balance of English and French as the two official working languages of the Council of Europe. I also considered gender balance to be an important criterion, which, together with the others, would help limit bias (Woods, 1985) by providing a "plurality of understandings" (Allwright, 2005, p.361). Conscious that my own experience of the Centre amounted to just over five years, and keen to understand how the ECML had developed over time, I also wanted participants who had known the Centre for much longer, in the hope that the "three commonplaces of narrative inquiry—temporality, sociality, and place" (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p.479), would prompt "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973), detailed descriptions of the context which go beyond simple lists of actions, are interpretative in nature and which yield rich and extensive data. I also had to add "convenience" to my criteria (Opie, 2010, Chapter 6, Section 4) by thinking about planned events at the Centre during 2018 when I would be able to generate my data. With all of this in mind, I identified six individuals who correspond to LeCompte and Goertz's description of "key informants" as "individuals who possess special knowledge, status or communication skills and who are willing to share that knowledge with the researcher" (1984 in Wellington, 2015, Chapter 6, Introduction). All six exercise a certain influence over the Centre, either as ambassadors or as decision-makers and are individuals, who, in their different expert roles, also broadly correspond to my adopted definition of language teacher educators, as those "who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers" (European Commission, 2013b, p.8). In addition to their individual and collective stories of the Centre, I hoped these six individuals would be able to share their perceptions of how the Centre has

influenced other language professionals, with whom they are in regular contact. I have chosen not to provide details of their specific roles in order to protect their identities.

But did these stringent selection criteria absolve me of ethical concerns? Not at all; I was very aware that through my pre-selection I had already exercised power and that whilst the strength of our working relationship should mean they would not shy away from voicing criticism, including criticism of my leadership (Walliman, 2006; Polkinghorne, 2007), that very strength could paradoxically result in them feeling pressure to meet certain expectations (Kubanyiova, 2008). I tried to address this concern already in the procedures I put in place to approach them, inform them about the project and ask for their consent, conscious that they might say yes out of a sense of duty, even if deep down they might prefer not to get involved. I drew up a list of other potential participants which helped ensure that I did not inadvertently put pressure on them; I also spoke to each of them informally on several occasions about my research plans, asking them to think carefully before agreeing and to agree, if and only if, they really wanted to be involved, making it clear that I had a wide pool of possible candidates. Once I had received formal approval from the University of Sheffield Ethics Committee, (a copy of the Ethics Approval letter appears as **Appendix 1**), I then sent out information sheets and consent forms and, in my accompanying email, reiterated the concerns expressed in the informal exchanges, reminding the potential participants that an initial acceptance could be revoked at any time. I raised the question of their agreement again at several moments throughout the actual research process, drawing on the model of informed consent discussed in Howe & Moses (1999) as "ongoing dialogue".

In addition to summarising the research project and outlining the role expected of each participant, the information sheet also addressed issues of confidentiality and anonymity. With regard to the former, it was stressed that draft transcripts would be shared with participants prior to their inclusion in the final report, so that they had a chance to correct, remove or amend information if they felt it was inaccurate or had the potential to cause them or the authorities they work for any reputational harm. Participants were asked to agree to individual interview transcripts being shared with the other research participants, but only after each participant had approved their own draft. Information was also provided on how the data generated would be stored, who could have access to it and how it might be used both during and after the current research project. Participants were also informed that they could choose between English or French or switch between the two as they deemed appropriate. Although all can communicate well in English, it was important to stress their freedom to choose their preferred language and thereby reduce the risk of "power asymmetries" (Roberts, 2006, p.21) through the dominance of English.

As for participant anonymity, and despite putting protective measures in place such as the use of pseudonyms for the participants' names, pseudonyms of their choosing, as well as removing any references in their transcripts which might reveal their identities, the fact that the research is openly about the ECML, a Centre that is one-of-a-kind, meant I could only limit, but never completely eliminate this risk of deductive disclosure (Kaiser, 2009). I did consider trying to disguise key information about the Centre and giving it a pseudonym, but had I done so, I would not have been able to answer my research questions. Moreover, I would have been unable to include the necessary critical analysis of the Council of Europe's work in language education and the development of plurilingual education, and much of my data would have been significantly distorted.

In addition to making the risk of deductive disclosure clear in the information sheet, and repeatedly stressing their right to withdraw, I also discussed it with each participant. All six understood the risk, one they felt was offset at least in part by being able to amend the draft transcripts, and, to my delight, agreed to take part in the project.

3.5.3 Planning the individual interviews

Aware that I had limited options for scheduling my individual interviews and the subsequent, focused group conversation because these had to coincide with events at the ECML in which my participants were involved, I began contacting them as soon as I received ethics approval. It became immediately obvious that my initial plans to have two separate interviews with each participant were simply unrealistic. Even with only one individual interview each, it took me most of 2018 to generate my data, with two interviews taking place via Skype because of changes to participants' plans.

Instead of two one-hour interviews, I agreed on an extended interview of between one and a half and two hours with my participants, including a short break if desired. This change in plan had implications for what I described in my thesis proposal as a "refinement of data" (Breslin, 2017), as I had initially hoped that the second interview would begin by discussing and amending the transcript of the first. The agreed alternative was to send the participants the draft transcript of the extended interview and to continue communication by email or by phone to ensure that all individual transcripts had been "refined" and agreed before the focused group conversation. My next step was to approach someone to carry out a pilot interview, so I drew on my back-up list of potential participants, approaching one of them whom I knew would be in the Centre in mid-December 2017. I had already decided that my interviews would be semi-structured, to allow me to determine the main topics to be covered with all six participants on the one hand, yet on the other, to have the

flexibility to change the order in which I approached these, to word topic-specific questions differently and use different probes, depending on the participant's role in the Centre and on his/her initial responses (Opie, 2010). I kept these questions to a minimum, not wanting them to act as constraints, so that participants would have time and space to tell their individual stories, stories which I hoped would bring out other interesting topics or dimensions that I had not anticipated, but still within the overall focus of my research.

3.5.4 Preparing, piloting and evaluating the draft interview questions

In preparation for the pilot interview, and, with my research questions as my starting point, I created my interview guide and from this list of topics developed a detailed interview schedule (Wellington, 2015, Chapter 6, Section 2). Given my relationship to the interviewee, I chose enabling, open-ended questions to limit confirmation bias, and organised them so that I began with a broad focus on the participant herself, on the story of her own professional growth, before gradually narrowing the perspective towards the ECML itself, firstly in relation to my interviewee and then to its influence on the professional growth of other language educators within her circle. Connelly and Clandinin's three "commonplaces" (2006) provided the overall framework for the interview schedule which I then reviewed to ensure inclusion of descriptive, structural and comparative questions/follow-up probes, drawing on Guest et *al.*'s (2013) simplification of Spradley's typology (1979). As I prepared the schedule, I tried, where possible, to combine all three question types with the three "commonplaces". It is worth noting here that Connelly and Clandinin's notion of "place" goes well beyond the physical location to embrace the wider political and sociocultural contexts, both local and global (Barkhuizen and Hacker, 2008). For example, I included "place" in an initial descriptive question about a specific ECML event. I then planned to probe this further with questions about the relationship among the participants ("sociality"), with a structural question to elicit a list of the factors which the interviewee considered had contributed to the success of the event in terms of professional growth, and a comparative one in which I intended to ask my interviewee to think about the ECML as a learning community and how its relationship to plurilingual education had evolved over the years (temporality). Towards the end I included a very broad question on the InFo-TED Model and whether or not it might be relevant to the ECML. With a first draft ready, I then returned to my research questions and reviewed my schedule, checking to see if it would yield the data I needed to answer them.

When it came to the actual pilot interview, however, I found that apart from showing my interviewee the InFo-TED Model, I rarely needed to use my probes: I witnessed the natural "unifying force" of narrative (Byrne, 2017, p.38) as the answers to many of my planned questions emerged

spontaneously through my interviewee's rich and fascinating story of her own professional growth and her experience of the ECML.

With the interviewee's permission, I had recorded the pilot interview and listened to the recording with Kvale's criteria (2007) for evaluating the quality of a research interview in mind. These include having shorter questions which trigger longer answers; obtaining spontaneous answers which are "rich, specific and relevant" (p.80); requesting clarification and using follow-up questions; checking the accuracy of ongoing interpretation; and a resultant transcript which requires little further explanation. Undertaking and reviewing the pilot interview proved to be invaluable preparation for the actual interviews as it helped me adjust the timings and review my draft questions, thinking not only about the degree to which they informed the research questions, but how they might be combined so that Connelly and Clandinin's "commonplaces" became enabling rather than constraining devices. These practical adjustments were relatively straightforward to make; more challenging, however, were the ethical issues which emerged: I realised that although I was conscious of the distinction between neutral probes and leading prompts, I had sometimes inadvertently used the latter (Parsons, 1984 in Opie, 2010) and that despite my intention of making the individual interview primarily about the interviewee, in reality had struggled to keep my own contributions to a minimum. This was never going to be easy and exemplified one of the "known imperfections" of in-depth interviews (Johnson and Rowlands, 2012), where the interviewer is part of the community being researched. It was a timely reminder, however, that if I really wanted to hear my participant's story and enjoy the benefits of in-depth interviewing – ideal for capturing multiple perspectives (ibid., p.101), open-ended and discursive (Guest *et al.* 2013, p.119) , – I ought to say as little as possible and view my schedule as a guide rather than a checklist. A sample interview schedule can be found in **Appendix 3**.

3.5.5 The actual interviews

Like all real-life exchanges, the planning differed somewhat from the execution, with some interviews shorter than expected, and others noticeably longer. They all began with a discussion of the Information Sheet and a signing of the Consent Form (except in the interviews which took place via Skype), with a chance for participants to reconsider their involvement or clarify any doubts, and for me to reiterate assurances regarding confidentiality and anonymity. The atmosphere was professional but also friendly and I did my best to put my interviewees at ease. With permission from the participants, all the interviews were audio-recorded on my laptop, its initial off-putting presence on the table quickly forgotten as the interview unfolded. With my first question I simply asked each participant to tell me the story of his/her career in the field of language education; some

chose to go back to their childhoods; others began at university or with their first job. It was the question that triggered the longest, and often richest response, a kind of condensed life-history which, within a reasonable time-limit, I simply let flow. My interview schedule was used for subsequent questions if the answers had not already emerged from the narrative, but often these questions were reframed in the light of what I had heard. After each interview I reviewed the questions planned against the questions I actually asked; in one face-to-face interview and in the two carried out via Skype it had not been possible to look at the InFo-TED Model, so I simply sent the participants the web-link and indicated we would return to this in the focused group conversation. My first interview was in English and my second in French; when I compared these two, I also realised some elements had been lost in translation. I tried to address this in subsequent interviews in French. These were six people I knew, or thought I knew well; in fact, it was only through these interviews that I really got to know them.

3.5.6 Transcription as a bridge from the interviews to the focused group conversation

As soon as I could after each individual interview, I started work on a full transcription from the audio file; I quickly realised that even in instances where I could clearly make out every word, this passage from oral to written was not just a hugely time-consuming process but one which was riddled with unexpected challenges, both practical and ethical. What was I to do with repeated words, with pauses or laughter, with phrases begun but not completed, or with grammatical inconsistencies natural to speech but which looked so incongruent on the word-processed page and would no doubt cause my participants embarrassment? Was it my place to add the missing word they meant to say but didn't or to "correct" the grammar? I searched for guidance in online methodology texts and was initially comforted to discover that there is no single correct way to undertake transcription (Kvale, 2007), only to be troubled by the realisation that this then placed the onus on me to make decisions, with the accompanying ethical risk of bias (Kowal and O'Connell, 2014). It was precisely because of this risk that I decided to undertake a complete transcription, rather than transcribe only selected passages and to reproduce the text exactly as it was said, including indications for pauses, for emphasis or laughter, making no changes to grammatical errors or additions where words were missing. Even though I had kept my own involvement in the interview to the absolute minimum, I felt it was important to include not only my questions, but also interventions such as "okay" or "thank you" or even just "mm", in recognition that this contributes to the "interactional work" (Rapley, 2012, p.546) taking place in an interview situation and to prepare the ground for a "more symmetrical approach" (ibid., p.543) to the analysis.

As I worked my way through the process of transcribing, I was aware that I could not isolate this rather mechanical task completely from the cognitive one of interpretation. As I listened, listened again and typed, I also considered the paralanguage (Squire, 2008): the pauses, the laughter, the emotions revealed through the changes of tone (Pavlenko, 2007), jotting down my initial impressions. I noticed patterns emerging, spotted inconsistencies I knew I wanted to explore and found myself constantly thinking about the usefulness of the data in relation to my research questions. I also started noting down possible themes to explore in more depth in the focused group conversation, as well as initial codes for data analysis which I added to and refined with each new transcription. It was at this point that I also began to have doubts about the usefulness of sharing complete transcripts of individual interviews among the participants as had originally been agreed, but thought I would wait for each participant's reaction to his/her draft transcript first, before making any final decisions.

I conducted a member-check by sending each participant the draft transcript of their interview, explaining at the same time how I had gone about the transcription and asking them to complete any sentences/phrases I could not hear from the audio file or correct anything I had picked up wrongly. I also indicated they could add to their answers, if they considered them incomplete. All additions and changes were tracked, so that I could clearly see the evolution of the text. Given the professional profile of my participants, their reactions were as I had anticipated: responsible – diligently amending/completing or adding to the information; ethical – censoring certain passages they felt were either too personal or which could be harmful to others; intellectual – providing me with links to works or authors they had mentioned; emotional and highly self-critical – expressing feelings of awkwardness, shame even, at what they considered to be the poor quality of their spoken language, native and non-native speakers alike. Reflexive too, making insightful comments not only in relation to themselves – "I realise my narrative is polyphonic: that people have spoken with and through me! It is also highly experiential while my written work tends more to the conceptual." (Babel, 2018) – but also in relation to my role, with a timely reminder of the inevitable power imbalance at play:

> […] you had been completely upfront when you told us about your research, that you were not the neutral researcher who comes from outside and I probably wanted to make myself (and my ideas) better known to you […] In short, even though you never impose your institutional position, which I greatly appreciate in you, this aspect was very much present (ibid.).

Transcribing and then receiving their feedback on the transcriptions clearly represented "ethically significant moments" (Kubanyiova, 2008, p.516) for me and I found that by concentrating on what kind of transcription was appropriate for my research (Kvale, 2007), and was aligned to my

positionality, I was able to address my participants' concerns: I wrote to each participant individually and then collectively, reassuring them that given the interpretive nature of the research, I was much more interested in the intended meaning rather than in the technical accuracy of their transcripts and would therefore incorporate their proposed changes. I explained that I no longer intended to share full transcripts within the participant group and instead would extract comments grouped by themes as a basis for discussion in the focused group conversation. I also gave them reassurances about this final report, indicating that it would only contain extracts from agreed transcripts from individual interviews and from the focused group conversation. For my French-speaking participants the focus on intended meaning presented additional challenges, as any extracts for inclusion would need to be translated. I therefore agreed that I would propose a translation which I would send them to approve or modify as they saw fit. As I was not undertaking discourse analysis, I also took the decision not to include a full coded transcript with this thesis, but instead two sample passages (agreed in advance), one from an individual interview and one from the focused group conversation. These can be found in **Appendices 7 and 8**.

3.5.7 Planning the focused group conversation

The entire process of transcribing and member-checking outlined in the previous section had yielded an initial analysis of the data which was formative (Opie, 2010), leading me to reconsider the focused group conversation and plan it in such a way that it would improve data generation. The final decision to organise it around key themes, however, which to the reader may seem like an obvious approach, was not reached lightly, and only after an iterative and arduous planning process which resulted in what could broadly be termed a guide, whose fitness-for-purpose I continued to doubt, even as the focused group conversation unfolded. It would only be in the final stages of data analysis that I came to recognise its worth, even if, with hindsight, I would probably have approached it differently. Of course, some of the doubts resulted from the fact that unlike the individual interview, I could not pilot the focused group conversation because a key feature was the fact that it would involve the same participants.

The development of the guide began with my notes from the transcriptions, a muddled list of questions that arose as I read, points I felt needed clarification and ruminations around the degree of structure required: could I use Connelly and Clandinin's three "commonplaces" of sociality, temporality and place as a frame or should the InFo-TED Model, which had already engendered some interesting feedback in the individual interviews be the springboard for an open-ended discussion? In the end it was a return to both my research questions and to Nutbrown's "focused conversations" (2014) which guided my thinking. By returning to the former and looking again at the

data generated so far, I realised that I needed to go deeper not only into the two constructs of professional growth and plurilingual education underpinning these questions and how these related to the ECML, but in fact to view the ECML not only as a context for professional learning but also as a construct in its own right, as "an idea or theory containing various conceptual elements, typically one considered to be subjective and not based on empirical evidence" (LEXICO, 2017), and to think about the ways in which the three constructs converged. I therefore decided to gather together comments from the individual interviews around these three constructs and use these as the basis for discussion. I selected contrastive statements from the interview transcripts, believing that by being attentive to, and willing to work through, differences of opinion, the very "cracks and fissures" where "inquiry spaces are made possible" (Clandinin *et al.*, 2009, p.84), this "sharing and comparing" would eventually lead to "'organizing and conceptualizing' as a higher-level process in the co-construction of meaning" (Morgan, 2012, p.162). I also wanted to see progression from a focus at individual level and on their personal stories to one that broadened out to focus on the ECML community and, just as in Nutbrown's "focused conversations" (2014), I saw this exploration of themes from the individual interviews as a form of data analysis by the research participants themselves, whom I hoped would now "allow their ideas to be shaped by those of others" (ibid. p.14).

I developed various iterations of something akin to an interview methodology matrix (O'Shaughnessy, 2010), a table in which I broke the planned focused group conversation into horizontal sections, including an introduction, a section with sub-sections for each of the three constructs and their points of intersection, a section on the InFo-TED Model and its potential relevance to the ECML, and a final one on the research experience itself. For each section I had vertical columns for notes on what I wanted to find out, what probes I would use for this, what concepts were being explored and what potential problems might arise. I then used this matrix to produce a detailed schedule including timings, how I would introduce each section, and which extracts I would use from the individual interviews. I sent the participants an email before we met as a group, simply indicating that we would be looking more closely at some of the themes which had emerged from the interviews. For the meeting itself I prepared separate handouts with extracts from the transcriptions for each of the three constructs, and a handout on the InFo-TED Model, having built time for participants to read these into the schedule. A copy of the schedule can be found in **Appendix 4**. No doubt the astute reader has already detected the self-doubt behind this over-zealous planning; going into that meeting with my participants felt very much like early teaching experiences where, uncertain of my bearings, I had tried to reassure myself by preparing for every eventuality – an impossible task to which the next section will bear witness.

3.5.8 The actual focused group conversation including transcription

By the time the focused group conversation took place, I had been actively engaged with my research participants for approximately ten months, and although I had already anticipated a possible evolution in my role to being a "working, narrative partner" (Gubrium and Holstein, 2012, p.33) in this second method of data generation, I had not expected this to happen in the way that it did. I had somehow imagined that I would add my own opinions and experience to the exchange, naively forgetting my role as researcher; it was in this capacity that the participants wanted my participation "in a more self-consciously collaborative way" (Abu-Lughod *et al.*, 2003, p.475), as they asked me to share the insights from my literature review with them, to explain why I was attracted to the InFo-TED Model or why I had asked them for a metaphor for the ECML in the individual interviews; they were genuinely interested in how my research was developing, engaging whole-heartedly in the focused group conversation, switching between English and French.

My carefully planned questions were barely needed – I only had to mention one of the three constructs and they launched spontaneously into an intense debate, so intense that we spent nearly three and a half hours together, including a short break. At times I steered, insisting that they took the time to read through the selection of extracts I had put together from the individual interviews. When I saw that these worked successfully as probes, I was pleased; for example, there was consternation about some of the comments on professional growth and awareness that key aspects were missing; when it came to plurilingual education they noticed the contradictions and lack of clarity. Yet despite the amount of time, I had to make an on-the-spot difficult decision to abandon either the planned section on the future of the Centre or the section on the InFo-TED Model. I chose to dedicate the remaining time to the latter and almost immediately regretted my decision: despite having prepared a handout on the InFo-TED Model which I thought had just the right amount of information to digest in ten minutes, some participants complained they didn't have the full picture, others that they needed more time to digest the information, while those who preferred to communicate in French were confused by key vocabulary such as the word "stance" in "professional stance". With hindsight, I should have sent them the handout in advance, but I had rejected this idea, conscious of how much of their time I had taken up already. As I did my best to address these issues, I was all-the-while conscious that my own bias was coming through and the sense of satisfaction I had experienced as they discussed the extracts from the individual interviews was quickly replaced by one of despair. My spirits were raised again as they talked about what their involvement in my research had meant to them but the doubts about how I had handled the focused group conversation lingered.

Just as I had done with the individual interviews, I produced a full transcript and asked for them each to check their own contributions for missing or, more often the case for French, misunderstood words. They were free to add, amend or censor, again with a focus on meaning over accuracy. It was only through the process of transcription and analysis, and the discovery that it had been precisely the controversy which had produced remarkably rich and insightful data that my doubts eventually began to dissipate.

3.6 Detailed analysis of the data

3.6.1 Introduction

Data generation and data analysis need to inform each other. The latter is an ongoing process, characterised as "iterative", "emergent" and "interpretive" (Dörnyei, 2007 cited in Barkhuizen *et al*., 2014, p.72). It begins early in the research project so that it is formative rather than summative, with the researcher willing to reconsider the design of the project in the light of these insights. Moreover, it requires an interesting combination of diligence and precision on the one hand, and the ability to think laterally and creatively, on the other (Opie, 2010, Chapter 11, Section 4).

This ongoing process was well under way by the time I had completed the transcription of the focused group conversation and had used member checking as a feedback loop: I had generated all my data, carried out some initial analysis of the individual interviews as preparation for the focused group conversation in which the participants themselves had contributed further to this analysis. I had added to my provisional list of codes as a result of the transcription and feedback stages and was now ready to undertake a deeper and more complete analysis. Given that I had already grouped comments from the individual interviews into broad themes and had further explored these in the focused group conversation, I assumed I would now continue with a thematic analysis, drawing on Braun and Clarke (2006), and would work through the six stages proposed in Wellington's simplified model of the "Constant Comparative Method" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Goertz and LeCompte, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1985, cited in Wellington, 2015, Chapter 11, Section 1): immersion; reflection; taking apart; recombining/synthesising; relating and locating, and finally, presenting. Moreover, we had just had an EdD weekend dedicated to data analysis and I was ready and raring to go.

3.6.2 Stages one to four: from immersion to synthesis … and back again

And so I immersed myself in the entirety of the data, reading and re-reading, listening to the audio files again, writing memos, adding to my list of provisional codes in search of patterns and paradoxes, back and forth "in a recursive movement" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.10). I had made a decision early on not to use computer software for the analysis, partly through fear of the time I knew I would need to become familiar with the technology, partly because I worried, possibly irrationally, that it would distance me from my data.

My approach was both inductive and deductive - from the first individual interview I let the data talk to me and came up with codes, but then took these codes to the next data set, each time adding to and reviewing the list. At one point I had a list with ninety-five codes/categories, seven of which had sub-codes. I started to see clear thematic groupings emerging from the codes, though some parts of my data were difficult to categorise. I made a conscious decision not to dismiss these apparent "discrepant cases" (Roberts, 2006, p.13) but rather to try and explore them further. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that whenever I added a new code to my list this was purely inductive, because many of these codes came from my experience in the field and from my reading of the relevant bodies of literature. This became even more apparent when I attempted to group my codes into sub-themes: the provisional list began to look like a near replica of the various sub-sections of my literature review on "key features", "(teacher) cognition" and "theoretical underpinnings".

 Aware that the concepts included within these sub-themes were inextricably linked and dynamically inter-related, I then progressed from sub-themes to broader groupings according to the three constructs linked to my researcher questions – professional growth, plurilingual education and the ECML. For example, I had "praxis" and "agency" for "professional growth"; "translanguaging" and "intercultural" for "plurilingual education"; "wider political aims" and "transnational" for the ECML and "ZDP" and "multiple interacting agents" for theory. Others, such as "different pedagogic traditions" as a code, or "tensions" as an overarching theme, were invented in direct response to the data.

At a certain moment I felt I had exhausted the search, that I had coded my data as fully as possible and that my list of codes, grouped into sub-themes, themes and overarching themes was complete. (A copy of the initial codes grouped within themes can be found in **Appendix 5**.) Yet I still had a feeling of not having done my data justice. Even with overarching themes, the synthesis seemed incomplete – something about the holistic and narrative nature of the data had not been fully captured. I decided to return to Connelly and Clandinin as my original inspiration for undertaking

narrative research, and to review my data through the lens of the "three commonplaces" of temporality, sociality and place. Having engaged at length with various conceptual models and frameworks for professional growth (see **Section 2.7**), and having drawn on concepts from these models for the data analysis, I was fully aware that this was not about trying to rigidly impose any particular framework on my data, but instead to see if the framework provided by these "three commonplaces", by reducing the complexity of the data, might generate new insights (Osberg, 2008, cited in Taylor, 2017). And it did – not by generating new themes, but by shedding light on the *progression* of certain themes (Squire, 2008, p.57) such as the gradual shift from talk of "linguistic diversity" to "plurilingualism", or on the evolving social and political environment, and in doing so it helped me see that a purely thematic analysis ran the risk of simplifying, decontextualising and ignoring the narrative character of my data (Hardin, 2003; Casanave, 2012).

There were ethical risks too – could I be faithful to my storytellers and to their personal and professional identities, if I extracted content from context and form? (Roberts, 2006). And had the thematic analysis taken account of my insider status? I was faced with a dilemma, and I started to question everything I had done so far in terms of data analysis. It was time to take a step back and do some more exploration of how others had tackled this stage in the research process by sifting through more journal articles, theses and blog posts. At least there was some relief in knowing I was not alone:

> […] You have to be prepared to face something that looks like there is no way it can come together. You have to be patient and understand that it takes time to work out what the big picture is – it doesn't necessarily come quickly or easily. You have to have a tolerance for ambiguity – things that might fit in multiple places have to be held onto until you can work out where the best place for them is. You also have to sweat the small stuff, the tiny differences. Above all, you have to be relaxed, accept that this isn't going to be a quick process. In fact, you're likely to think it's in-soluble and undo-able several times before you're done. (Thomson, 2017)

3.6.3 An eclectic analytic plan to revisit stages one to four (from immersion to synthesis)

As a result of this extended reflection and drawing heavily on the *Summary Table of Techniques Used at Various Stages of Analysis* (Kawulich, 2004), I came to the conclusion that I needed to develop an analytic plan of my own, tailored to my specific research paradigm (Erik, 2016) and which allowed me to combine a range of approaches to the analysis of qualitative data in a way that was more holistic, more narrative-focused and more reflexive. This was not about rejecting the careful process of coding and analysing which had already taken place, but about complementing and reviewing this process, and looking at my data in its entirety afresh, using clean copies of transcripts, free of coding. In subsequent readings of the data, I drew on Polkinghorne's distinction in narrative inquiry

between 'paradigmatic' and 'narrative' cognition, with the former focusing on themes, and the latter on narrative approaches to data analysis and presentation (1995). Reviewing the data with Connelly and Clandinin's "three commonplaces" in mind had been the first step in this process, but I then went further into the narrative analysis, thinking about critical incidents, key moments in history or key influencing figures. I considered the cognitive action of their utterances – were they simply remembering or were they also analysing that memory and theorising?, as well as the persona(e) my participants wanted to present, not only in the individual interviews where the story element was dominant, but also in the focused group conversation. I thought of their narratives as "discursive constructions" (Pavlenko, 2002), looking more closely at the way things were said, at the metaphors used and the linguistic features deployed, conscious of linguistic resources peculiar to bi/plurilingual people, such as codeswitching or examples of lexical and grammatical transfer (ibid., p.180).

A further approach focused on my internal and external responses to what each participant said, on both an emotional and intellectual level, recalling my reactions during the data generation as well as my reactions on re-reading the transcripts. Though I said very little, I was part of their stories, aware that my very presence was influencing both what they chose to tell me and how. I therefore undertook a voice-centred relational analysis of the data (Brown and Gilligan, 1992, cited in Mauthner and Doucet, 2003) to strengthen my reflexivity as researcher, by relating the story told to my own experience and locating myself within it.

3.6.4 Stages five and six (relating and locating; presenting); implications for Chapters 4 and 5

Having completed this more holistic data analysis, I then returned to my initial codes and themes and refined these again, and as I did so, I began to see how to progress to stages five and six: just as my overall approach to analysis was a narrative one, within which there were two complementary and interrelated strands, one focusing on the act of story-telling and the other on the themes that emerge from these stories, so too would the presentation of my analysis adopt this two-pronged approach: it begins with my participants' stories in the form of vignettes in **Chapter Four** and continues from there to the presentation of themes in **Chapter Five**. It is important to stress however, that the separation into vignettes and themes does not correspond to data from the individual interviews for the former, and data from the focused group conversation for the latter; instead, I draw on both data generation methods for both forms of data presentation.

> If we accept this view that truth is a floating value, akin to a swirl, that lies somewhere among the vectors of observation (direct experience), rigorous conceptualization (evidentiary argument), and communal understanding, then the truth we are seeking is not unlike the truth of story: A truth that taps into our shared comprehension of a phenomenon.

Each rendering provides insight, expands understandings, and pushes credibility, but none settles it once and for all." (Doyle, 1997, p.96)

Like the citation above, this choice reflects my interpretivist positionality, my rejection of objective truth and my belief in the power of story to enrich both our individual and collective understandings. I wanted to present my analysis not as proven facts but firstly through the prism of my research participants' stories, in which their understandings of the themes are deeply embedded. These stories paint a picture of the wider social, cultural and political context and the detail of my participants' personal and "professional knowledge landscapes", a metaphor used for the "exceedingly complex intellectual, personal and physical environment" in which our individual professional experience is situated (Connelly *et al.*, 1997, p.673), through and in which the narrative meaning-making process takes place.

In line with my research questions, the themes are grouped under the key constructs of professional growth and plurilingual education, and the ways in which these interact with the ECML, itself a complex construct. I use the notion of "tensions" as my conceptual frame, both within these constructs and at their points of convergence, through which to engage critically with my analysis, an engagement which is interwoven with consideration of how this analysis reinforces, contradicts or adds new insights to the literature. The coding of my data guided me towards the idea of "tensions" as a conceptual frame, a choice I feel is appropriate given the complexity of the constructs being explored, because tensions encapsulate "ambivalence and contradiction, rather than reducing or resolving it" (Stronach *et al.*, 2002, p.121, cited in Berry, 2007, p.133).

3.7 Chapter summary

I hope that this reflexive engagement with the strengths and limitations of my chosen narrative-based methodology and associated methods has lent "philosophical, theoretical, ontological and epistemological coherence" to my study (Wellington *et al.*, 2005, p.98) and has demonstrated "the unavoidably triangular connection between these research questions, these methods used to operationalise them and these data so generated" (Clough and Nutbrown, 2012, p.58). In the interests of trustworthiness, which Mischler (1990) considers the basis of validity in qualitative research, I have tried to be as transparent as possible both in terms of my positionality and by providing the reader with a detailed description of the entire process and the research context (see **Section 1.4**). Interview guides from both the individual interviews and the focused group conversation, two iterations of the codes used for my data analysis, as well as two coded extracts combining all of the approaches to data analysis, can be found in the appendices. I have detailed the ways in which I involved my participants in the transcription and, where relevant, translation

processes because I wanted their voices to be heard (Roberts, 2006), and the insights from their individual and collective meaning-making to be relatable, rather than generalisable (Wellington, 2015). It will be for the reader to judge if the following two chapters in which I engage with these insights, do justice to these aims.

Chapter 4: Presenting, interpreting and questioning my data via vignettes

4.1 Stories from within: research participant vignettes as narratives of discovery

My vignettes are multi-purpose: through the use of long quotations, they retain my participants' voices (McAlpine, 2016); the rich contextual details and ongoing interpretation, both on the part of the participants themselves and on mine, provide the reader with a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of their "professional knowledge landscapes" (Connelly *et al.*, 1997, p.673), whose colours and textures are tightly woven into the fabric of their life histories. They are also analytical in nature, with the description reviewed through the lens of Connelly and Clandinin's three "commonplaces" and focusing in on each participant's learning style and view of language learning. Elements of my own subjectivity and my internal emotional and intellectual responses to these unfolding stories provide a degree of critical reflection. In an attempt to reduce the risk of "the elevation of the experiential as the authentic" (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997, p.305), they are also psychoanalytically informed (Langer, 2016). Through these varied approaches I am openly inviting the reader to be "a critical partner in the interpretation process" (ibid., p.740).

For each research participant, I have added an additional "label" to their chosen pseudonym, consisting of a person noun and an adjective. These attributes represent my personal perception of each participant, based on the entirety of that individual's data set; they are therefore completely subjective. They are intended to conjure up a first impression for the reader, which I hope the unfolding story will substantiate. Below the name and in brackets, I have indicated where the original data were in French so that the reader is aware that the quotations are all my translations into English. Although every effort has been made to capture the original meaning and the translations discussed and agreed with the person concerned, minor losses to the finer nuances are inevitable.

4.2 Varley, the pioneering internationalist

As a novice researcher, I approach my first research interview with a mixture of fear and excitement, intensified by the fact that Varley, my first interviewee, just happens to be the person with the most extensive experience of the Council of Europe. I have refined my interview guide as a result of the pilot interview and have calculated that we will need approximately fifty minutes. Nothing, however, could prepare me for the inspirational and instructive story I am about to hear, one I only reluctantly draw to a close after an hour and a quarter.

Varley is nervous too, which surprises me; here is someone who has always been honest with me, someone I look up to and turn to for advice because he knows so much more about the Centre than I do, despite my role as Director. Surely that relationship will help counter the typical imbalance of power between researcher and participant? As his story unfolds, I come to understand that his nervousness has less to do with power relations and much more to do with his commitment to the research project, to the Centre on which it is focused and to language education more widely. Varley has thought carefully about the interview topics in advance, taking neither his vast experience nor his knowledge for granted; I am touched.

But also troubled: little by little, Varley gently inverts the balance of power, indirectly challenging, in his signatory unassuming and self-deprecating manner, some of the assumptions behind my questions. For example, when I ask him about the link between plurilingual education and the Centre, he begins his reply with "I'd like to go one step back…". In a similar vein he prefaces his answer to a question on his understanding of linguistic diversity with: "I won't relate it initially to linguistic diversity…". I realise my questions will need further reworking before the second interview but more than that, I become aware of levels of complexity relating to my research focus and sense a threat to the robustness of my research questions.

As I listen to Varley's story, the story of a career in language education characterised by a constant thirst for new and ever greater challenges, I am carried away on a fascinating journey that has taken him across continents, sectors and roles. I am struck by the speed of progress from classroom teacher to trainer/mentor and on into various senior management positions, especially in what he himself describes as "an accidental profession", and at the same time humbled by his repeated attempts to make light of his own success: he refers, for example, to the challenge of setting up a management faculty overseas from scratch as "an interesting and amusing task".

Throughout the interview, I experience emotional and intellectual turmoil, in awe of his privileged mind and his pioneering contributions to major developments such as the CEFR and the ELP;

ashamed of my own ignorance as I scramble to identify the various writers he mentions; and delighted by the little gems of wisdom I'm discovering for the first time: "the tradition in FLE (French as a foreign language) is much better at dealing with texts and literary texts".

I am conscious of the interdependent influences of two of Connelly and Clandinin's "three commonplaces", those of temporality and place:

> It was a time when you got responsibilities quite young. […] I was very involved with helping the setting up of language teacher associations in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Macedonia, and these were fascinating exercises in developing democratic groups with people who weren't used to being free to do this.

This triggers in me a strange feeling of envy, tinged with nostalgia and regret: envy of a period in the Council's history in the latter decades of the twentieth century and into the early twenty-first century when language education was thriving, with multiple opportunities for language professionals to play a part in the change process; nostalgic for a socio-political climate in which hope reigned, for a Europe of fledgling democracies; and regret that those halcyon days are long gone:

> I think if we look at the period between say 1986 and 1993 - the collapse of communism … I mean it was very much linked to the idea that people were saying they were going to set up democratic systems – what is the place that languages have in it. […] And I think it was a period when in the years around 2000 there was a lot of feeling that things could change and that it was possible to do things. It was a different atmosphere from the one we've got now.

And yet, as he opens up to me and divulges aspects of his life history I had not previously known, I become more and more convinced that it is the other commonplace "sociality", which includes his personal and professional stance, his attitude and inquisitive mind and the way he relates to others, that have shaped his destiny, much more than temporality and place combined.

Language education may well have been an "accidental" career choice, but once on that path, Varley takes the reins, agentive and self-directing as he seeks out opportunities for both personal and professional growth, all the while guided by his moral compass towards activities where "the values were right". He has a very clear view of language learning, which he considers a natural process, linked to intellectual growth and to pleasure, one in which learner agency is essential. Logically, therefore, his vision of language education includes all languages and all forms of learning within a life-long learning perspective. Self-analytical, he is able to pinpoint key developments in language education which helped to crystallise these ideas. Once again, I feel despondency as I compare these with today's socio-political and educational context and wonder where the idealism has gone:

I think the first one was probably Chomsky – really to think of languages, as language ability as being in-built, there's an acquisition device, that it's natural, it's part of the growth, that it is intellectually linked with all sorts of things to do with structuralism – I was reading Lévi - Strauss and so saw it in context. The second one was related to the Council of Europe – in the 1971 meeting when the whole idea of functional language came in, language as something you do, rather than something you learn. […] And then I think the real key is the moment when you said that languages belong to the learner; that they can be at any level […] basically languages were something that could be learnt partially and you learnt them for what you wanted to use them for. […] it's to do with tolerance, it's to do with openness to others, and it's to do with the freedom of people to be themselves.

He constructs a persona where the personal and professional are in harmony; self-motivated, self-critical and caring in equal measures, his career follows a pattern of roles that involve developing and implementing support structures for others, which he uses as stimuli for his own learning:

So, if I were to describe myself, as being very much, for a long time a practical teacher, quite a long time, being, not a teacher trainer, but setting up systems which involved training people who were coming from a non-structured or very different pedagogic background into a different one.

I've been involved in training other people which has led me to think about my own project, my own practice and then to put it together. […], studying and writing for myself about learning theory, about how groups work, about, things of that kind.

With panic in my breast as the enormity of the challenge of my thesis stretches out before me, I am at once struck by the contrast to Varley's self-reliance and can-do disposition – "I was thrown into the deep-end right at the beginning and feel, you know, that's a good way of learning" – yet also by the similarity in our learning styles, with his preference for personal practice as a starting point for inquiry and for the development of theories:

There's a quotation from John le Carré which says "forget the philosophy, old sport, just push me in the right direction" and quite often that's what's happened in my career that I've found myself in terms of developments and then gone along there […] and then the principles and theory have come as a result of doing things rather than the other way round.

By the time he draws his story to a close, the swell of the rollercoaster has begun to subside and I begin to regain my confidence, reassured by his description of himself as a "sort of non-academic in lots of ways, having picked up bits of the trade as I went along".

4.3 Babel, the erudite ventriloquist

(French)

There's only a short break before my second interviewee, Babel, arrives. I try to assess the first interview: did it go well? Did I get the data I need? I realise my feelings will undoubtedly change when the detailed analysis begins, but right now I'm satisfied, both emotionally and intellectually. This motivates me to identify and try to reformulate those questions Varley had unwittingly helped me unpick. I am surer now about the schedule and the timing. But not so sure about Babel whose idiosyncrasies both bemuse and confuse me. I worry too that something essential may get lost in translation.

I should have known better. This was Babel, after all, who always did things her own beautiful way. Just minutes into the interview and I am swept away, mesmerised by the richness of her language which brings her story so vividly to life. My head is swimming, as, through what feels like a process of osmosis, I hear different voices from her child- and early adulthood, those of her classmates, her school and university teachers and her teaching colleagues, but the ones I distinguish most clearly are those of her parents, to whom she is deeply and touchingly indebted: "I don't think they could have been any better; my gratitude is infinite". A studious book-worm – "books are my life" – she paints a picture of her youthful self as rather passive, content in allowing others to determine her fate. I am struck by this lack of agency, my awareness no doubt heightened by the contrast with Varley, and realise that for Babel, freedom comes through literature which can release her from the geographical and socioeconomic context in which she is so deeply rooted, taking her on a figurative journey which stimulates and challenges her, morally, intellectually and aesthetically:

> It was the encounter with the great authors […] it was a source of richness that was much more than simply linguistic.
>
> […] this man who looks at the savages and says, but maybe we are wilder than they are; yes, they are cannibals who eat their enemies but they also appropriate their souls, and us, what do we do with people who are put in prison? (*referring to Montaigne*)
>
> This concept of time that you can rediscover, time that is not really lost because it only takes something small, a Venetian tile, say, and you are transported back to the past. I was 25 before I went to Venice for the first time, but I already knew the city through Proust. […] I was reading my world through his eyes.

I am shocked as I listen to her bravely recount the difficulties she encounters in her early teaching experiences; shocked yet honoured, knowing she has placed her total trust in me. I feel her pain deeply, as if it were my own, pain which the passing of time has failed to dull, in her repeated use of words like "trauma", "crisis" and "catastrophe". And I am angry: angry at the negligence of

educational authorities which promoted the myth that a good learner makes a good teacher to justify the lack of training provision; angry that she bought into this myth: "traumatic, because I was a good student, I was brilliant, not in mathematics; for me the equation was: good student = good teacher" and ends up blaming herself for her initial lack of success: "I don't have the gift of teaching". Suddenly my heart is racing; I am twenty-two again, standing in front of a class of adolescent boys who are mimicking my pathetic attempts to pronounce their Catalan names. For a moment we are one.

She is riddled with self-doubt; highly sensitive to the judgement of others and scarred by memories of humiliating incidents: being taken for a fool when she tries out her broken English on some American tourists; when a pupil she has passionately tried to support turns against her; having to endure the sniggers of her colleagues at an in-service course when she asks the trainer for advice on how to motivate her learners. By now I am aching for the turning point in this sorry tale, unable to relate a tragic dénouement to the determined, capable Babel I know. And I breathe an inward and complicit sigh of relief and understanding, when it comes through the positive endorsement of others who release her from her passivity, bringing forth her natural curiosity and creativity – "I was nevertheless inquisitive and enterprising" – which misfortune had buried but not destroyed. Ironically, the first endorsement comes from the trainer on that self-same course where her colleagues ridiculed her. By reassuring her that she is asking the right questions, he engenders self-belief and she begins to experiment in her classes and to look for every professional learning opportunity available to her.

It is the boom period for developments in FLE (French as a foreign language) and as it flourishes, so too does her pedagogy:

> He really motivated me and gave me confidence. In front of the others he told me that I was asking the real questions […]. He said: "be creative, invent, invent, invent your own pedagogy" and from there I went on lots of training courses.

> And then, I began to get some satisfaction, with pupils who started to like French and little by little […] my pedagogy began to take shape.

The second endorsement comes in the form of a colleague who becomes a lifelong friend and professional soulmate. Together, they unleash a torrent of creativity and I see the exhilaration in the sparkle in her eyes and hear it in the lilt of her voice. I am uplifted by the personal passion and commitment, almost palpable in her choice of words, a passion which I realise is all-too-often ignored in discussions about pedagogy:

> With her, it was absolute intellectual complicity, the same vision of education, she was much more confident than me, but I was much more intellectual, the theory for me has always

mattered, I read a lot, and then I was a little bit the alchemist who experimented. There was the thrill of going into class and trying things out... It was invention, it was creativity, it was really magnificent – it was very very beautiful.

But if passion and commitment continue to dominate her career path as she crosses the threshold into teacher education, where her own teaching experiences, both the positive and the negative, fuel her determination to encourage creative thinking and instil self-belief in her mentees, it is the ethics of education and a profound sense of responsibility towards the learner that is her guiding light throughout. My esteem for Babel grows exponentially; I am both humbled and inspired:

> But you see, it is a profound stance that you adopt vis-à-vis the learner, one that the learner perceives deeply and that shapes him; it is a look that welcomes weakness, that says "I'm here, I'm here only for you, to help you progress" […] It's this deep respect for the child where he is right now, helping him grow and making him free, never imposing ones ideas…

Together with her colleague, she succeeds in bringing their action-research initiatives in bilingual education to bear on local educational reform processes and I am impressed by the extent to which the tables have turned in her favour. Yet while I feel admiration for her determination to "carry things through to their conclusion", I worry about her idealism and a cynical voice inside me registers my lack of surprise when a new government upends the reform process, as I think of the frequent instances when political decision-makers opt for the more popular alternative.

As with Varley, I am mindful of all three of Connelly and Clandinin's "commonplaces" in Babel's story, but it is through her vivid descriptions of the particular context of her life and work that I come to understand the true significance of place. It is place that determines her preference for, and ease with French, place that shapes the path of her professional interests as they shift from FLE to bilingualism and on into the fields of intercomprehension and integrated didactics, and from there to the languages of schooling and the importance of valuing different languages and dialects within a learner's repertoire. And it impacts on her sociality, influencing the person she is, someone who learns and who facilitates learning through a deliberate process of opening up to, and wanting to engage with, the ideas of others, however different from her own, someone who recognises the potential added-value of the global to the local:

> I'm of mixed-breed and I see that the mixed-breed is better sometimes, it's more diverse, it's richer […] so we need a multi-disciplinary approach involving all subjects, trying out different kinds of activities, always decompartmentalising, decompartmentalising, moving beyond a narrow localist perspective…

It is place and her own learning experience there which clearly shape her view of language learning and of the wider aims of language education. I am perplexed by her analysis of the difficulties she encounters with English which she attributes to her own bilingualism and to late exposure to a very different linguistic code; I do not react but having listened to her describe her preferred learning

style and the methodology used in the English lessons, I am struck by the level of cognitive dissonance between the two, convinced that therein lies the primary explanation for her struggles.

For Babel, languages are not an end in themselves but are "vectors for constructing knowledge in epistemologically different ways", which are enriching precisely because they force us to think differently:

> […] bilingualism is an enormous and very interesting challenge, firstly as a challenge to monolingualism, but also because knowledge developed in several languages, is enriching for humanity; it is magnificent.

When it comes to the aims of language education, she goes even further: language education is first and foremost about educating the individual learner, with language as a powerful tool not only for constructing knowledge, but for developing awareness of all forms of injustice, including those that stem from linguistic hierarchies. She still feels the impact on her own identity of a regional language once considered "a peasant trait". At times I have struggled with Babel's militant defence of regional languages, the languages of migration and the languages of schooling, interpreting this as a lack of interest in foreign languages; now, however, I begin to realise it is more a question of priorities, of wanting to channel limited resources into language areas where learners experience extreme disempowerment.

Her story exudes passion, yet I sense my own ambivalence: on the one hand enraptured by this natural story-teller; on the other, frustrated that we are already one hour into the interview and I am failing in my role as researcher to steer her towards my many remaining questions. She reads my mind: "I was too long!" and skilfully punctures the tension with humour, as she tells me she has calculated that if she lives to eighty-five, she'll only have time to read 3700 of the 120 million books currently in circulation! We burst into laughter.

4.4 Robert, the academic strategist

(French)

A few weeks pass before an occasion arises for me to interview my third research participant, Robert. I am glad of this because I can do some early data analysis and think through my questions yet again. But I'm also glad because I need to psyche myself up for this interview, my first interview with a highly experienced and renowned teacher-researcher in the field of language education. I find myself swaying from worrying he will find my questions appallingly amateur, to being convinced his years of supervision will make him especially understanding towards a novice researcher. I try to rationalise my fears and realise there is something else behind my heightened levels of anxiety, something I've clearly been trying to suppress but which I know I need to acknowledge, not least to safeguard the rigour of my research insights: if I'm honest, I struggle to subscribe to the pedagogic approaches he promotes, though not to their aims, and can only assume this suggests some kind of cognitive weakness on my side, given their success on the European stage.

I needn't have worried on either front. He enters my office and greets me with a warm embrace. I sense immediately his respect for this data generation exercise; I can tell he wants me to get the data I need and find myself smiling inwardly at how his inability to ever fully drop the researcher persona works in my favour: every so often he checks we're not running out of time; he asks me to be more specific to ensure he is covering the ground I want him to in his responses; he draws my attention to his choice of words, "just in case you're analysing the discourse"; and intersperses his reflections with humorous asides to help me relax.

I realise that despite frequent exchanges, I barely know this man who now carefully guides me through his career, checking I have fully grasped the changing contexts, all the while linking it to key authors and historical moments in the evolution of language education. He is keen for me to understand his own professional evolution too, spelling out the stages for me as he moves from teaching one language and involvement in matters of language policy within teacher associations, into research and teacher education in the same language and then gradually towards plurilingual pedagogies. I understand his approach much better now but retain a healthy scepticism around practical implementation.

And as I appreciate more fully both the nature and the value of his work, I relive that feeling of envy and of wonder I experienced with Varley, wonder at what it must feel like to know your contribution has made a difference. My wonder quickly turns to shame and self-doubt, as he draws my attention to the importance of the Council's *"Guide for the development of language education policies in*

Europe" (2007) – does he know that my critique of this publication in my EdD policy assignment was anything but positive? I see now that my judgement was misplaced, skewed by a lack of contextual knowledge.

And the feeling that he is inside my head continues: I am convinced he has realised I struggle to comprehend his signatory didactic approaches, convinced too he has connected my use of the word "story" to narrative inquiry and that he suspects I am hoping to use Connelly and Clandinin's "three commonplaces" as a broad framework for my analysis. But I will never know for sure.

As he tells me his story he constructs and reconstructs his persona and I realise I am enjoying this unique opportunity to get to know him. I find it comforting to hear such a prolific writer speak of the challenges of academic writing:

> When I'm working on an article, because let's not kid ourselves, often our thoughts only progress when we know we have to write […] and links start to form in my mind between different ideas and across fields, I realise the process of constructing my ideas is a continuous one.

I am delighted to discover that involvement in language projects, which he views as a form of action-research, has been a continuous source of professional enrichment for Robert and while he sees research as the key vehicle for innovation, he is clear that this is not an end-in-itself:

> What's the point of doing research in education, if the outputs have no impact on policy or practice?

I wonder why I had considered him somewhat esoteric until now.

It is a story in which sociality and temporality combine, dominating over place. His gentle, kind manner belies his personal ambition, an ambition inextricably linked to his lifelong militancy in defence of linguistic diversity for the greater good: "I'm telling you, it's moral, it's political... and then, well, well, it's about peace between nations". Where Babel is the idealist, Robert is the strategist, forever on the lookout for opportunities and means to further the cause at national, European and international level. I now appreciate his sustained focus on developing and promoting plurilingual education at the levels of curricula and teacher education; he recognises these as vectors of policy reform and therefore as key to large-scale change:

> We were looking for new ways to promote a wider choice of languages in schools and then we came across that part in the CEFR, it was the early 2000s you know, on plurilingual competence […] and we said to ourselves, maybe something should be done regarding the different approaches that include several languages at once, and we can link it to this definition in the CEFR.

And yet their views of language learning and language education are very similar. Although Robert is less interested in bilingual education per se and more focused on access to learning experiences that involve several languages, he believes, like Babel, that the question of knowledge construction is fundamental:

> […] how concepts are understood in one language... how they are understood in another, this is of absolutely unparalleled educational value.

We have reached the end of his story and the present day with the challenges it presents for language education. My lasting impressions are of the strength of his commitment to social justice and to the individual learner, all-the-more powerful in the context of a life history mostly spent outside the classroom, and of his bravery and honesty, as he reminds me that these challenges are complex:

> […] the mission of public service towards the nation, towards each child […] his right to education, all of this is deeply rooted in the values my parents instilled in me.

> It's not so easy to love your neighbour... I'm caricaturing, of course... it's not so easy not to be racist, and it's not so easy to accept people who are different than you.

4.5 Sutra, the pragmatic synthesiser

Preface

Ten days later I meet with my next interviewee, Sutra. Each time my interview schedule has included variations on certain questions, adapted depending on the interviewee, but this time the variance is greater; in contrast to my first three candidates, whom I have categorised broadly as "insiders", professionals who, in different guises, have played an active role in the development of language education at the Council, either in Strasbourg or in Graz or both, Sutra better fits the category of "outsiders", professionals whose role focuses more on mediating these developments, on ensuring their fitness-for-purpose for the end-user. It is, however, a deliberately fuzzy distinction, more a question of degree, with all participants having some experience of both roles. The inclusion of both "insiders" and "outsiders" allows me to capture a range of perspectives which I hope contributes to the robustness of my analysis. From the very beginning I have shared the rationale behind my choice with my participants, emphasising that they will each bring different but equally valuable insights to my study. Explaining this is but the start of my ethical responsibilities and in many ways, represents the easy part, as this next vignette demonstrates.

Sutra arrives early for her interview, radiating her usual positivity. I'm instantly infected, looking forward to our exchange. But as I turn to activate the voice recorder on my laptop, the mood changes. The chatter becomes more nervous and I realise that despite my best efforts, she is experiencing intense anxiety, anxiety which partly relates to her sense of responsibility towards me and my research, afraid she will not be able to give me the answers I need, and anxiety amplified through a sense of inferiority vis-à-vis the other participants. Completely irrational but very real. I feel the weight of my responsibility for her wellbeing and deactivate the voice recorder. I tell her how much I appreciate her and use displacement techniques and gentle self-ridicule to show my empathy, exposing my own self-doubt as I describe how imposter syndrome has dogged me since I struggled with the application form for the EdD and just how close I came to pulling out during the very first study weekend in Sheffield. Gradually, she begins to relax. She indicates her readiness to begin.

I ask her to start by telling me the story of her career. Like Babel and Robert before her, she chooses to go back to her school days, and I see the sparkle return to her eyes as she vivaciously recounts a particular language learning experience in secondary school. This, she tells me, is where her love of languages began, a love kindled by an inspiring teacher. I want to jump in there and tell her how similar this experience is to my own, but she is now in full flow, describing in detail the techniques

he used to motivate his learners. I decide to refrain, fearful that any kind of interruption could reawaken her self-doubt.

She is convinced that this experience spurred her on to undertake a series of trips across Europe as a university student, grateful that the combination of her two passions, languages and amateur theatre, availed her of previously denied opportunities to cross borders. I am puzzled; do we not both belong to the generation who spent the hazy days of our youth inter-railing across Europe? I log that question in my notebook for later, as she explains how the same two passions also determine her early career in export and in cultural institutions. Like Varley, however, passion without intellectual challenge or responsibility is not enough to sustain her; these she ultimately finds in abundance as she moves into the field of education.

I note other parallels with Varley too, even though their contexts are very different; where his is international, hers is strictly national. Sutra is also pragmatic and solution-focused; like Varley, she takes time to observe and talk to practitioners about the actual problems they face before deciding what support structures and professional learning opportunities are needed. She is committed to this dialogic engagement, considering it a form of cooperative learning for everyone involved. I am also reminded of Babel as I see that the learner as the ultimate beneficiary is always present in her thinking:

> We do it together, so my role is more as someone who would facilitate teachers to become more competent and for students as well, because this is the final aim of what we are doing.

I find myself wondering how much this has to do with the memory of her own extremely positive language learning experience and the analysis of what made it so unique. For Sutra, language and culture are inextricably linked; successful language learning depends on having opportunities for real language use; these build confidence, making culture accessible. She acknowledges that her view of the aims of language education has evolved with her career and through her contact with the Council, from an early focus on foreign languages and cultures towards a more holistic and inclusive one.

I admire her modesty, her determination and her commitment to language education; it is this combination of characteristics which motivates her to seek out opportunities to further her own learning and bridge gaps in her knowledge. This feeds into and nourishes her understanding of the big picture. Like Robert, she recognises the interrelated nature of policy, curricula, teacher education and practice and feels responsible for ensuring that she draws on her own professional learning to the benefit of all those involved in the wider system:

> I went deeper and deeper into the system of foreign language teaching - because when you have to answer different questions you have to know the system. […] Little by little I put up a map of languages in our school system, the roles and so on […] I had to see the progress and to understand and try to get in touch with the different experts; I was present in many meetings, conferences, I liked to be more and more involved on this national level, really to understand better and to see where the space is for improvement.

Sadly, and perhaps somewhat cynically, I ask myself how many other decision-makers are quite so self-aware, so keen to learn from and engage with different stakeholders, their ears ever close to the ground.

I recognise these same characteristics coming through as her responsibilities in relation to European cooperation grow. I know how well she fits this ambassadorial role, mediating with ease between national and European levels and experience such delight when she reveals, however cautiously, her growing self-confidence, aware at last, that she has much to give, as well as much to learn:

> So I wanted to know more, to be part of it, to cooperate to see if I could be of help, my ideas, especially how to do things better.

We are up to date; she has peppered her story with relevant historical facts, and I have found the answer to my unspoken question. I am ashamed by my ignorance but hugely relieved that my silence prevented it emerging as arrogance, arrogance for assuming that the kind of freedom experienced by western Europeans was shared across geographic Europe. As she draws her personal story to a close, I am momentarily unable to think of Connelly and Clandinin's three "commonplaces" as helpful "check points" (2006, p.479), so perplexed am I by this uncompromising facet of temporality, and, to a lesser degree, of place.

4.6 Lotta, the spirited polyglot

Like Sutra before her, my next interviewee, Lotta, is also more of an "outsider". This time, however, I am the one who is nervous, terrified in fact, because our contact is going to take place over Skype. Will technology sabotage this interview we have both struggled to find a suitable date for, with Lotta kindly agreeing to give up some of her holiday time? I am surprised to find that this latter aspect works in my favour: Lotta is clearly in holiday mode, nonplussed as I insist on doing a few dummy-runs to check the interview is recording properly.

She chooses to begin her story at university, and having now asked the same question five times, I find myself unintentionally comparing her starting point with the other stories, wondering if the differences are worthy of analysis. The object of my wonder changes rapidly however and my jaw drops, as she rhymes off the languages she speaks, some studied in formal education, others "picked up", effortlessly, or so it seems to me, in her free time. Lotta and I have always communicated in English and I realise that I've allowed this lingua franca to blinker my vision and make me lazy; I never thought to ask about or use her other languages, which are clearly such a fundamental part of her.

As is her humour. There's a lot of laughter in this story-telling, both hers and mine, as she describes key moments, places and characters in her career to me, a varied career that spans all educational sectors from primary through secondary into tertiary vocational, both as a classroom language teacher and in a range of management positions. In these positions she insists on continued direct exchange with practising teachers, facilitating their development, supporting teacher associations and linking languages to the expansion of the internationalisation agenda in tertiary education.

But there's also poignancy; I find myself wishing she were less harsh on herself and notice that her memory seems to take her automatically to past mistakes rather than successes – "once again I had done something rather stupid" – as she constructs a persona for herself as somewhat hapless and foolish, crediting her achievements to a mixture of chance and helpful colleagues, downplaying her own determination and hard work. I am struck by her repeated use of the word "girl" to refer to herself – "the girl with languages", "this girl is alright" – and wonder if this is a deliberate attempt to belittle herself or if these are simply examples of second language interference. By the time she tells me that she even doubts her own humour – "Others always laugh at me in a very gentle way because I always try to be funny and I don't know how to!"– I am no longer surprised, even as her story exposes other somewhat contradictory aspects of her persona and the complexities of how she sees herself, or perhaps wants to be seen.

She talks repeatedly about "getting bored easily" but this is not someone who flits in an uncommitted manner from one job to the next; instead she recognises that the time is right to move on, only once she has gained a thorough understanding of the subject matter and feels ready to immerse herself in something new. She has learned the hard way, however, that the challenge must be big enough to stimulate deep thinking yet not too big to overwhelm:

> I thought I didn't understand anything and there was a time when I even cried because I felt I was so bad; I didn't understand anything. […] So, I think always testing my comfort zone has been a good helper, um, being brave, looking for new tasks.

She is the kind of person who undertakes her own inquiry-based learning, while also benefitting from experiential learning with others:

> […] the idea of finding out what is behind phenomena, what is looking into the rationale of things, looking for research information, trying to sort of organise phenomena into something that you can get to grips with. […] Clearly it has been a sort of ease to talk to people and to listen to people and to learn together.

Like Robert, Lotta believes that education systems should support the learning of several languages as a means of developing greater language awareness and intercultural understanding:

> I have never lost my need for at least trying to learn a little bit of other languages whenever. It's so useful that you have a landscape of languages.

Like Babel, she does not consider language learning an end-in-itself, but rather as a philosophy of education, one that places the learner at the centre:

> It's not only the languages but the values, the things they say about school culture, the conception of learning and so on and putting all that together […] And the glorious thing that is […] where the norm says: every day when you encounter the pupil, you rejoice and the teacher has to be able to understand that you see him or her, you hear him or her, and you facilitate him or her to express what he or she is learning and feeling and so on […] trying to make sense of that because the beauty especially of course, is in making the students find their best possible capacities.

As Lotta confidently outlines what she sees as the key role of language education today, I try to hide my panic, overwhelmed by an enormous sense of responsibility:

> I see a huge future here and I see the turning of the tables, in particular European democracy, and it's really that languages have come into the picture, starting to play a big part. And obviously linguistic and cultural diversity and multicultural pedagogies and so forth […] it's sort of putting democracy and human values and respect of human rights in the very core of teaching and learning.

We have arrived at the here-and-now and the end of her personal story; the self-ridicule and criticism are replaced by self-confidence, passion and pride as she describes her involvement in key national developments in language education and the ways in which she acts as a mediator between

policy and practice, supporting language teachers' professional development. I note the parallel with Sutra in Lotta's pride in herself and in her ability to make a difference, as well as her pride in her country for its commitment to, and belief in, international collaboration as a mutually beneficial process of giving and taking:

> […] but I love that work and I love to talk to people and reflect on what might be the right ways of putting good ideas into the kind of texts, the kind of discourse that you can tie into our curricula.

> I try to find things that are worth saying and I think I have found my role in that, I won't stop. It's really fun. I am there for my country of course and my country has something to say!

At the same time I note the irony of the striking similarities in our career-paths despite three "commonplaces" which have almost nothing in "common", and smile inwardly on realising that the similarities extend to the professional and personal identity she constructs, one that is in constant flux, oscillating between the extremes of destructive self-doubt and instances of fierce pride. To me at least, it seems that "sociality" takes precedence over "temporality" and "place".

4.7 Enrico, the critical statesman

(French)

Two days later I hold what I think will be my last individual interview, again by Skype, this time with Enrico. I'm feeling confident that the summer holiday will give me a chance to carry out a detailed analysis, in preparation for the focused group conversation I intend to organise in September. The confidence doesn't last because this time my technological nightmare becomes reality; I'm struggling to pay attention to what Enrico is saying, distracted by a warning message about a weak signal flashing intermittently on my screen. Enrico continues his tale, blissfully unaware, in full throttle. I too carry on, hoping it will work, not brave enough to tell him my fears. In vain. The recording is incomplete and barely audible, my plans now turned upside down. In the end it is almost three months later before an opportunity avails itself for me to undertake this final individual interview in my office, too afraid to risk another online fiasco. Enrico is as kind and caring towards me as the first time, but spontaneity by definition cannot be relived, and I sense a certain self-conscious strain creeping in. With hindsight, I wonder if this is why his interview is shorter than the others, if I felt guilty about taking up more of his time and subconsciously probed him less.

Enrico is different from my other interviewees in several ways. It has taken longer to get to know him, even though we first met many years ago in another professional life. For a moment I am back there, feeling a little uncomfortable in his presence. I know this is completely irrational, that then I had mistaken his quiet nature for aloofness, the breadth of his knowledge and experience only serving to highlight my own ignorance. I ask him to tell me his story; his face relaxes into an enormous smile and he gently teases me in what I have come to understand is a mechanism he uses to overcome his innate shyness. I am safely back in the present.

Of all my interviewees, he is not only the longest-serving teacher but also the only one to have reached the zenith of national education policymaking, after various roles relating to both primary and secondary teacher education. In striking contrast to the others, he is openly dispassionate about languages themselves, even though his entire career has been in the field of language education. He registers my surprise and offers me an intriguing interpretation for this apparent contradiction, one that befits his unpretentious self-awareness:

> I had no particular interest in languages themselves, but I think that's also been an advantage for me…not to be passionate about languages but instead to consider them a topic for reflection and discussion.

Inside I react with ambivalence: a mixture of bewilderment, bordering, if I'm honest, on mild disappointment but this quickly evaporates as he talks with passion about building confidence in

language learners so that they can express themselves in whatever limited language they have, without being afraid to make mistakes. He places great importance on the cultural dimension of language learning but warns of tokenism in this regard, pleading rather for culture and cultural differences to become, like the language itself, objects of reflection:

> Because the cultural dimension in language teaching is fundamental […] very often it is nothing more than decoration. There are very, very few moments when students are encouraged to talk about the cultural elements they encounter and to think about what is unusual, what is different and why. It should be an introduction to linguistic and cultural mediation.

> Everyone has to have skills and knowledge; everyone, without exception, also has to have an understanding of the world through intercultural education, from and through, language learning.

I want to hear more about his impressive career but in his characteristic modest way, he is keener to talk about his involvement with the Council and the impact this has had on his own professional growth. With my researcher hat on, I realise my attempts via the interview schedule to delay this aspect of our exchange are proving less successful this time but my frustration is short-lived, quickly replaced by laughter as he tells the story of how, as the innocent freshman at the Ministry, he was duly given what was considered to be "the short straw" and ordered to represent his country in language education meetings at the Council. And then I feel a huge sense of pride in the organisation I work for, when he tells me that this "short straw" is not only what "saved" him "intellectually", but is the vehicle through which he discovered a very different face of research from the "ivory tower" and "impenetrable" one he has previously experienced. With my teacher hat on, I can relate to this view of research but we're having this exchange as part of my own research, and I find myself hoping he is wrong when he declares that input from researchers to the Council's language policy work is the only way to ensure that research insights influence not just policy, but teacher education:

> So for me it is precisely the only way...even if it is indirect, because it is through tools that have been developed at European level, and then more or less taken up at national level, through these documents from which teacher educators can draw inspiration, which of course they often do.

Like several other interviewees, he too contributes to the development of key Council tools in language education, constantly reviewing them through the lens of his national context. Rather than blinker his vision, this acts as a critical lens, allowing him to take distance from his environment on the one hand, whilst acting as a constant reminder on the other that developments undertaken at a European level cannot succeed unless they are also applicable in specific contexts. I realise that it is because of his focus on implementation, that he talks only about the resources developed, rather

than the process involved and notice that the emphasis shifts when he starts to describe his involvement with ECML projects. Here it is primarily through interaction with people whose perspectives and contexts are very different from his own, that his assumptions are further challenged.

It is his professional persona which largely defines him – "my professional roles constitute an integral part of who I am" – but it is thanks to this privileged insight into his more private persona that I understand his unusual and repeated use of the word "shock" to describe this dialogic engagement, to which I know he is fully committed, but also know it does not come easily to him:

> For me the shock was the exchange with the representatives of the member states […] this really was a discovery for me because I had no idea what contribution this sharing, these exchanges, could have. […] Really for me it was a highly emotional shock, one of extreme importance.

Despite a career which takes him ever further away from the classroom, his tale is consistently one of two voices in perfect harmony: the voice of national responsibility, whose weight bears heavily upon him; the other, the teacher's voice, committed to improving classroom practice and outcomes for learners. One voice enhances the other and in both I hear only wisdom and humility as he looks back on his career, commenting that he feels he only really learned to teach by stepping outside this role, through observation and the chance to reflect on his own and others' practice. Like Babel and Robert, he is very aware of his own humble origins and believes in the power of education to change lives:

> I have really benefited from social mobility. It was education that saved me. […] I have always had the impression that I owe everything to school, so I had to give something back, I had to give something back to the pupils […] in a somewhat intuitive way, that is, without really thinking about didactics and pedagogy... it's the desire, the desire to be with the learners, to help them progress.

If his story has been dominated by "place", it has also been strongly influenced by cultural and institutional elements, the "social conditions" within "sociality". It concludes, however, with the "hopes, desires […] and moral dispositions" that constitute the "personal conditions" of sociality (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006, p.480), as Enrico selflessly asks me to look to the younger generation to take the Centre into the future: "I'd like to be kicked out! It would cause me great pain, but I would have a cleaner conscience!"

4.8 Conclusion

I hope that through my vignettes my reader has been imbued with "embodied narrative knowing" (Craig *et al.*, 2018, p.334) and now feels familiar with my research participants' "professional knowledge landscapes" (Connelly *et al.*, 1997, p.673) – their personae, their preferred learning styles and their view of language learning and of language education more widely, all the while aware that these stories, though situated, are neither static nor finite, that the voices do not speak by themselves. In line with my interpretivist stance in which I reject absolute truths and view knowledge as constructed in interaction with others, I have intentionally attempted to extend the reader's "embodied narrative knowing" beyond that of the participants to include myself. This does not run counter to my attempts to capture my participants' voices, but instead openly acknowledges that in representing my participants, I am also presenting myself.

My use of a voice-centred relational approach to data analysis engaged me in a form of internal, dialogic meaning-making, externalised through the inclusion in the vignettes of my emotional and intellectual responses to my participants' stories, even where these were difficult or uncomfortable. It recognises my subjectivity as researcher and acts as a "tool to operationalize reflexivity" (Mauthner and Doucet, 2003, p.414), mediating between the participants and myself and alerting the reader to the limits of my interpretation.

It also aligns with my narrative-based methodology, making the relationship between the researcher and the researched visible (Caine *et al*., 2013; Norton and Early, 2011) and acknowledges my status as holder of "narrative privilege" (Adams, 2008, p.180). I believe it adds to the transparency of the research process, particularly important given my insider status, and contributes to the criterion of "sincerity", considered by Tracy (2010) as one of the eight "big-tent" criteria (p. 837) for judging qualitative research.

My aim was also to open up a mediational space between myself and the reader so that through these vignettes I draw the reader into a social constructivist process of critical engagement, one I hope will continue into the presentation of my insights according to themes in **Chapter 5**. It is through this thematic presentation that I pull together key threads from these narratives, because despite marked differences in what are highly individual "professional knowledge landscapes", jointly they yield common themes, themes which were explored both individually in the interviews and collectively in the focused group conversation.

Chapter 5: presenting, interpreting and questioning my data via themes

5.1 Introduction

As indicated in **Section 3.6.4**, this thematic presentation will be broadly structured according to the constructs embedded within my research questions: professional growth, plurilingual education and their interaction with the ECML, using "tensions" as a conceptual frame. I will begin by examining each construct separately, broken down into sub-themes from the data generated in both the individual interviews and the focused group conversation. I see two reasons for this approach: firstly, each one is, in and of itself, extremely complex, made up of many different concepts and therefore merits an individual, in-depth analysis; secondly, irrespective of the ways in which they interrelate and overlap, each also exists independently of the other. After an examination of each construct, I will engage the reader in a discussion around the points of convergence between the construct and the ECML. At certain points in the discussion I will reengage with theory, particularly where theory enhances interpretation and, at the end of each section, I will provide the reader with a synopsis of the tensions. I will conclude the chapter by returning to my theoretical framework so that it now captures the interplay between professional growth, plurilingual education and the ECML.

As with the vignettes, and in order to present as accurate an account as possible of how my participants perceive these constructs, I will often make use of extended quotations. Given that all data generation took place in 2018, only the participant's pseudonym will be included with the quotation. Where the context of the data generation is of significance, i.e. either the individual interview or the focused group conversation, this will be highlighted.

5.2 Professional Growth

> This general lack of knowledge in teacher education research concerning ingredients, conditions or contexts that may have a positive impact on what and how educators learn [...] complicates the development of educators. (Meijer *et al.*, 2017, p.820)

> If we are to facilitate the professional development of teachers, we must understand the process by which teachers grow professionally and the conditions that support and promote that growth (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002, p.947)

I have chosen to begin this presentation of my insights on the professional growth of language teacher educators with two strikingly similar citations, the first focusing on teacher educators and the second on teachers. My motive is three-fold: the first reason for doing this it is to alert the reader in advance to challenges around terminology. While Meijer *et al*. (2017) speak of "ingredients, conditions or contexts" (p.820), Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) have "outcomes, process and conditions"; Lunenberg *et al.* (2017) combine these in the umbrella term "critical

features". For the most part, I will also use this umbrella term not only because it is shorter, but also because of the powerful message conveyed in the adjective "critical". However, I will also draw on "processes and conditions" where this differentiation adds clarity and will refer to "aims" rather than "outcomes". I consider "aims" as aspirational and am concerned by the frequent use of the word "outcomes" in the context of education to suggest something which is easily measurable. My second reasons for two citations, one concerning teacher educators and one teachers, is to remind the reader of one of the key messages from my literature review: that the professional growth of language teacher educators cannot be considered completely in isolation from either the professional growth of (language) teachers, or of teacher educators more broadly. Thirdly, and most importantly, this double citation is to foreground what I believe is one of the key insights from my research: that there is a subtle tension between the similarities and the differences in the target groups, a tension which in fact encompasses all the other tensions and one which the ECML ignores at its peril. This tension will be explored in more detail in **Sections 5.2.3** and **5.2.4**. It is a blurring of lines which emerges clearly from my data, and is one I had not anticipated: my participants at times struggled to focus on the professional growth of language teacher educators, rather than language teachers, captured in Babel's words:

> It's intriguing (this distinction). In fact, I personally had never thought about in these terms before.

Like Kools *et al.* (2012, cited in Dengerink *et al.*, 2015), I suspect that this is in part due to their commitment to supporting the professional growth of the teachers in their care: whenever they began to talk about professional growth, the discussion inevitably led them back to their key concern. At times during the focused group conversation I had to gently remind them of our focus on language teacher educators. I will return to this tension in **Section 5.2.3** in relation to my own data and offer other possible explanations.

Note: for clarity of presentation, I have organised the insights according to sub-themes, but the boundaries between these categories are deliberately porous, with each one influencing and impacting on the others. I would also like to point out that in my research exchanges with my participants, all of whom are from the field of language education, the word "language" did not always preface "teacher" or "teacher educator", not because the references necessarily applied to all teachers or teacher educators, but rather because "language" as an attribute was simply assumed.

5.2.1 Aims

Guskey's seminal work on teacher professional development (2002) refers to "change" as the desired aim, with change needing to occur in the three domains of practice, of teachers' attitudes and beliefs, and of learning outcomes for pupils. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) are interested in understanding how to bring about long-term change in these domains and define change as "growth or learning". This concern with ensuring long-term outcomes was clear from my individual interviews where comments on professional growth usually related to teachers – "what really remains very strongly with you afterwards" (Sutra) – outcomes which they described in terms of both learning and growth. Long-term change is characterised by a genuine sense of ownership of the learning, reflected in verbs used to describe both the aims and the process, such as "interiorise" "assimilate", "appropriate", so that the learning becomes part of the teacher's very being:

> I wanted everything to be really thought through by them... they've got it, they have assimilated it. It's gone in. (Robert)

> Appropriate, i.e. be aware of the objectives, refine them, understand how to achieve these objectives [...], take ownership of tools, methods etc. (Enrico)

Learning and growth understood in this way result in empowerment, but this empowerment goes hand-in-hand with responsibility:

> All our work should be directed towards criticality. [...] We should talk about "critical language awareness", "critical intercultural awareness", "critical communication" [...]. I understand "empowerment" as something very strong, in the sense that it allows educators, teachers and students to be critical and to recognise social injustice, it allows them to actively and positively critique policies. (Babel)

This quotation is significant on three levels: firstly, because all three of Guskey's domains (practice, values and student outcomes) are implicated and interconnected; secondly, because it indicates a clear link between learner, teacher and teacher educator growth, and lastly, because it links the aims of (language) education directly to the question of values.

5.2.2 Values

As outlined in the vignettes, all of my participants consider the aims of language education to go far beyond the acquisition of linguistic competence; the goals cannot be separated from the values which begin with an openness to otherness and to diversity, with a fundamental respect for every individual learner, whose voice must be heard. The logical corollary of this focus on the individual, is a focus on society, with the aims of language education becoming more openly political. For Lotta, language education means "giving a voice to the students, their own voice in the sense that they use the language and the languages the students have, in order to make meaning, to give meaning to

the issues that are being learned about"; for Robert it is linked to "changing people's views of the world" and for Varley and the Council of Europe, it is regarded as "democratic, as revolutionary, as to do with society, with changing society".

Given that we cannot simply assume that everyone involved in language education subscribes to these values, we can also consider values as conditions that facilitate professional growth:

> I mean different things help you to learn better, I mean it's not just the training […] but also about your personality, your beliefs and everything that comes into the picture. (Sutra)

Moreover, if these values are to evolve, they must become part of the process of professional growth, bearing in mind the insights from literature on teacher and teacher educator cognition, which clearly demonstrate that bringing about change in terms of values, particularly long-term change which then impacts on practice, is extremely challenging (Murray and Male, 2005; Phipps, 2009).

I believe my data both confirm and add to the aforementioned bodies of literature on teacher and teacher educator professional growth and cognition; they highlight the multiple complexities around values as part of professional growth; they draw attention to the tensions between "what we know, what we say and what we do" (Babel); they warn us of the dangers of treating values as "beatitudes" (Robert), whilst at the same time emphasising our moral obligation to recognise, accept and work through these tensions:

> And then the other very significant thing is that…and I don't yet know how to do this, other than to insist […] on ethics, on values, and on the whole ethical aspect. (Babel)

> We need to continue to embody these humanist values […] without succumbing to them as if they were beatitudes; these values are also problematic, but we are here to work on them, right? (Robert)

5.2.3 Professional Identity

> First of all, […] we need to make people understand that lifelong learning is normal, because things are constantly changing, and knowledge is increasing. Would you go to a dentist who, for the last 40 years, has had no further training? No, you go in search of the professional. (Babel)

This comment implies that what constitutes the "professional" includes the notion of engagement in continuous professional development. Rather surprisingly, it was the only example of a comment on the theme of professional identity from the individual interviews and at the time it struck me as self-explanatory; I did not feel the need to explore it further. During the focused group conversation, however, where the exchange of views resulted in "new knowledge through connective discourse" (Nutbrown, 2014, p.4), this apparently obvious link between professional identity and professional

growth was problematised. While the development of a professional identity was considered a valid aim of teacher professional growth – "but it should be something that will […] enhance your professional self-image" (Lotta) – tensions emerged between whole-school and each individual teacher's learning needs:

> I was struck when Babel was talking about the importance of the team which I think IS extremely important, but we shouldn't forget that teaching is also a very individual, solitary thing and that there are situations where teachers are having problems and difficulties. (Varley)

These in turn exposed yet another tension between teachers who have "an extraordinary sense of professional commitment" (Enrico) but do not consider themselves "professionals", precisely because in certain national contexts it is unfortunately still the case today that they have few opportunities to come together:

> I know of no other profession where the idea of discussing our progress and our problems with each other is inconceivable. (Enrico)

If the notion of professional identity is problematic where language teachers are concerned, it emerged clearly as a thorny issue when it comes to language teacher educators, because it goes hand-in-hand with questions of status and definition of roles, both of which revealed themselves as highly variable. I believe this also helps explain why my participants' exchanges often veered back to language teachers: it is challenging to talk about any aspect of the professional growth of a target group which often lacks a "common culture" (Robert) and suffers from identity issues, possibly linked to poorly defined or shifting roles (Murphy and Pinnegar, 2011):

> We can only talk about teacher professional development; we can't talk about the professional development of teacher trainers because in our context they don't exist as such (except in the context of initial teacher training). Or at least we'd need a clear identification of their responsibilities, which is far from being the case at the moment. (Enrico)

> It's that we don't have the title of teacher educator as such, so there's no system in place and it's always difficult... and that's why we have to create projects so that they can work together and really assume this role because otherwise […] there's no environment that would facilitate it. (Sutra)

And yet to some extent an "identification of their responsibilities" (Enrico) is precisely what emerged from the rich exchange in the focused group conversation, significant responsibilities in terms of both breadth and depth. Some examples given include creating an environment based on trust and mutual respect between teachers and teacher educators; stimulating creativity which should lead to innovation; reassuring and instilling a sense of self-belief; structuring learning opportunities so that language teachers share and reflect on their practice and values; as well as providing new input – theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical. Above all, it was the "caring" element of the

"professional stance" outlined in the InFo-TED Model which emerged most clearly, reflected in the language used – "nourish", "provide food for thought", "allow them to grow":

> We have to reassure them and give them the energy to find original solutions themselves […] I think we have to spark their ideas, and also give them lots of ideas but at the same time nourish their reflection. (Babel)

> Our role is to provide food for thought, bring new questions… to give teachers the chance to talk about what they are doing and why, and to reflect... to give them tools and content that allow them to grow […]. (Enrico)

It may be difficult to articulate the professional identity of language teacher educators; their sense of professional responsibility, on the other hand, is both explicit and significant.

I believe my data therefore provide further evidence of the need to continue to expand the small, but growing body of research on the professional identity of teacher educators (Izadinia, 2014). It is a topic of such importance that one of the four core domains within an online knowledge base for teacher educators in the Netherlands is dedicated to "the profession of teacher education" (Dengerink *et al.*, 2015). Interestingly, two recent theses focus specifically on the professional identity of language teacher educators in particular national contexts (Thorne, 2015; Yuan, 2015). This subject-specific angle requires further exploration, not only in other national contexts, but in transnational contexts such as the ECML. The approach, however, needs to be holistic, exploring the links between values, professional identity and professional growth, summed up in the following citation:

> […] relatively little is known about the relationship between the formation of professional identities, the practices of teacher educators and the learning they undertake. These connections matter because professional identities form a key part of teacher educators' ways of understanding the world of teacher education and enacting their beliefs, values and principles through work. The exploration of identity is therefore part of a wider commitment to promoting the understanding and improvement of teacher education in general. (Murray *et al.*, 2017,n.p.)

5.2.4 Critical features

In my literature review I highlighted the considerable convergence in research insights around the critical features (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2017) which help generate professional growth in (language) teachers and (language) teacher educators, such as communities of practice which provide safe spaces for dialogic engagement. I also highlighted a number of divergences, such as greater agency in terms of determining input or the undertaking of research for teacher educators. These divergences did not usually amount to critical features which are unique to teacher educators; the distinction was rather a question of degree. While my data broadly confirm these insights, they also broaden the perspective by including language learners in classrooms in this continuum. They

identify conditions applicable to all learning, not just professional learning, such as a view of learning and development as a continuous process which adopts a learner-centred approach, based on respect for, and belief in, the learner:

> I believe when it comes to supporting the development of teacher educators, teachers or pupils, although there are all these big differences in status, motivation and state of development, this must be based on the same fundamental principles, I would say humanist principles. (Babel)

In many ways there is little that is completely new in what my participants say about the critical features that foster (professional) growth; their comments simply reflect the shift away from a transmission model of professional learning towards an approach that emphasises learner agency and reflective participation (Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002), a shift that began in the seventies and one that many of us take for granted. Yet still the challenges persist; by presenting the challenges here as tensions, I wish to highlight their complexity and the need to work with, rather than attempt to resolve, these tensions.

While learner agency is pivotal to this shift, it is a condition riddled with tensions. The first one emerges in its translation into French. My French-speaking participants propose several options but are fully content with none. The same thing happens with the closely related term, "empowerment", appropriately described by Babel using the ambiguous word "casse-tête", which can be either a "puzzle" or a "headache". The second tension arises in consideration of the role of agency: it emerges as both a condition of professional growth and as an aim, where the aim is viewed as the interiorisation of learning which leads to empowerment. Further tensions arise when learner agency is linked to learner motivation and learner autonomy, tensions between intrinsic and external motivation, as illustrated in this quotation from Sutra's individual interview:

> It's very important self-reflection and to see where you are not that strong, so you would like to improve, this is one thing, and the other is of course if there is a possibility and just something that would be of interest to you, though it's not something that's really missing for your job [...] And then of course the necessity, when, for example, the law changes and you see that you are not qualified, and you have to do something more.

The theme of agency is developed further in the focused group conversation with Lotta suggesting a balance is needed between autonomy and duty:

> And teacher autonomy comes into the picture. An ethical obligation is not really enough. It should also be something that will give you pleasure.

Babel and Robert remind us that while learner agency and autonomy may be considered key, how they are conceptualised is shaped by the current neoliberal agenda dominating education policies in many European countries; for Babel this gives rise to the tension between agency and accountability – "there is the concept of autonomy on the one hand [...]and accountability on the other [...] we

must be accountable for our results" – while for Robert there is the danger that an over-emphasis on agency can lead to national authorities reneging on their responsibilities to organise professional learning opportunities:

> Now it (agency) should not lead to the conclusion that ultimately teachers can do it all on their own. And that the institutions withdraw from providing professional development. I see a great danger, I see pedagogical and methodological interests, in entrusting professional development to teachers, but I also see dangers that stem, let us say, from neoliberalism, and from the will of the liberal state to free itself as much as possible from a certain number of its roles.

Consideration of the format and the content, or the "how" and the "what" of professional learning opportunities, reveals other tensions: while for Sutra learner participation and creativity are key – "in the end you are satisfied because you have been creative, you could put yourself into the final product, so this is what I really think matters a lot", Lotta places greater emphasis on group work and external expert input – "so there's three sides: the guru, from national or even international level, then somebody from the field and then working together"; Babel is more concerned about the "what" and the tension between value-based and technical input: "between an input that is, how do you say, humanistic and an input that is technical… I have always been afraid of the technical… there is a place for the more technical, but it mustn't take over" while Varley addresses the tension between theory and practice, emphasising praxis:

> So basically the concept of professional development […] it is that people should be given the opportunities to reflect and invent, and develop and look at things, see the things as they are, rather than to go from any theoretical pre-suppositions and that when you get to looking at principles, it's because you relate it to practice.

These tensions are pertinent to professional growth in general, with variations in the span in each depending on the focus of either language teachers or teacher educators, thus reinforcing the notion of a continuum. However this very notion brings us back to the overarching tension with which this section began and the danger of underplaying the nuanced but essential differences between the two target groups, a danger which only fully emerged in the focused group conversation – "it's not the same thing; it's not the same thing at all" (Robert) – differences which require our urgent attention:

> I think that teacher educators must also be researchers, much more so than teachers, that they must have even greater autonomy than teachers when it comes to professional development, and these aspects expose really important differences; I would not be very keen to put teachers and teacher educators in the same package, so-to-speak, when thinking about their development. Of course, there are some common points, but I think we have a lot to lose by wanting to put them in the same package, if only strategically... […] one of the priorities, given in particular, the diversity of the status of those in charge of teacher

education today, is a need for serious reflection around the development needs of teacher educators (ibid.).

One key difference relates to conditions: where language teacher professional learning is considered most effective when it is context-specific (Norton and Early, 2011): "start with your learners – what do they need?" (Babel), addressing language teachers' "own issues and concerns" (ibid.), because "it's not easy teaching languages" (Enrico), for language teacher educators, who are more likely to work in isolation, in conditions which may not be conducive to professional growth, stepping away from their own contexts is particularly beneficial. These insights are in line with the literature on the kind of learning that takes place through boundary crossing (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011), considered by Williams (2013) and Williams and Berry (2016) as particularly productive for teacher educators and the development of their professional identity. The cognitive dissonance that results from this confrontation with different perspectives leads to learning which is beneficial in two apparently contradictory ways: it acts as a prism through which language teacher educators can critically review their own practice and beliefs, and at the same time better appreciate that practice:

> I don't want to criticise, but when you're in these roles in a somewhat closed environment, you end up always doing the same things and in fact you don't progress. (Enrico)

> If I've been able to do useful things, it's because I've been able to do it in French and German and English […] to do it across traditions. […] Almost all language teacher educators work in very constraining systems, with national programmes, all sorts of bureaucratic and constraining systems. To be able to get them out of that context and really to think about what a language educator does […] I think it (the transnational aspect) is the absolute key to the success; first of all you get people out of their context; they're thinking about things at a level very different from their own particular context […] Things are similar but different which means that we can continue with what we are doing but we can also change. (Varley)

Another important difference emerged when considering the "how" of language teacher educator professional growth, the process. Time and space for informal, self-directed learning (Dengerink *et al.*, 2015), often in relation to research, was emphasised as just as important as group learning with peers, with each feeding into the other:

> […] individual reflection and the evolution and enrichening of (our) research. […] We exchange ideas and we see that our thinking, our understandings and views of the world evolve. (Robert)

Learning through international projects offers language teacher educators an ideal medium for group reflection and theorising, and for combining task-based learning – "if you find good tasks, then these tasks unite people" (Babel) – with challenge, where challenge is a stimulus for deep learning and higher order thinking: "this constant questioning, this constant challenge, we only make progress when we have obstacles to overcome" (Enrico). Through projects, the cognitive conflict presented by the identified challenge (Cobbs *et al.*, 1990 in Clarke 2002) can be exploited, with

enough time to allow the process of reflection to act as a springboard for innovation and the creation and piloting of new products:

> The most interesting part for me, without doubt, was the learning within projects. Our thinking was constantly being enriched… There too, the way we grow and learn is very different. (Robert)

> In order to innovate, there's got to be an element of dissatisfaction […] at the same time you need a sort of vision which says this is how things should be. That "in-between", is where the process of innovation is, and in order to be able to do it, you've got to have an idea of what the first few steps might be, you work where you start out – but not to know necessarily what it is at the end that has got to come out of the process. (Varley)

There are echoes here of comments made by the authors of the InFo-TED Model:

> What I found interesting is that national projects and initiatives on teacher educators' professional development benefit from "up scaling" them to an international level. (R.V. in Lunenberg *et al.*, 2017, p.567)

The tensions in these nuanced differences in conditions and processes need to be handled carefully; the aim is not to resolve the tensions by suggesting, for example, that language teachers and language teacher educators therefore require totally distinct learning opportunities. It is rather about finding ways to manage the contradictions and the complexity. One such approach is to organise projects at national level which bring language teachers and teacher educators together:

> I see that we must create the framework, the environment for all this to happen. And that's difficult [...] because it happens very often, well, that teacher trainers, they live in a certain universe, very often teachers live in a different universe. It's difficult to bring all this together - there's a lack of trust. So we have to create the environment where people, ideas, methods, didactics etc. intersect. (Sutra)

There are further tensions in the aims of research undertaken by language teacher educators: on the one hand, a desire for the research insights to impact on learners in classrooms – "research actively engaged in practice" (Babel) – and on the other, a recognition of teacher educators as "second order professionals" (Murray and Male, 2005) who have limited direct contact with learners. It is yet further evidence of the complexity of the field that precisely in this distinction between language teachers and language teacher educators we come full circle, back to the interrelationship between (language) learners, teachers and teacher educators, echoed in the words of Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015), words my data firmly endorse:

> […] we need a firmer commitment to understanding those practices of language teaching, teacher learning, and language teacher education that illuminate how teachers can be helped to make a difference to their students' lives in the language classroom (p.441).

5.2.5 Conclusions on professional growth – reiterating the tensions; reengaging with theory

I would like to conclude this section on professional growth by firstly summarising the various tensions identified before considering what this might mean in relation to theory. There are tensions between the development needs of language teachers and those of language teacher educators; between individual and group learning processes; between input which is context-specific and input which crosses pedagogic traditions; between technical, creative and value-based input; between autonomy and external constraints; between theory and practice; between structured or less formal learning; between professional commitment and professional identity; and between linguistic, didactic or wider societal aims – tensions which influence aims, processes and conditions. There is an overarching tension between what we think, what we say and what we do (Babel), both as teachers and teacher educators. The challenge for all of us working in the field is to avoid turning these tensions into reductive dichotomies and instead recognise them as subtle, yet complex nuances which can be exploited for productive learning.

Subtle nuances are also visible when it comes to theoretical frameworks. In my literature review I pointed out that research on the professional growth of (language) teachers and teacher educators was frequently viewed through the lens of sociocultural theory (Kleinsasser, 2013; Golombek, 2015), which I felt was also appropriate for my own research, provided it was complemented by other theories to help capture the complexity of the subject matter. On analysing my data, two further refinements emerged in relation to the learning process: the first is that the informal structure associated with communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) is more suitable for teacher educators (Czerniawski *et al*., 2017), rather than the more structured settings often associated with professional learning communities (Stoll *et al.*, 2006); the second is a subtle pull towards social constructivism, which reflects more accurately the kind of learning my participants described.

Based on my data, which are peppered with variations on the words "construct/re-construct/co-construct", I feel this is particularly fitting for language teacher educators who learn best when they engage in a social constructivist learning cycle, a cycle in which the learner progresses from individual reflection through articulation towards group reflection, theorisation and dialogic engagement, on to meaning-making, ownership and interiorisation, before the cycle begins again.

In fact, according to my participants, our focused group conversation exemplified just such a learning process:

> When I read my interview transcript, I was in despair! For me it is extremely impressive to see that it is through listening, discussing, having to express yourself, that you really become aware of things, things I absolutely would not and could not have said before. It is by being

able to exchange in confidence in this way that we make progress and makes sense of things we said earlier. (Enrico)

I'm very very happy with this model of constructing knowledge […] with new issues that don't have solutions as yet, and I think this is constructing knowledge in a very very delightful way because there's so much expectation. (Lotta)

The process we've just been through I've found educational and "formatif". […] Things done on the personal level then become much clearer and enriched when we do it together. (Varley)

I think that each one of us with his or her own experience could bring, perhaps, new angles to the discussion […] a really enriching discussion for me. (Sutra)

Moreover, social constructivism aligns well to my narrative-based methodology: "social constructivist approaches […] share the idea that our narration and discourse brings into being worlds of understanding" (Kuhn, 2007, p.169).

I believe it is this confluence of complementary learning theories which together deepen our understanding of the complex construct of professional growth. Let us now see what happens when professional growth confronts an equally complex construct, that of the ECML.

5.3 When the professional growth of language teacher educators converges with the ECML

5.3.1 Introduction

As Varley said, the impact of the ECML in terms of professional development is very complex indeed. You are there in a little corner of Austria. (Babel)

It is precisely this complexity that my research set out to explore, aware as I was of the limited number of opportunities offered by the Centre on the one hand, and of the uniqueness of these opportunities on the other. Aware too, of the important differentiation between project team members, who are involved with the Centre for a period of three or four years, and other language professionals who attend one or more ECML events (project workshops, in-country project follow-up activities, colloquia etc.), a differentiation which would impact on many aspects of my insights. If I could just identify the conditions and processes which best facilitate professional growth and try to replicate these at the Centre, particularly for those whose contact is limited, then perhaps I could maximise its potential. As I hope the preceding section has just demonstrated, however, this is far from straightforward, unearthing more variables than certainties, more tensions than solutions, tensions which are replicated in what my participants said about professional growth in relation to the Centre, at times heightened, at times diffused. I will now present these insights, once again using tensions as my conceptual frame.

Particularly at this point, when my data begin to relate directly to the ECML, the critical reader should rightly be concerned about bias, given that the data were generated by an insider researcher, myself as the Centre's Director, and from six participants with longstanding involvement in the Centre. As a reflexive researcher, I am very aware of this dilemma and although I am not attempting to make any claims about the generalisability of these data, outlining from the start that they represent the participants' perceptions, I chose my participants precisely because of their intimate knowledge of the Centre, knowledge which gave them the necessary perspective through which to examine how it has evolved and to consider how it should evolve in the future, and to do so by applying the same principle of criticality they themselves had demanded of all development processes. As I hope the following analysis of the data will show, they were as open in their critique as they were in their praise.

5.3.2 Aims and critical features

In the preceding section on the professional growth of language teacher educators, my insights identify three conditions: exposure to different perspectives, freedom from the constraints of national systems and a safe space in which to learn. Given the transnational nature of the ECML, it is unsurprising that it meets these conditions, conditions that are also part of the learning process. Where there is tension between the different perspectives of those involved in ECML activities, this should be considered as a resource to exploit, not only to find common ground but to create something that is greater than the sum of its parts:

> […] I mean the miracle that 33 people from 33 different countries can come together, work harmoniously and do things and have infinitely more in common than they have as differences. (Varley)
>
> […] there are these epistemological conflicts that are getting stronger and stronger, because there are stronger and stronger personalities coming there, and that's not a bad thing, in fact it's quite wonderful; it means that finally no one is reticent in coming forward, no one dominates, no one imposes their ideas, but together we fight to create something that works for all of us. (Babel)

And this goes hand-in-hand with the second condition: freedom from the constraints of national systems. In sharp contrast to national systems, which almost by definition have a tendency to look inwards, to "close within their own institutions" (Sutra) and become "fortresses" (Robert), the Centre offers an environment which has always looked for ways to "open outwards" (ibid.), offering the "feeling of being in "parenthesis" for a while, a feeling that is extremely beneficial to everyone, it's very rich and very beneficial" (Enrico). Babel describes the Centre as "a space for making proposals, for creativity, for free expression […] and goes even further by implying that national

constraints actually inhibit open dialogue between experts – "here is where experts are completely free to express themselves – it's one of the few places left".

Yet this is precisely where an important tension emerges. As indicated in **Section 1.4**, participants in ECML project workshops are selected by their national authorities as experts in the field who have something to contribute but who, in return, are expected to show how the experience can support developments at national level: they are there in an individual capacity but are also there to represent their country. This tension between individual agency and national representation is a complex one, linked to values – "do they choose to come here because they are already sensitised?" (Babel) – and influenced by multiple factors over which the Centre has little control: the size of the country concerned, its educational system, the current political and policy context, how and whom it selects, and the opportunities this person has to influence change at national level.

Given the degree of variability, the contrast in my participants' perceptions of the Centre is unsurprising:

> It's really like a window through which new perspectives, new ways of doing things can come. (Sutra)

> It's very far away. Very far away. […] there's this problem of mutualisation, of appropriation. […] I believe that the people who come are indeed usually teacher educators, who bring something fundamental to the quality of the tools, the products of projects, but as I see it, they have no influence at national level […] they come, they are delegates, they return to their function, period. (Enrico)

Although the tension between individual and national development needs is less apparent in the case of project team members who put themselves forward for selection, it remains present nonetheless because the final approval of projects to be funded by the Centre is based on priorities in member states and is taken by its Governing Board, made up primarily of representatives of national governments. And therein lies yet another tension: projects are chosen based on their relevance to current needs but "must also be pre-emptive with regard to future needs" (Babel):

> The ECML is a place where certain reflections and innovations are possible, which are "ahead" of the member countries' own thinking. (Robert)

When it comes to the condition of a safe space, my data indicate that this is one the ECML not only meets, but surpasses: the institution provides an intellectually stimulating environment, personified by Robert as a mother, whose warmth and tenderness facilitate growth:

> […] that feeling of being in a team, of the warmth between us, when we work together […] when things go well, but they generally go well, you really... you feel like you're on a mother's lap because the Centre helps you, because the Centre gives us this place where we develop.

When viewed simply as a context for learning, the Centre is undoubtedly sociocultural, bringing together as it does, experts from across its thirty-three member states; it functions as an informal community of practice – "a tangible network which is European-wide" (Lotta) – in which the learning is predominantly project-based and among peers, with the team assuming the role of more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86) during project events. We need to remember, however, that Robert is speaking here from the perspective of a project team member; for the condition of a safe space also to apply to project events such as workshops, it becomes part of the process, and has to be created by the project team. This exposes a tension between a sociocultural *context* for learning and a social constructivist *approach* to learning: those coordinating an ECML event must not assume that the context, in and of itself, will foster a process of genuine social constructivist learning. My participants, already in the individual interviews, articulate very clearly what this process should look like:

> I think at least one phase with enough time and enough space for the participants to do something creative and then to present it, is one of the keys of a workshop. I think to recognise that there is a training element in it, that, you know, you've thought about it a bit more than anyone else, if there are things that need to be communicated, to do it clearly and well; to think of posing a question about what you're going to do in the workshop rather than to say, here is something that is tied up; there's got to be room for input from the participants. It's not got to be presenting something that's already done; but really to think that the project might be changed by the input and the people can get in involved in it and that they can contribute. (Varley)

> And then there's the trust, I'm always struck by the trust...that is, the participants come with the real impression, the feeling, that they are there not just spectators but as participants...that they are taken seriously. (Enrico)

> So that's what it is all about, just like for pupils, that is, meaningful, rewarding activities that do not insult their intelligence […] here is commitment, involvement – a belief that this is genuine platform for dialogue. (Babel)

Perhaps they were at pains to describe this process precisely because they not only recognise the gulf between the opportunities for the professional growth of team members and those of workshop participants, but also because they know continued vigilance is required:

> Before I participated in workshops but participating...you don't see the effects too much but as coordinator I really perceived the enormous, enormous beneficial effects of this unique situation. (Enrico)

> I think the experience of being at a workshop, even more of being in a team has actually transformed a lot of people […] t's been a catalyst for a lot a people. (Varley)

> I think we're finding the right ways not to organise "sham" events […] the conclusions are those of the group; it's not for us (the team) to predetermine them. (Babel)

Just as conditions and processes are intertwined, so too are processes and aims, particularly when we focus on content, on the "what" of the process. The research/practice tension identified earlier, appears to be one the ECML manages relatively well, with both addressed through project activities and in project outputs that are research-informed, yet practical. The process itself also results in learning and growth at both these levels:

> Each theoretical part was followed by the group work where everyone presented his own example/experience. (Sutra)

> It's all about putting theory into practice and it's this link between principles and implementation that really binds...it's fantastic...and it helps us to move forward...in a very, very powerful way. (Enrico)

> It has been a decisive experience in her thinking... and also in her practice as a teacher educator...the ideas, the enrichment, within the project team. This is something that has been really fundamental and which she would never have had elsewhere, that much is clear. (Robert)

Yet the data also suggest that the Centre has a rather ambivalent relationship with research and that its well-intended attempts to bridge the gap between research and practice risk a reductionist approach to both:

> What are the current needs and how can we meet current challenges in our classrooms right now, and we need to find these solutions, partial solutions perhaps – but it seems to me we're still not making this link. (Enrico)

> At the end of the first project, we would have continued to work on the conceptual [...] without having to deal immediately with what is happening in the classes. [...] But we needed to show member states in particular, that all this was not just ideas. (Robert)

The Centre is caught in an almost impossible tension between access to the breadth and depth of research in language education from across Europe on the one hand, and the differing needs on the ground in thirty-three countries on the other:

> The ECML is, of course a pathway directly into European research in this area [...] And we do understand that when professors and such people work on projects, they do it the way professors do, and they put all the science into place. But the Centre should try to find the simpler truth – it's there, to turn things out into a more user-friendly way, starting with the language, making it more understandable, more palatable. (Lotta)

Babel urges the Centre to acknowledge and work through this tension in relation to research:

> For my part, I think that research is threaded through the Centre's work but in ways that are not explicit enough: there's the research from existing literature on the various themes addressed, ad hoc research funded as part of projects, personal research undertaken by team members, exchanges with researchers in certain fields... The very way in which projects are conducted has the appearance, maybe even meets the scientific criteria of action research. In short, the ECML's relationship to research deserves to be made explicit, to be clarified and valued.

This tension increases when the research/practice binary expands to include policy. Although the results of a survey in the Netherlands reveal that teacher educators do not consider learning about educational policy to be a top priority (Dengerink *et al.*, 2015), my data indicate that this is a necessary expansion, not only to satisfy the demands of ECML member states and their governmental representatives, but because bringing about sustainable change requires alignment of research, policy and practice:

> I'd say you can't successfully implement educational policies if there has been no research and if there are no outputs from this research, no products that can be put into direct use in professional development activities. […] And you can't have innovative quality products that stand the test of time, that know where they're going, if there hasn't been research behind them – or that know what they're aiming for, if there's no policy. (Robert)

Despite the apparent logic of this quotation, any attempted alignment on the part of the ECML brings with it two further tensions: the first between European and national language policies and the second between process and product. In relation to the first tension, my data aptly capture the current ambivalence vis-à-vis European institutions: disconnected from reality for some, a symbol of hope for others:

> So, for policies, what's it going to be? Is it the educational policies of the countries or is it a somewhat ideal educational policy as defined by the Council of Europe? (Robert)

> We often have depressing national programmes, and when we see the proposals coming from the Council of Europe or from the Commission, we can breathe a little; that's good. (Babel)

As far as the second tension between process and product is concerned, there was disagreement among my participants about what mattered more: the products which result from ECML projects, often inspired by Council of Europe language policy developments, or the process of being involved in a project. This tension is inextricably linked to the tension between the individual learning needs of language teacher educators and the needs of member states; from the perspective of the former, it is the process which is most beneficial; from the latter, it is all about the outputs and their uptake at national level, though here too, we encounter further challenges around accessibility and adaptability:

> Could the ECML not use the workshops to train teacher educators? I don't believe in it at all. […] Only products can have an influence […] It seems to me that the major challenge for the ECML is to make the specificity and richness of the tools it makes available to education stakeholders visible on a larger scale, beyond a small group of decision-makers. Too often, the quality of this work is generally recognised, but the link is not directly made with perceived needs at local or national level. (Enrico)

> It is very difficult to prepare tools in projects and think that they would be useful for countries and teachers to use […] because they are not adapted to their local contexts (Sutra).

As with all the tensions my data reveal, this is not one we should aim to resolve but rather consider it as a resource to be exploited, as Varley wisely reminds us:

> Enrico made the point that what really counts for the long-term impact of the ECML is the "products" of the projects and how far they are widely and effectively usable and adaptable in the member states. I agree and disagree with this view – a major impact has certainly been through certain ECML tools which have been adopted, adapted, translated and integrated into national curricula etc. On the other hand, the process by which they have been achieved is not "anodyne" – if the products hadn't gone through the processes of international cooperation, discussion, input from experts and group members etc. they would certainly be different and would perhaps embody ECML values less richly. The emphasis on products doesn't take account either of the more process-based outcomes of the ECML, where the emphasis is on how to innovate or improve rather than on the content of the innovation.

It becomes increasingly difficult to separate process from product; both can be considered aims of professional growth through the ECML. Varley's quotation, with his reference to values, leads us to wider questions around aims. It is at this point that I would like to draw on data generated during discussions of the InFo-TED Model and its possible relevance to the ECML. This is not to suggest that the aims of professional growth through the ECML were not discussed at other points – the question of values, in particular, permeates all the data – instead, it is because, as I indicated in my literature review, this model acted as a catalyst for "constructive controversy" (Achinstein, 2002, cited in Kelchtermans *et al*., 2018, p. 130), with the tension between the affordances and the constraints it offered us, emblematic of the entire data set. I will therefore also draw on this data to lead into my summary of the point of intersection between the construct of professional growth (of language teacher educators) and that of the ECML.

5.3.3 The InFo-TED Model

In both my literature review and my methodology chapter I explain what attracted me to the InFo-TED Model and why I chose to use it in my data generation, including a reflexive account of the difficulties encountered. I hope that the following section will show that despite these difficulties, the inclusion of the InFo-TED Model has both enriched and challenged my analysis. A figure of the model can be found on the following page.

Dynamics of professional learning

Diversity

Social and technological change

Communication and relations

Growth & empowerment

Personal level: Knowledge & Practice

Local level: Institution, programmes

National level: Frameworks or standards

Global level

Boundaries

Identities

Visions

How I teach is the message

- Critical and inquiry oriented
- Self-regulated
- Caring
- Contextual responsiveness
- Research informed

Professional stances

university-based and school-based teacher educators

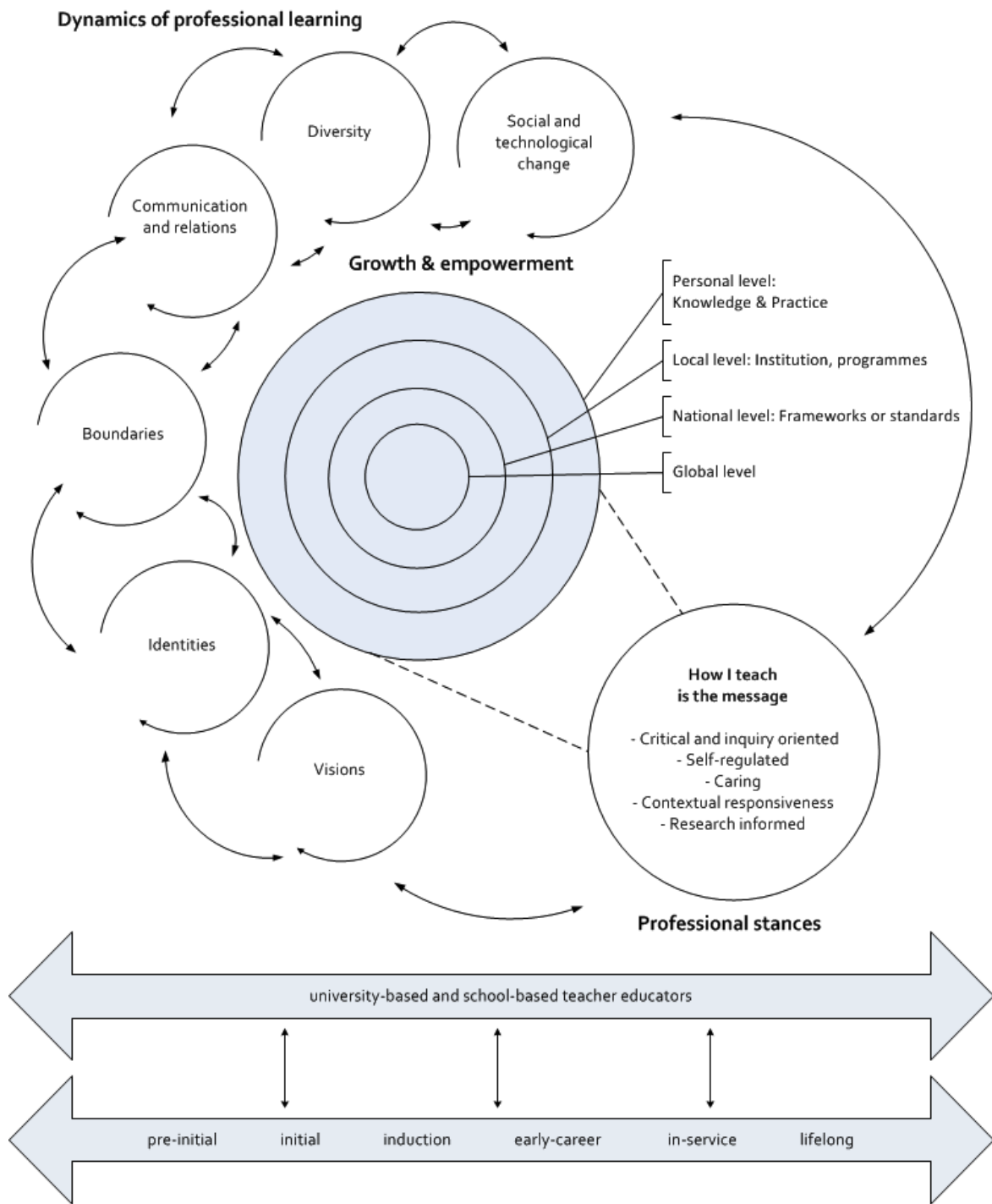pre-initial   initial   induction   early-career   in-service   lifelong

Figure 2: InFo-TED Conceptual Model of Teacher Educators' Professional Development

The InFo-TED Model provoked in my participants one overarching tension between affordances and constraints. Let me begin with affordances. My participants appreciated the idea of the professional growth of teacher educators as a dynamic and complex construct:

> It is a very complex, articulated vision. I like this movement – everything must be interconnected. (Babel)

> And what attracts me to this model are the interactions, the dynamics of the interactions. (Enrico)

They also recognised the value of a model that brings together the personal, institutional, national and global levels in the form of concentric circles; in thinking about the levels in this way, my participants moved beyond earlier binary tensions such as those between the individual and the institutional, between the individual and the national or between the national and the European, to a discussion around the need for the ECML to consider all of these levels and the ways in which they interrelate. This led Varley to express reservations about the term "global" – "a dangerous concept meaning to withdraw from anything specific" and to a consensus that it should be replaced with "European"; Enrico's preference for the circles to have been drawn using broken lines to suggest permeability and boundary crossing, was also welcomed. Where some felt agency was absent from the model, others recognised agency in the fact that the personal level encompasses, rather than is encompassed by, the other levels. There was agreement that for the Centre, the institutional and national levels are "much more complex" (Babel), but that if we can support people to "grow on a personal level, that allows them to do things at an institutional level" (Varley).

Already where used in the individual interviews, the model functioned as a meaning-making tool, resulting in the creation of "new knowledge" (Nutbrown, 2014, p.4). The circles on the left-hand side, originally designed as "content domains" (Kelchtermans *et al.*, 2018, p.127), the "what" of learning processes, morphed firstly into aims – uncontroversial aims such as the need for the Centre to strengthen communication and create networks, as well as long-term aims, where questions of identity moved beyond the personal and the professional, into the societal and the political:

> And societal in the long term - major projects take time to really stimulate change at the societal level, but this is fundamental and must be kept in mind. (Babel)

> Visions and identities are very strongly there and they're very much part of what it (the Centre) is; almost more important than the actual operational things which come out of it. (Varley)

> And that the ECML is in the process of being understood in its function, not only in technical terms, but also in terms of its real purpose, as a place to build a European identity […] We need to have a vision, and I believe that everything that is developed here has this dimension of vision; the question of identity is clearly present. (Babel)

The meaning-making expanded in the focused group conversation, where these circles took on another more holistic function, a kind of checklist which would act as "an extremely powerful way of contextualising […] any particular action […] so, where am I working in terms of vision, in terms of identity etc. and those seem to me absolutely crucial in the way we think about things" (Varley).

However, for all the positive comments, my data clearly illustrate the constraints in trying to apply this model to the professional growth of language teacher educators through the ECML. The use of the verb "teach" in relation to teacher educators was heavily criticised as indicative of a top-down, transmission model which ran counter to everything that had been said about learner agency and teacher educators as facilitators. Robert, perspicacious as ever, identified the cause of the general unease with the model and in doing so, subtly alerted me to the mistake I had made: I had been attracted to this model because it had been developed by the people for whom it was intended; notions of agency and ownership were key and yet I had failed to see the contradiction in assuming it might work in a different context and for different end-users:

> I think that here we are going completely against some of the ideas we have developed, I'm being provocative, of course, but a model like this one does not begin with the reality of the ECML at all. And you will always have difficulty grasping the reality of the ECML if you start from a model that is external. Do you see?

Despite these difficulties, they could all see how having a model for the ECML could be beneficial, but it would need to be *our* model, developed by, and for, those involved with the Centre:

> I'm using the "we" as we who somehow work through the ECML, so we should provide agency to those whom we help in promoting their capacities, so maybe I would draw a different kind of a model. (Lotta)

> I was thinking, when you work on a project, on a theme, you tend to lose sight of the overall vision […] so such a model could perhaps help us to retain the complexity, the whole picture precisely while working on something small, something simple, something necessary, etc.[…] But I think we need to find graphic representations which are more effective, which are our own. (Babel)

5.3.4 Conclusions on the professional growth of language teacher educators and the ECML – reiterating the tensions; reengaging with theory

I will now conclude this section in a similar vein as with the previous one: firstly, by summarising new tensions which emerge when the construct of professional growth meets that of the ECML and then by reconsidering how this new knowledge impacts on theory. There are tensions between the professional growth of ECML project team members and those who only take part in ECML events; tensions between individual, institutional and national development needs; between process and

product; between policy, research and practice; between national and European policies and between addressing present needs and anticipating future challenges.

My data identified yet another tension, this one more directly related to the premise of my research itself, based as it is on language teacher educators as the key target group for ECML programme activities. While my participants broadly confirmed this premise, they felt on the one hand that teacher educators had been a clearer focus of the Council's work in language education in the past, reminding me of a collection of case-studies dating back to 1982, and that the Centre (as part of the Council), ought to make them a clearer focus again in the future; on the other hand, they were unanimous in insisting that the way ahead for the Centre lay precisely in reaching beyond this target group, even beyond the world of language professionals to focus more on general education. It became clear that the simplicity and single focus of the name – *The European Centre for Modern Languages* – is long since inadequate in this complex, postmodern world. If I felt overwhelmed, I found some comfort in how they viewed the Centre in relation to their own professional growth:

> I always enjoy this exchange; the possibility, the atmosphere created […] and also working in groups, in smaller groups so that everyone can participate. I like that it's still in two languages, it's not just English […] I mean it's really enriching to come here and exchange […] it's so positive here; it's a unique institution within Europe working so closely with member states and with national priorities but at the same time being all the time human, because very often it's just on paper but you really do it in practice. (Sutra)

> I don't know what I would have replaced it with, that's for sure. That's why I have a strong attachment to what's being done here, both because we can do it from the point of view of disseminating our ideas, but also because of the contacts we have here and, let's say, the collective intellectual work. (Robert)

> I consider myself very fortunate to be able to work for and with teams of young people active in a field that has always interested me and within a political framework that is unique in Europe. It is really a very great privilege. (Babel)

I also felt that my humble research was at least beginning to address Robert's concern:

> It's the language teacher educators who, in my opinion, are lost. They have no idea where they are. […] There has been very little reflection in this field, and that also goes for the ECML.

By extending the problematisation of the generic construct of professional growth to a specific focus on language teacher educators, my theoretical framework had also broadened, with social constructivism complementing sociocultural theory; in the same way, by extending the focus on language teacher educators to include the construct of the ECML, my theoretical framework opens up to include CHAT which, like sociocultural theory and social constructivism, can be traced back to Vygotsky (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011). From my data, I would suggest that the ECML conforms to the definition of an activity system as a complex institution where learning takes place within a

community of practice (Engeström *et al.*, 1995), where multi-perspectivity is valued (McMurtry, 2006) and in which the learning is greater than the sum of its parts (ibid.). Activity systems are also characterised by "internal contradictions" which are positive forces for transformative change (ibid.), leading to "expansive learning in which the learners are involved in constructing and implementing a radically new, wider and more complex object and concept for their activity" (Engeström and Sannino, 2010, p.2). Perhaps it would be helpful to consider the tensions identified as examples of such "internal contradictions". Moreover, as indicated in **Section 3.3.3**, the concept of learning at boundaries plays an important role in CHAT, with contradictions considered as stimuli for change and growth (Roth and Lee, 2007); it is a concept which characterises my data, firstly, in the professional growth of language teacher educators, and now in relation to the ECML. It is precisely this concept which provides the link to the next section of this chapter where I will explore the insights gained through an analysis of the construct "plurilingual education":

> We are working with histories, we are working at borders and these epistemological conflicts that I see emerging, this is precisely the moment when the borders are close. And we have to cross them; it's really where we cross borders; so we have to accept these epistemological conflicts as they are, it's our job, it's good that it happens, it's our job to think about how best to accompany this border crossing. Identities – are we not in the process of building together a plurilingual, intercultural and European identity? (Babel)

5.4 From linguistic diversity to plurilingual education

5.4.1 Introduction

In my literature review I provided the reader with a brief history of language policy at the Council of Europe, outlining when and why the term "plurilingualism" had been developed, with reference to the Council's Recommendation concerning modern languages (Council of Europe, 1998a), to the CEFR (2001) and to the Council's *Guide for the development of language policies in Europe* (2007). I did not know at that point that my data would mirror the very shift expressed in the subtitle of this guide, "*from linguistic diversity to plurilingual education*", thereby providing me with a suitable title for this section of my analysis. I also engaged with current debates on the impact of this shift (Maurer, 2012; Kubota, 2016), and with the contested nature of the term "plurilingualism" (Castellotti, 2010). As a reflexive researcher I remained concerned that my participants' commitment to "plurilingualism as an educational value" (Council of Europe, 2007, p.17) together with the direct involvement of some of them in key developments in language education at the Council, might render questionable the degree of criticality they would apply when discussing this construct. What follows, however, is a series of insights that reveals the extent to which they too problematised and

critically unpicked this complex construct, even if the data clearly represent perceptions, perceptions which in many ways mirror their personal narratives as presented through the vignettes.

As with the construct "professional growth", I will first present insights on plurilingual education which do not relate directly to the ECML before considering points of convergence; this time, however, given the origins of this term, the distinction is inevitably more blurred. Once again, I will use tensions as my broad conceptual frame. I will begin with the problematisation of the term. This will be followed by what I believe to be one of the most useful outputs of this research report – a deconstruction and clarification of the construct itself which evolved initially from data generated in the individual interviews and was then consolidated "through the more abstract processes of organizing and conceptualizing" (Morgan, 2012, p.162), in the social constructivist activity which was the focused group conversation. This deconstruction and clarification will also provide a logical link to the next section where plurilingual education meets the ECML.

5.4.2 Terminological tensions

The first tension relates to the origins of "plurilingualism". While it is indeed true that the term is clearly linked to the Council of Europe in whose texts it is also defined, the construct itself and the values underpinning it, such as the importance of first languages, the need to recognise and value all languages in any individual's repertoire and the rights of an individual to choose which language/s to use and to learn, are certainly not values over which the Council has sole ownership, even though respect for diversity, of which these values are a subset, has always defined the Council's work (Council of Europe, 1969). In his individual interview, Varley expresses this tension when describing an early teaching experience in Africa:

> It didn't seem to make sense for children to do all their primary education in English, completely divorced from their first language, so we did a pilot project teaching reading in Dagomba and Wale-Wale instead, with very positive results. Nobody called it plurilingualism at that time.

Babel expresses something similar:

> […] we already had this idea without using that word - it was already there, if you look at our early national guidelines for language education, they already had all the values, the valorisation of the learner's repertoire.

Robert points out that until the 1990s the Council's work focused essentially on foreign language learning and teaching but that UNESCO, in contrast, was already promoting the values underpinning plurilingualism. In his reference to UNESCO, Robert takes us to another tension – "Quality language teaching was not UNESCO's mission" – the tension between values and wider aims of language education, and the actual implementation of these values through language learning and teaching.

This, I believe, as my data will demonstrate, is the key tension in the construct of plurilingual education, that same gap between rhetoric and reality which was identified in the construct of professional growth:

> Ah of course, no one is against diversity, no one is against plurilingualism...ah, of course, it's beautiful...but they don't know what the goals are. (Enrico)

> Because behind the notion of plurilingualism, there are idyllic, simplistic images. (Babel)

Babel understands the importance of managing this tension; of refusing to present it as an either/or:

> In my opinion, there is the learning of individual languages within a global perspective […] mother-tongues, the language/s of schooling, foreign languages, minority languages, regional languages, when possible, languages of migration. […] I say that we educate for diversity, for plurality etc., that is, we include the whole formative aspect of languages in singular pedagogies.

However, through her regular contact with teachers on the ground, she is equally aware of the challenges in doing so:

> When I asked the teachers – "what scenarios would you like for your grandchildren?" – for certain they wanted plurilingualism for their grandchildren… as long as they are not the ones to have to implement it.

> Just try to imagine the fuss and difficulties that the primary teacher may have in translating a value into a professional gesture, into a personal attitude.

The tension here is not simply a binary one; it is complex and dynamic with multiple aims embedded in the values and multiple approaches in the implementation, and with both these variables also context dependent. The context is also dynamic and multi-faceted, including as it does the learners and learning opportunities, as well as policies, curricula and practices within different education systems. The complexity arises from the overarching nature of the construct, intended as it is, to inform not only all aspects of language education, but also to play a role in supporting knowledge construction in different subjects:

> Plurilingualism is needed here too, the confrontation between languages, the peaceful confrontation, that is, a confrontation between languages within disciplines, how concepts are conceptualised within a language... how they are conceptualised within another, it is of an absolutely irreplaceable educational value. (Robert)

5.4.3 Conditions, processes and aims

There is a tension between conditions and processes, between beginning with the learner and the learner's needs in a particular context and reconciling this with generic guidelines either at national or European level; the process, or, in other words, the pedagogic approach adopted, must correspond to the learner and not be determined from above (Marshall and Moore, 2018):

Plurilingual and intercultural education always starts from the needs, from the speakers, so in this context we ask what languages are spoken, what languages are to be promoted, what languages are to be valued, what kind of methodology is to be used, because there is a particular culture […] That's why the educational establishment is a strategic and fundamental point of departure, because there you don't respond in a generalist way, say from the Council of Europe or from the government, but you respond to the needs of specific people whose development you are supporting. (Babel)

This tension can also be expressed as a tension between aims and processes; between the wider agentive goals of plurilingual education and standardisation processes which thwart this agency, a tension already noticeable in the final text of the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001):

If you look at the first introductory chapter to the Framework it's very clearly stated that it's to do with tolerance, it's to do with openness to others, it's to do with the freedom of people to be themselves and I think those values were more present in the first 1995 version because the whole technical aspect of the levels was not there, or at least they were there but they weren't seen as the binding factor. (Varley)

It is not only learner agency which my data indicate as compromised; language professionals are also experiencing a lack of agency which the earlier analysis of professional growth clearly linked to the important aim of developing a professional identity. This is particularly the case for foreign language professionals who feel that their focus on the development of specific linguistic competences, a focus for which they were trained, is being called into question. This concern is first mentioned by Robert in his individual interview, but then elaborated on by both Sutra and Enrico in the focused group conversation:

They were afraid the language they were teaching would be forgotten. (Robert)

[…] for modern languages, I see a kind of frustration on the part of the teachers who ask themselves "is there still need for us to really teach foreign languages?" (Sutra)

When I was a teacher myself at first, it was my responsibility to help students reach a specific level of competence. I have the impression […] that, clearly, we are changing the aims, it is rather an educational role that we are now assigning to language teaching. The aim is to enable students to learn any language at a later stage and to deal with different linguistic situations. We are in a paradigm shift in the teaching of modern languages, which is extremely important but not yet explicit. And that's the danger, we want to mix everything up by saying, "we haven't changed the objectives but here are other ways to do it" We're not understood. That's why there are reactions, like: "plurilingualism - I don't see how it will help me to acquire level B1 or B2 in English, German or Spanish". (Enrico)

Yet as the tension related to foreign languages intensifies, the same tension decreases for the language/s of schooling and language in subjects, because conditions have changed and more pupils in European schools are learning in the medium of a language which is not their first language. In these conditions the wider aims of plurilingual education are better understood; it is no longer some future idyll but rather a realistic response to current challenges:

> […] the effect of plurilingualism went in the direction of the language of instruction and to take into consideration that perhaps all the students are not speakers of the language of instruction as the first language. (Sutra)

> I think there have probably been times when words about values have been heard but without really corresponding to the needs felt in the education system but […] it's starting to come and I think that indeed it's present to some degree everywhere […] different educational systems...are more and more sensitive, open. (Enrico)

I would like to conclude this section with a quotation from Varley which clearly points to the serious risk in conflating, rather than explicating, aims and processes in plurilingual education – a justification for the following section, in which that much-needed explication takes place:

> (We need) to get away from the idea it's good because it's plurilingual, if it's bad and trivial teaching, it doesn't matter how plurilingual it is. (Varley)

5.4.4 Deconstructing the construct

In her individual interview, Babel talks about the need to give language teachers definitions related to plurilingual education, "definitions which need to be very very clear but not simplistic". The first definition my data offer us comes from Robert's individual interview and helps clarify the relation between linguistic diversity and plurilingualism and how they come together under "plurilingual education":

> Plurilingual education is the umbrella term covering (the development of) plurilingual competences, i.e. the contribution of plurilingual approaches to the acquisition of different languages, and also mastery of the transition from one language to another language […], that was one part, and the other part of plurilingual education is everything that develops openness to and interest in others, let us say, essentially attitudes, but there is knowledge too, of course […] so it's always competence with knowledge, know-how, and "savoir-être", attitudes which are more oriented towards how to behave as an individual.

It is during the interaction in the focused group conversation that Enrico not only confirms these two aspects but goes even further. He describes plurilingual education as a paradigm shift and warns of the dangers of not making this shift explicit:

> These are two very different things that get muddled and confused, and for me, if we don't distinguish them very clearly we are heading straight into a brick wall […] it is clear that, by introducing these two concepts and trying to put them into practice, we are changing the perspective, the purpose of the teaching of modern languages in schools.

He then rises to the challenge himself, and breaks down the two aspects into four helpful and clear elements:

- the first element is taking the learners and their languages into account, i.e. the plurilingualism present in the classroom;
- the second for me is to develop the plurilingual competences of each learner, to teach them to build bridges, to develop strategies that are not linked to any particular language, but which are based on different learning situations;

- the third element is actually to educate people about the value of diversity on all occasions and at all levels, with all that is understood by cultural mediation etc. which for me is fundamental in the current context;
- the fourth element is to develop skills in the languages for which one is responsible, an aspect which must not be forgotten.

Robert builds on this deconstruction to reconstruct, so that the meaning of the whole is revealed through the parts and vice-versa:

> I would like to thank Enrico for having listed these four points. I think it already allows us to move towards understanding, but we must not forget their unity either. Because when you see one of these points, you can see very clearly that the other one also contributes to it. I think, we have to think about each point but […] they form a unity, there is solidarity.

Babel finds an appropriate metaphor to summarise this exchange, defining the construct as "minestrone" – rich, inviting, with each of the components essential but where, just as in complexity theory, the whole is much greater than the sum of the individual parts. Robert reminds us that the list of ingredients in this minestrone is not finite, precisely because the construct focuses on individual learners in their entirety and as they develop; it is a construct that continues to evolve, with implications for the ECML, as the next section will demonstrate:

> […] in terms of a learner's lifelong linguistic development, regardless of who the learner is, there is also this unity in which we find the notion of register, which means that we must also think in terms of synergies, whatever they may be, and consider things in a transversal way.

5.4.5 Conclusions on plurilingual education: reiterating the tensions; clarifying the construct

As with the construct of professional growth, I will conclude this section with a summary of the tensions identified in the construct of plurilingual education. There are tensions between the values which link to the wider societal aims and the reality of implementation; between the holistic nature of the construct and the need for specific, contextualised pedagogical approaches; between plurilingualism and the learning of individual languages; between plurilingual education as a standardised top-down policy and plurilingual education as bottom-up and agentive, for both learners and teachers; and between enriching complexity and stifling confusion.

I believe that these insights build on the literature that emphasises the positive aspects of plurilingual education: it encompasses all languages (e.g. Auger, 2009; Anderson, 2011), is learner-centred (e.g. Marshall and Moore, 2018) and contributes to more inclusive societies (e.g. Cummins, 2015), as well as to the less positive: that the principles, aims and approaches to implementation require clarification (Newby, 2003b; Forlot, 2012). By using tensions as a conceptual frame, my insights add to the literature which highlights the need to bridge the gap between the rhetoric and the reality (Castellotti, 2010; Kubanyiova and Crookes, 2016). More significantly, they go beyond

mere confirmation of key messages – through critical and dialogic engagement with the construct and the resultant deconstruction, they make a positive and timely contribution towards addressing the confusion.

5.5 When plurilingual education meets the ECML (and the wider Council of Europe)

5.5.1 The Council of Europe as a catalyst for change

It is important to note that some of the insights from the data refer to the wider Council of Europe, rather than the ECML; given the former's longer history of language education and the fact that key policy developments stem from there, this is only to be expected. Once again tensions emerge at this point of convergence, tensions which can be subsumed under the overarching tension between evidence of success on the one hand, and the enormity of remaining challenges on the other. At the same time, as the previous section on plurilingual education demonstrated, there is also a relaxing of the tension between future challenges and current needs; it seems that it only when the distance between the two poles narrows and the degree of cognitive dissonance is great enough to encourage learning but not so great as to alienate, that the added value of the Council's "revolutionary" work in the field (Varley) is truly appreciated:

> I wonder if these topics of minority speakers (Roma, deaf, hard of hearing, refugees ...) would be that present in our society without the efforts of the Council of Europe and its ECML. And look at the ECML projects: not that many treat foreign languages only, there are always links to other languages present in school or in society. And the reason behind it is the Council of Europe "raison d'être": democracy, human rights and the rule of law. (Sutra)

> [...] 10 years ago I don't think there was really any talk about language education in the sense that we mean now, the focus on the languages of instruction and on the way students use languages in order to make sense of their learning, but that changed and that message has been taken very much on board in my country. (Lotta)

5.5.2 Countering the backlash: the role of the ECML

At the same time, however, my data reveal that precisely this relaxation of the tension, this apparent recognition of the relevance of plurilingual education, belies other more dangerous tensions: the first between the growing acceptance of plurilingual education and the simultaneous backlash against it; the second between relevance and implementation, and the risk of assuming the former will assure the latter.

Enrico is not over concerned by the backlash, dismissing it in his individual interview as evidence of both academic posturing and of wider dissemination:

> I'm very mean... I have nothing against researchers, but I think researchers need to get people talking about them, [...] so (they) position themselves in debates. And yes, of course,

nothing is simple, but it is precisely because these ideas of taking plurilingualism and diversity into account are increasingly perceived at the institutional level, that there are reactions. If there were no reactions, it is because no one would be aware of the progress.

Varley and Babel, however, are less optimistic: in their individual interviews both express the view that confusion and misunderstandings abound (Castellotti, 2010), confirming the literature that warns of plurilingualism becoming a dogma (Flores, 2013):

> I think the term is out there now. But you have to be careful, you know it's like the shoe box, you have to see what's in the box. And, the impression I have is that there are very, very different ideas, even among the experts. (Babel)

> I think that there may be a danger that plurilingual education is used as a banner, rather than as a way of doing things you want to do […] plurilingual education is important not because it's plurilingual but because it allows people to develop cognitively, because it allows them to develop a sense of identity, to be able to talk to other people, it enriches their lives. […] And I think probably there may be a genuine danger that it becomes a sort of watchword – without really thinking about what it's for. (Varley)

Again individually, they both link these dangers directly to the ECML and are constructively critical of the Centre and of their roles within it. Varley urges the Centre to exploit its richest resource – those different pedagogic traditions that have appeared repeatedly in the data – to counter the risk of plurilingualism being seen as a dogma:

> […] my biggest concern is that the Centre doesn't get itself identified with one particular approach to plurilingualism and really does manage to get a harmony between different traditions because it is possible to do, there are so many things in common […].

He highlights the gap between the aims of plurilingual education and its practical implementation, and admits that the Centre may have inadvertently contributed to the reigning confusion:

> I get the impression that a lot of teachers are methodologically and didactically lost in this confusion and that I feel that sometimes the responses we (the ECML) have made so far haven't really answered that challenge.

Babel suggests a concrete first step which consists of managing the tension between the complexity and holistic nature of the construct of plurilingual education on the one hand, and the need to be explicit about differentiated approaches to methodology, depending on the context:

> We need to play the role of linking different languages, including minority languages, and the languages of migrants […] without isolating them in different projects, but knowing that there are still specificities… I think we really need to make an effort to show all the facets of plurilingualism and there are some that we don't cover […]

It is not until the focused group conversation, however, that Varley articulates one of the key challenges of plurilingual education – managing to sustain it across educational stages without losing the focus on progression in terms of the acquisition of linguistic competences; at the same time, he acknowledges the enormity of what remains to be done:

[…] How do you differentiate between the different cultural backgrounds, you know, how do you really cope methodologically with diversity? […] what kind of learning theories are we applying, what kind of methodologies, what kind of classroom practices allow you to do it over the long period of the primary school and secondary school, and at the moment, neither countries, nor centrally, it seems to me, do we have a satisfactory response, or at least a satisfactory response which is widely understood.

Lotta echoes this sentiment, while reminding us why we cannot afford to shy away from the effort involved:

There is confusion for the moment, and we need to work hard to find our way to meaningful pedagogies, but it is a way that is necessary for these troubled times.

Further tensions arise between products and processes as my participants debate how the ECML should address these challenges; despite 25 years of project outputs developed by language teacher educators, Enrico feels that many of these outputs are too abstract and expresses the need for new products that "show how what has been written and developed at the ECML can be used in a very concrete way". He urges the Centre to develop a product which brings "all the elements together in a technical, methodological and didactic way to help teachers with implementation". Others, however, stress the importance of the process, believing that plurilingual education only becomes meaningful through social constructivist learning activities such as those offered in ECML workshops:

We have to prepare the surroundings that would encourage teachers to try it, then to discuss it, then to retry it, and then perhaps at this moment all these concepts would become clearer and clearer to the teacher or teacher educator… Unless you do it always by experience you can't understand […] it's difficult to integrate the theoretical knowledge into everyday practice, […] everything will come little by little. (Sutra)

And echoing Robert's earlier insight into plurilingual education as an evolving construct, one which is gradually moving into the domain of subject discourses, Babel exhorts the Centre to build stronger bridges to experts and research in this particular field, and to assume its role as mediator, as instigator of learning at boundaries (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011; Williams and Berry, 2016):

It would be very dangerous for us language specialists with this strong language perspective to work alone without the knowledge-building specialists. We both have a lot to learn in this interrelationship because there are things we don't know and the same goes for them; it's only by coming together that we can build solid knowledge in this domain.

I was touched by the repeated use of "we" in these quotations, a choice of pronoun that bears the hallmark of my participants' commitment.

5.5.3 Conclusion on plurilingual education and the ECML: reiterating the tensions

I will draw this section to a conclusion as I have done in previous sections, by restating the tensions but will withhold reengaging with theory for the conclusion of this chapter in **Section 5.6**.

Many of the tensions identified in section **5.4.5** where the focus was purely on the construct of plurilingual education, reappear in its encounter with the ECML: tensions between values and their implementation, between holistic approaches to language education and specific methodologies, and between agency and standardisation. Additional tensions emerge between national and European initiatives, between ECML learning processes and the products of these processes, and between a focus on language education and education more broadly. Once again, the overarching tension is one between confusion and complexity.

It is this last word – complexity – that dominates: plurilingual education is a complex, multi-faceted construct involving multiple aims, languages and methodologies, in constant evolution, interacting with individuals and with dynamic activity systems within learning institutions, at national level and with the ECML, itself a dynamic activity system. And it is complexity which provides me with the link to the next section, where the three constructs come together – professional growth (of language teacher educators), the ECML and plurilingual education – each one in evolution, each one harbouring within it a series of tensions, which are intensified as the constructs converge – and where the theoretical framework continues its organic evolution.

5.6 Chapter conclusion: conceptual and theoretical consolidation

5.6.1 Conceptual frames

In Section **3.3 Conceptual and theoretical advancements**, I indicated that I would draw on a combination of conceptual models/frames and theoretical frameworks in different ways and at different stages of data generation, interpretation and presentation. As I draw this chapter to a close, I would first like to summarise how I have used three different conceptual models – the notion of "tensions", Connelly and Clandinin's "three commonplaces" (2006) and Kelchtermans *et al*'s InFo-TED Model (2018) – before turning my attention to theory, and to the consolidation of my broader theoretical framework.

While "tensions" have been used exclusively as a frame through which to present the insights from my data analysis, the "three commonplaces" have played a central role in my narrative-based methodology, acting as an overall frame for the questions in my individual interviews, as codes in my data analysis and as an important meaning-making device in my data presentation via narrative

vignettes. The InFo-TED Model has been used for data generation, and in particular as a springboard for discussion within the focused group conversation, as well as for data interpretation. Not only have elements from the model emerged as important themes, such as "identities", but it was the InFo-TED Model which led me to the discovery of literature on "boundary crossing", the overarching thematic construct which has become the leitmotif of my research.

5.6.2 Theoretical frameworks

In my literature review I briefly engaged with complexity theory, in the context of Taylor's "tentative process model" (2017) for teacher professional growth. In **Section 3.3 Conceptual and theoretical advancements** I toyed with Taylor's description of professional growth as a "nested, complex system" and wondered if such a description might also be true of my evolving theoretical framework. I am now convinced that this is the case: it is no longer simply a confluence of theories but rather theories nested within theories, and with complexity theory as the overarching one, which are required to do justice to the complexity of my data:

> A realistic thinker knows he or she has to give up the hope that the little patches of coherence will eventually combine into a consistent global theory. It seems that the sooner we accept the thought that our work is bound to produce a patchwork of metaphors rather than a unified, homogeneous theory of learning, the better for us and for those whose lives are likely to be affected by our work. (Sfard, 1998, p.12)

Although it originated in the sciences, complexity theory is now acknowledged as relevant and applicable to other research fields such as education (Kuhn, 2008) but also to research which crosses bodies of knowledge, so that they can "be blended to provide a wider understanding" (Gear *et al.*, 2018, p.2). This notion of boundary crossing runs through my data, not only where the constructs converge but also within each of them individually. While learning theories such as sociocultural theory, social constructivist theory or the theory of cognitive dissonance are particularly helpful for shedding light on the complex construct of professional growth, such theories become insufficient when professional growth meets the construct of plurilingual education and together they converge with the ECML. CHAT helps us understand the ECML as a dynamic activity system; like CHAT, complexity theory recognises internal contradictions, constant change, non-linear processes in constant flux, and the notion of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts (McMurtry, 2010). Moreover it allows us to view the Centre not only as the point of convergence of multiple national activity systems, each influenced by the wider economic, social and political context, and to think of these as "networked systems" (ibid., p.112), but also to think about the ways in which individuals interact with these systems. Complexity theory rejects grand narratives as reductive and not credible, just as my data warn of the dangers of plurilingualism becoming a dogma; by viewing the

data through a complexity lens, the tensions identified cannot be reduced to simple binaries but rather are considered as "internal contradictions" that "drive change" (ibid., p.120). In addition, it aligns with my research methodology, viewing the researcher as complicit in the process (Taylor, 2017), a process which is concerned with "dynamic interactions" (ibid., p.97), in the same way that I interact with my data, for example through my vignettes. It also focuses on "patterns of interaction" (Gear *et al.*, 2018, p.2), similar to my points of convergence. Ultimately it is about learning, in line with my hope of drawing on my analysis to optimise the learning opportunities offered by the Centre. I believe the ECML corresponds exactly to Taylor's definition of a "complex, living system":

> Complex, often living, systems […] that learn through the interaction of their components, responding to each other, their context and to external conditions…. and that learn over time. (2017, p.98)
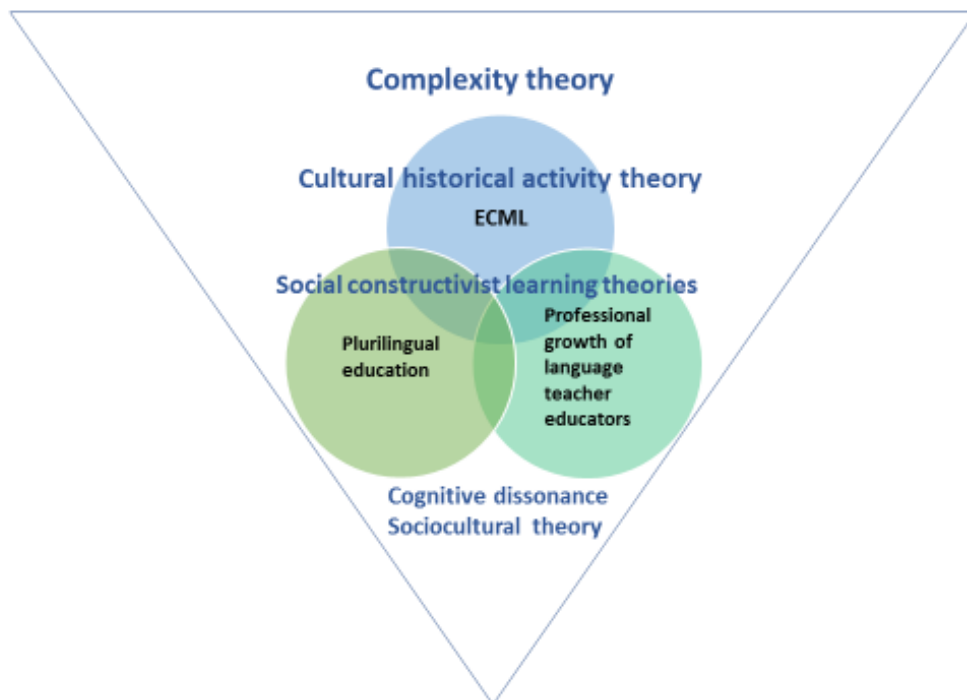
Figure 3: Converging constructs and nested theories

With **Figure 3** above, I now conclude this presentation of my insights via themes, offering the reader a graphic presentation of the nested theories I have applied in my analysis. Together they act as meaning-making tools, attempting to capture the complexity of my three key constructs – the professional growth of language teacher educators, plurilingual education and the ECML – and their points of convergence.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In **Chapters 4** and **5**, I presented the reader with insights from my research, interwoven with considerations of how they relate to, differ from, or add to the literature. I will begin this concluding chapter by returning to my initial aim and to my research questions as outlined in **Chapter 1**, in order to engage in a critical evaluation of the degree to which I believe this aim has been achieved and my research questions answered. This will then form the basis of a brief summary of key insights and an opportunity to highlight their potential significance in terms of a contribution to both knowledge and practice. I will also review the research process which led to these insights, outlining its limitations, both contextual and methodological, before engaging with what I believe to be the implications of this study for future research and for practice, particularly in relation to the ECML. I will conclude this thesis in the way I began – by weaving my voice as novice researcher and the journey of my own professional growth into the final narrative tapestry.

6.2 Aims and research questions revisited

In Section **1.6.2**, I indicated that my research set out to "uncover, explore and gain a critical insight into the professional growth of language teacher educators, as the ECML's key target group, including the role played by plurilingual education, and to do so through the prism of the Centre". This overarching aim was translated into the following research questions:

How do language teacher educators perceive involvement in ECML activities in relation to their professional growth?

- *What role does plurilingual education play?*
- *How might professional learning opportunities at the ECML be optimised?*

The wording of both the aim and the main question intentionally recognises professional growth as the overarching construct. The first sub-question suggests that plurilingual education is a part of language teacher educators' professional growth and the second sub-question, while acknowledging the mission of the ECML as a learning provider (Council of Europe, 1998b), makes no assumptions about the contribution of the Centre to the professional growth of language teacher educators. As the word "perceive" in the overarching question indicates, I wanted my six research participants to tell their personal stories of how they see the Centre in relation to both their own professional growth and that of other language teacher educators, and in relation to plurilingual education.

I believe that the richness of my insights is yet another example of boundary crossing because the insights go beyond the original boundaries of the research questions. With hindsight, I recognise that these questions do not fully operationalise my broader aim. It is this broader aim that has been achieved, with the answers to the research questions subsumed therein. This "critical insight" not only deepens our understanding of the three underpinning constructs – professional growth, plurilingual education and the ECML itself – by illuminating the complexities and tensions within each of them, but also reveals the complex ways in which the constructs converge, thereby drawing attention to the resultant challenges.

6.2.1 The professional growth of language teacher educators in relation to the ECML

My six participants are in no doubt about the significant positive impact involvement with the ECML has had on their own professional growth as well as on that of others: according to them, the Centre operates as a community of practice at the interface of policy, research and teacher education, replicating many of the conditions and processes identified in the literature as contributing to professional growth and to the engendering of rich intellectual and dialogic engagement. Its project-based approach to learning and the multi-perspectivity resulting from its unique transnational and cross-sectoral nature, create a rich environment which is particularly conducive to the professional growth of language teacher educators. Varley, my pioneering internationalist, puts it very simply:

> I mean I would say that the work with the ECML has probably been one of the two really high spots of my professional career – the ones that have given me the most satisfaction and most development; I think I've learnt a lot.

What is clear, however, is that the ECML contributes to the professional growth of language teacher educators in different ways and to different degrees: the greater the involvement with the Centre, the greater the benefit, with project team members clearly benefitting most of all; that said, my analysis also suggests that language teacher educators who do not get the opportunity to take part in ECML activities can benefit indirectly through the resources which result from the projects, particularly where these are adapted and used in teacher education.

6.2.2 The professional growth of language teacher educators in relation to plurilingual education

When it comes to the sub-question on the role of plurilingual education, I believe my insights provide the following answer: that plurilingual education is fundamental to the professional growth of language teacher educators, who must recognise the pivotal role they can and should play in promoting social justice and in embedding the kind of inclusive, culturally and linguistically sensitive language education needed in today's divisive and toxic socio-political climate. While there is no

doubt that the Centre embraces plurilingualism as "an educational value" (Council of Europe, 2007, p.17), there is also clear concern that this must not result in a lack of criticality. The Centre would be well advised to heed Forlot's appeal (2012) to remain vigilant and to confront this problematic construct in all its complexity. Much more needs to be done to support language teacher educators not only in understanding the "what" and the "why" of plurilingual education as outlined in sections **2.4.2** and **2.4.3** of the literature review, and what this means for the teachers in their care, but especially in clarifying, exemplifying and tailoring the "how" (section **2.4.4**), so that plurilingual education is differentiated accordingly to the individual needs of different learners in different contexts, while at the same time remaining faithful to its central tenets – commitment to learner voice, with the valorisation of the learner's entire linguistic repertoire, and to the development of the learner as a responsible social agent.

6.2.3 Optimising professional learning opportunities at the ECML

The answers to the overarching and the first sub-question are already suggestive of the answers to the second sub-question, which will also be addressed when I consider the implications of my analysis. Given that project team members account for only a small percentage of those involved in ECML activities, and that most language teacher educators have limited access to the Centre, it is not only paramount that these limited opportunities take account of those conditions and processes identified in the literature as supportive of the professional growth of teachers and teacher educators, but that systematic attention is paid to those critical features that differentiate the professional growth of (language) teachers from that of (language) teacher educators.

In the same way, ensuring critical engagement with the complexity of plurilingual education and a differentiated approach to its implementation – differentiated according to aim and language (e.g. foreign/second/first), as well as to context (country, policy, linguistic landscape, sector etc.), will help optimise the ECML's learning opportunities, directly contributing to the professional growth of the language teacher educators involved. Whilst impossible to gauge, there is ample evidence to suggest that this will support the learning of the language teachers for whom they are responsible, who, in turn, will be better equipped to respond to the needs of the learners in their classrooms. The difficulties my participants experience in thinking about their own learning as language teacher educators because they are so focused on the teachers in their care, is clearly suggestive of this (**Section 5.2 Professional Growth**), as is the emphasis in plurilingual education on the development of each individual learner's own linguistic repertoire (**Sections 2.4: Plurilingual education: the what, the why and the how**, and **Section 5.4.4 Deconstructing the construct**).

6.3 Contributions

6.3.1 Key insights as a contribution to both knowledge and practice

In his recent study on the professional identities of language teacher educators in Hong Kong, Rui (2015) indicates that research focusing specifically on this target group is extremely rare. I believe my study, by identifying the critical features, conditions and processes that support their professional growth as a series of tensions – between research and practice, between individual agency and national/European initiatives, between process and product, between values and their implementation, between professional commitment and the need to develop a distinct professional identity – subsumed within the overarching tension between the similarities and key differences between language teacher educator and language teacher professional growth, contributes further knowledge to this field and to our understanding of its complexities. Moreover, I believe this contribution to knowledge is of direct relevance to both policy and practice: it is a reminder to policymakers that (language) teacher educators are "linchpins in educational reform" (Cochran-Smith, 2003, p.5) and that their professional growth matters. In terms of practice, it provides guidance in relation to the critical features that best support this growth. Such professional learning opportunities should be characterised by social constructivist learning processes in transnational communities of practice where language teacher educators can be agentive in their learning, develop their distinct professional identity and critically engage with attitudes, beliefs and with the complex construct of plurilingual education.

In **Section 3.4.2**, I considered the suitability of narrative methodology, citing Doyle (1997), who considers it "a powerful pedagogical tool" (p.94), and Norton and Early (2011) who believe it can generate "the kind of data that are essential for research as praxis" (p.417). With this small contribution to research, policy and practice, I feel I have not only justified my methodological choices but perhaps more importantly, have responded to the key question posed by Robert, in his individual interview:

> What's the point of doing research in education is, if the outputs have no impact on policy or practice? (2018)

As my literature review reveals, and in sharp contrast to literature on language teacher educators, research on plurilingual education, used here as the umbrella term for culturally and linguistically sensitive pedagogies and related philosophies of education which value diversity, abounds, and while much of it emphasises the benefits, a more critical voice is beginning to emerge. I believe my study contributes to the body of literature on plurilingualism by embracing the complexity of the divergent voices within it: it confirms the importance of plurilingualism as "an educational value"

(Council of Europe, 2007, p.17); it engages fully with the criticism of plurilingual education; it then goes one step further and addresses the challenges of implementation by proposing context-specific, differentiated approaches, and manages the overarching tension between confusion and complexity by providing clear yet comprehensive definitions.

In the Introduction to **Chapter 1**, I indicated that the study sits at the crossroads of two critical fields: research on teacher educators and research on culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogies for teachers. The uniqueness of its contribution lies less in what it offers for each field individually, but rather in their fusion, in arguing that plurilingual education, with its commitment to inclusion and social justice, should lie at the heart of language teacher educator professional growth.

6.3.2 Further contributions

Through its evolving, boundary-crossing and eclectic theoretical framework which encompasses a number of sub-frames – Connelly and Clandinin's three "commonplaces" for my narrative vignettes, "tensions" for the presentation of my themes, the InFo-TED Model as a lens through which to consider the professional growth of language teacher educators at the ECML, learning theories nested within complexity theory – and the ways in which these different tools together illuminate insights from my data, my study also has a unique methodological and theoretical contribution to make.

This critical use of a range of theories also speaks to the criterion of rigour: the apparent self-evidence of sociocultural theory is disrupted and challenged as other theories are introduced. The same applies to the eclectic approach to data analysis, where the thematic analysis is re-examined using a narrative frame, and together these are further questioned through the use of a voice-centred relational approach (Brown and Gilligan, 1992, cited in Mauthner and Doucet, 2003) which directly acknowledges my own subjectivity and influence on the research. Member-checking and participant approval of translations from French into English, involving participants themselves in data analysis by making extracts from individual interviews the basis for discussion in the focused group conversation, as well as the extensive use of their own words in the presentation of my insights, strengthen this methodological rigour.

6.3.3 Originality of the research project

Never before has the ECML been the subject of a doctoral thesis; to date there have only been academic articles focusing on individual ECML projects or on a particular ECML programme. While every effort is made to include testimonials from individuals involved in ECML activities in the various evaluation reports, this study is unique in capturing, exploring and privileging the voices of key individuals who make such an invaluable contribution to the Centre.

6.4 Limitations, implications and recommendations

6.4.1 Limitations

Perhaps the most obvious limitation of this study is my insider status as researcher. Throughout the research process this has been openly acknowledged; heightened criticality and reflexivity have been applied at all stages, in an attempt to reduce researcher bias. The same insider status impacted on the methodology: I chose a small number of participants I know reasonably well, people who are all deeply committed to the work of the Centre. I recognise that insights from a larger sample size would probably have been different and that other voices would have told other stories; my aim, however, was to do justice to these six voices, particularly through my narrative vignettes.

The fact that some of my insights relate specifically to the ECML could be considered a limitation, because no assumption of transferability to other research contexts can be assumed. The focus on my own workplace, however, is appropriate to a professional doctorate and I make no claim to generalisability but rather to relatability. Moreover, in the course of the study, the Centre became much more than simply a research context; it became inseparable from the focus on six individuals and their learning, perfectly captured in the words of Casanave:

> The approach is a relational one, in which individuals' experiences, psychology, affect, and learning are seen as inextricably permeated and defined by context. […] Context is neither a factor nor a variable […] but the focal milieu. (2012, p.646)

It is the ECML which is most directly affected by the insights from this research, but before I turn to the important practical implications and recommendations for the Centre, I would first like to consider what my study might mean in terms of future research.

6.4.2 Implications for future research

I believe there is an urgent need for further critical engagement with the construct of plurilingual education in all its complexity, confronting and challenging any attempt to reduce it to "simplistic, idyllic images" (Barbel, focused group conversation, 2018), and with what this means for (language) teachers and (language) teacher educators. The bracketing of "language" is an intentional indication that this construct crosses boundaries, impacting on all aspects of education. This should be seen as a positive, because as a boundary-crossing construct it provides a beacon of hope in the current European context of increasing social, economic, ethnic and linguistic divides.

I also believe that given the small-scale nature of my own research, further exploration of the specific added value of transnational professional learning opportunities for language teacher educators is required. This could build on the findings of two studies undertaken within the InFo-TED network which is funded by the European Union through the Erasmus+ programme (European Commission, 2019). The first of these, focusing on higher education-based teacher educators in the six countries taking part in the InFo-TED network, recognises the importance of transnational professional learning opportunities (Czerniawski *et al*., 2017), while the second suggests that research focusing on this transnational aspect is still in its infancy:

> I feel that what we have established is still local, limited and therefore vulnerable. Creating an international context […] opens up more learning possibilities for teacher educators and embeds national developments within a stronger European environment. (Lunenberg *et al*., 2017, p.564)

Further exploration could begin, therefore, by drawing on national networks of teacher educators in ECML member states, as well as European networks such as InFo-TED, to identify language teacher educators. A survey could then be prepared which would attempt to capture information on what kind of international opportunities exist (in addition to those offered by the ECML) and to gather the views of those who have taken part. In this way it would be both wider than the InFo-TED survey (in terms of countries involved) but also narrower, focusing on a specific sub-set of teacher educators and on one aspect of their professional learning. This, of course, would be quite an undertaking, but it is perhaps a propitious moment, with the European Commission about to launch a new and enlarged Erasmus+ programme in 2020. A smaller scale project could focus on the ECML summer academy proposed in the following **Section 6.4.3**.

6.4.3 Implications and recommendations for the ECML

While this study offers substantial evidence of the contribution of the ECML to the professional growth of language teacher educators, (see in particular **Section 5.3**), it also suggests that more attention should be paid to their specific learning needs, given that they represent the Centre's key target group. This was one of several recommendations from my research participants and it has implications in both general and specific ways: in general terms, all ECML activities must draw on the "critical features" for teacher educator professional growth as identified in the literature; more specifically, and based on the wider definition used throughout this study of teacher educators as "all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers" (European Commission, 2013, p.8), more targeted professional learning opportunities should be offered which are tailored to the different kinds of professionals included in this broad definition, such as university and school-based language teacher educators or school language teachers acting as mentors for newly-qualified teachers. Such opportunities should also be differentiated according to the career stage of those involved. One way to do this could be through an ECML summer academy which targets novice language teacher educators. Interestingly, the idea of an ECML summer academy has been mooted by ECML Governing Board members for several years but it is only in recent months that I have understood the importance of this suggestion and been able to develop a concept for such an academy, my thinking enriched and consolidated through my parallel research. This would be an ideal opportunity to pilot and evaluate the key insights from this research with a small group of language teacher educators.

Depending on the national context, inspectors can also be considered as teacher educators: a further recommendation from my research participants is to use the European platform of the ECML to engage in critical dialogue on the role of inspection in language education and the opportunities for professional growth afforded to inspectors themselves.

The notion of boundary crossing is implicit in the broader definition of teacher educators applied in this study, but the boundary crossing required of the ECML goes further: just as it needs to find ways to provided targeted support to language teacher educators, it also needs to support the professional growth of other actors involved in language education – language teachers themselves, but also Masters/PhD students and language researchers, parents, teachers of other subjects and head teachers. My participants also suggested there was a need for dedicated events for these different targeted groups as well as events in which the different stakeholders could work together. Through my engagement with complexity theory I now understand this apparent "internal

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contradiction" or tension as a natural and enriching feature of complex and adaptive activity systems, such as the ECML.

The success of such a system depends in part on effective feedback loops. These are the focus of three further recommendations from my participants, all with similar aims. The first of these concerns ECML projects and the need for the teams who lead the projects to better implicate the participants in project workshops. Workshop participants can act as feedback loops before, during and after the event, gathering feedback from wider networks within their individual national contexts so that this collective intelligence enhances both the workshop process and the final project product. The second recommendation is the proposal to create a small group of language professionals whose role it would be to identify innovative initiatives in member states and ensure that such developments feed into the ECML programme. In return, these developments should benefit from the collective European thinking that takes place within the programme. The third recommendation concerns research: the Centre needs to strengthen its links to the research community so that this community can also act as a feedback loop, ensuring the Centre has its finger on the research pulse and that the latest research insights are feeding into ECML learning processes, only to re-emerge in the form of accessible, user-friendly resources.

My intention on completing this study is to identify opportunities when I can share these insights with my colleagues in forthcoming staff meetings, and with the experts who lead our activities. Together, we will discuss what they mean for future ECML activities – at the level of content, where this relates to plurilingual education, as well as the level of conditions, processes and aims. A further step will be to consider whether or not some kind of conceptual model, such as the InFo-TED example, developed specifically *for* and *by* those involved ECML would be helpful in taking forward the recommendations. For now, this raises more questions than answers, given that an inclusive model would need to embrace the complexities of plurilingual education, go beyond language teacher educators to include other stakeholders such as staff and national representatives, and remain open to change as the Centre evolves.

I believe the insights from my research are also of interest to the wider education community, and in particular to teacher educators. Given how much I have benefitted in the course of my research from various aspects of the InFo-TED project, perhaps I could reciprocate by responding to the request on the InFo-TED website for blogs on teacher educators and their development. This could be a first step towards future publication, but a tentative one, as the next section will confirm.

6.5 On being and becoming a language teacher educator

The title of this section is an adaptation of the title of Casanave and Shecter's (1997) book: *On Becoming a Language Educator – Personal Essays on Professional Development*. From the title, the reader will understand the obvious relevance of this book to my research, but it is only now, as I reflect on what this research journey has meant for me, that it takes on its full significance and one on which I will now elaborate.

In section **1.5: My place in the research,** I indicated that my motivation was both personal and professional, with the two inextricably linked. I also referred to the research process as a "learning experience" which impacted on my evolving, multi-faceted identity. I can still remember the anguish nearly five years ago when I pressed the button to submit my application for a place on the EdD. I could never have imagined the degree of challenge this journey would present, nor anticipated the frequent moments of despair and self-doubt. I did not keep a written research journal but instead made intermittent voice recordings on my laptop; when I listen to these now, they are dominated by expressions such as "completely at sea" or "feeling lost" and I wonder if they equate to what complexity theorists, according to Opfer and Pedder (2011), describe as "the edge of chaos". Yet time, patience and the unwavering support of family and friends have helped me understand that the emotional and cognitive dissonance I have experienced, has, in fact, unleashed my creativity and supported my professional growth.

It is a journey which has exposed the tensions and struggle that characterise identity formation (ibid.) and one which has had a profound impact on my sense of self and of the world (Canagarajah, 1996). If I was unsure of my motivation, I was even less convinced of my ability to embrace a new identity as researcher. Those doubts have accompanied me throughout this journey, and the nagging continues even now, as I write the final words of this thesis. I still do not feel quite ready to add this researcher identity to my other professional identities as teacher, manager or Executive Director. If and when that time comes, future publication of and from this report might help strengthen the Centre's link to the research community.

What the entire experience has made me realise, however, is that I too have long since been and continue to become, a language teacher educator. This identity boundary crossing has been one of the most satisfying, if completely unexpected, outcomes of my research journey.

6.6 Concluding thoughts

I have used the journey metaphor for this thesis on several occasions, in relation to myself and my learning, and also in relation to my reader. I began in the role of travel agent and travel companion, tempting the reader to join me on this journey. I then assumed the role of cartographer, providing the reader with the measure of the landscape, directing the compass towards salient features, analysing and interpreting them along the way, and facilitating the crossing of boundaries. I now hand over to the reader to judge the quality of my cartography.

Like the thesis proposal, this report marks both an end and a beginning: the research is complete but the work of drawing on the insights is about to begin. It is now for the ECML and for myself as the Centre's Director to show leadership in confronting the complexities of plurilingual education and building on the concept of boundary crossing, a concept which encompasses both the challenge and its resolution. There is an urgent need to render the intersecting boundaries as permeable as possible, so that genuine transformative learning can be engendered.

I shall give the final word to Babel who, in her member-check comments on the transcript from the focused group conversation, is utterly unambiguous in spelling out the reasons why this must be done:

> […] drawing on the values of the Council of Europe, the Centre must view languages as tools at the service of the development and education of the individual European citizen, and do so with clearly defined and strongly justified political aims: human rights and quality education for all, but also peace, intercultural dialogue, democratic citizenship and a culture of democracy.

Appendices

Appendix 1 : Ethics approval letter

Downloaded: 21/02/2018
Approved: 29/11/2017

Sarah Breslin
Registration number: 150107808
School of Education
Programme: EdD

Dear Sarah

PROJECT TITLE: Towards plurilingual understandings? Storying the professional learning of language teacher educators through the
European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe (ECML)
APPLICATION: Reference Number 016716

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 29/11/2017 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 016716 (dated 27/10/2017).
- Participant information sheet 1036530 version 1 (27/10/2017).
- Participant consent form 1036531 version 1 (27/10/2017).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

Please note that the university google drive space is recommended for storage of research data: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/rdm/safedata. This is all fine but I am just wondering about the extent to which these participants would have been able to decline the offer, if they really didn't want to do this. How did you make sure that they didn't feel obliged to participate in any way?

If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Appendix 2: InFo-TED Conceptual Model of Teacher Educators' Professional Development

Dynamics of professional learning

Diversity

Social and technological change

Communication and relations

Growth & empowerment

Personal level: Knowledge & Practice

Local level: Institution, programmes

National level: Frameworks or standards

Global level

Boundaries

Identities

Visions

How I teach is the message

- Critical and inquiry oriented
- Self-regulated
- Caring
- Contextual responsiveness
- Research informed

Professional stances

university-based and school-based teacher educators

pre-initial   initial   induction   early-career   in-service   lifelong

Appendix 3: Sample individual interview schedule

1) Can you briefly outline your professional career in the field of language education; tell me how it all began; what motivated you to work in this field etc.

Possible probes:

• Change of role – if so, why?

• Clarification: what attracted you to languages? Already at school?

• University /first job/which languages/any involvement with research

2) First experience of the Council or ECML
   Possible probes:
   • Expectations of the centre?
   • What had you heard about it?
   • Motivation for getting involved?

3) Thinking back over your career, was the notion of linguistic and cultural diversity always present/when did it come into play and why?

4) **What opportunities have** you had for professional development (as a student-teacher/teacher/teacher educator/in current role etc)? Can you talk about these/describe one in detail?
   Possible probes:
   • What did you enjoy/didn't you enjoy at the time.
   • What worked/didn't work
   • group work/expert input/training courses/round table discussions/national or local/x-sectoral or sector specific etc)
   • Use TIME concept here to probe: describe first job – how did you feel then?/ when you think back, how do you see it now?
   • Use PLACE concept – what do you remember about school building/what did you like
   • Use SOCIALITY – who else/feel towards peers/instructors/

4b) (If not enough from 1) What about informal learning opportunities – can you think of any?
(Probes – observing a fellow teacher/chat at staff meetings/)
4c) professional development opportunities that you've organised or delivered for others

iii

5) What ECML events have you taken part in? Please describe one in detail (not GB)

Possible probes:

- One that sticks in your head
- what did you learn/why do you remember it/who was all there/
- Tensions/plurilingualism present and discussed – resisted?
- policy- research- practice
- Evidence of change in practice? - Knock-on effect in your context?
- Long-term impact in your country /difference between event in Graz and in-country; your role at event – what did you experience?

6) A negative incident/moment of frustration – describe?

7) Can you think of anyone you know who has been influenced by involvement in ECML – tell me about this/ impact of particular resource perhaps?

8) What does it mean for Slovenia to be part of the ECML? What are your country's expectation? /what impact is there of this involvement?

9) How did your role as GB member come about? What was your motivation?

Probes:

- Vice chair: expectations
- first experience
- What do you like, not like/concrete examples of things you've learned? (contribution to learning)
- Has it changed anything you do in your job?

10) Your understanding of plurilingual education – how do you see it/ has this changed/has the ECML contributed to this or what else/other things have influenced it? Has it changed your values?

11) What do you see as the role of the ECML?

Possible probes:

- success factors
- bridging policy, research and practice
- role of values

12) InFo-TED – does it say anything to you/ can you see a link with the ECML?

13) Wishes for the centre for the future

14) Metaphor for the centre – image that springs to mind – colours, smells, environment

15) From this interview, what is the key message that you'd like me to convey to others?

Appendix 4: Focus group conversation schedule

<u>9.30 am Introduction</u>

Thank you for interviews/mix English and French/ Privacy and what I will do with the transcripts. Aware you don't all know each other – an opportunity to introduce yourselves in a moment.

Focused group conversation: Why the name – it's focused – I know what I would like to achieve and will steer it and provide an overall structure, but it's also a conversation to which I hope you all feel relaxed and comfortable contributing. Looking at key concepts: professional learning/development; plurilingual education; the ECML. Consider the idea of how a conceptual model of professional learning might be of use to the ECML.

Practical: session is being recorded, so we need to use the microphones and we need to ensure, unlike in a totally natural conversation, that someone has finished talking before someone else starts. Speak clearly, not too quickly. Please use either English or French – whichever you feel more comfortable with – but be aware that neither language is the first language of all of the people here. When French is spoken, Frank or I will give Paula a helping hand to understand – so if you could wait a moment before next person speaks - and when it comes to the statements from the individual interviews, I have provided Paula with my translation.

My role is to guide the discussion but not actively take part in it.

Moved from focus on individual to focus on group – challenge and deepen the individual thinking from the interviews/using some of the things that were said (the ideas, not necessarily the exact words) – extracted key ideas/changed wording slightly – have grouped some that were similar - to take this to a higher level. Statements are just springboards for discussion – not meant to constrain our exchange in any way. Should provoke further discussion and an enriched conversation.

So, what is my research all about? The contribution of the ECML to the professional growth (learning, professional development) of all those who take part. For me, most of the people who take part in our activities fit under the umbrella term – LTEs – if, and only if, we understand TEs in a very broad sense: so, inspectors, experts who produce resources for teachers, those who organise PD, teachers who take on a multiplier or mentor role in a school - I'm using a definition from the European Commission – HANDOUT ON TABLE

1) Start with definition of <u>LTEs</u> – based on EC definition of "teacher educators":

"Teacher Educators are all those who actively facilitate the (formal) learning of student teachers and teachers (EC, 2013, p.8)."

In my eyes, you are all, or have been, in different ways, LTEs. So can I ask you briefly to present yourselves and relate yourselves to this concept?

(SB: take notes as to how they react, especially GB members – are they uncomfortable?)

9.45

2) **PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

In the individual interviews, I asked you what you understood by professional learning (and I indicated that there were several terms used in English, sometimes synonymously, sometimes with slight differences) – and we discovered that the ways these terms worked in French were quite different! Some people talk about professional development, others, professional learning. I personally prefer the term "professional growth" which works as an umbrella term covering all aspects of professional learning and development. You can use whichever term you prefer. So, I'd like you to expand on some of the things you said about this concept in the individual interviews/use these statements as springboards for discussion. Anyone can start/anyone can continue in either language/you can pick any of the statements and add to them/comment on them etc. It doesn't need to be the person who said them in the individual interview, who starts.

2 mins to read through – some about motivation, others about the format of PD, about input, others about aims, others about place of research - maybe start by repeating the statement you want to refer to –

(Tick off as covered; if nothing forthcoming suggest – MOTIVATION – FORMAT- (with EXPERT OTHER/RESEARCH) - AIMS

INTERVIEW EXTRACTS

On ne progresse que quand on a des obstacles à surmonter (you only make progress when you have obstacles to overcome); the need to come out of one's comfort zone

Working in smaller groups so that everyone can participate; to talk to people, to listen to people and to learn together

S'approprier des contenus en les verbalisant, en discutant (make the content your own by voicing your thoughts, through discussion)

It's not only the languages but the values, the things they say about school culture, the conception of learning and so on and putting all that together, trying to make sense of that

C'est vraiment voilà l'objectif, voilà des outils, et on fait un bout de chemin ensemble et après il faut qu'ils continuent ce chemin (It's really about saying, here's the aim, here are the tools, and we'll take you part of the way and then you'll need to continue)

So there's 3 sides: the guru, from national or even international level, then somebody from the field and then working together

Definitely, the presenter should first of all be a convincing personality; someone already with experience with theory and knowledge, open to listen and to hear and to respond

A person who helps us to go through different steps but doesn't do it for us, just a kind of guidance, explaining why it's necessary, so when you understand what you are doing and why you are doing it, then it's not a problem

Tout le travail, souvent, n'est pas seulement un travail de formation, mais c'est un travail comment dire de...de rendre conscient, de « empower » de nouveau (all the work is often not only about training, but it's about awareness-raising, re-empowering people)

Opportunities to reflect and invent; give participants the confidence to create things; this is what I really think matters a lot, that you are involved, that you put your creativity into it, [...] but when you are in the process of creativity this is what really remains very strong with you afterwards.

Entre un input qui est, comment dire, humain, humaniste, et un input qui est technique, moi j'ai toujours eu peur de la technique (between an input that focuses on the human aspects and an input that is technical - I have always been afraid of the technical)

La caractéristique c'est le suivi. C'est-à-dire : est-ce qu'après, les gens travaillent ? C'est ça qui est essentiel : est-ce qu'après on a mis en place un réseau ? (The most important feature is the follow-up. That is, do people work afterwards? That's what's essential: was a network set up afterwards?)

Faire évoluer les représentations des gens (help people's way of seeing things to evolve)

La recherche doit élaborer les concepts, mais elle doit s'impliquer quand même dans une forme de médiation vers la formation (Research must develop concepts, but it must still be involved in some form of mediation towards training)

The principles and theory come as a result of doing things rather than the other way round

(Prompts: professional identity/PLC/individual learning etc/VALUES AND ATTITUDES/agency/praxis/contextualised etc) check these are covered – other thoughts? Consensus /disagreement?

10.05

3) PLURILINGUALISM/EDUCATION THAT SUPPORTS AND PROMOTE THE "PLURILINGUAL IDEAL

Intro: similar format/time to read/react/agree/disagree

(Order here would work)

INTERVIEW EXTRACTS

And obviously linguistic and cultural diversity and multicultural pedagogies and so forth - what are they if not, sort of putting democracy and human values and respect of human rights in the very core of teaching and learning

Parce que derrière le plurilinguisme, et il y a des images idylliques, des images faciles *(because behind the concept of plurilingualism there are idyliic, simplisitic images)*

On a des situations de diversité dans nos classes, dans notre société et ou on ira à l'échec collectif ou alors on arrivera à en prendre conscience *(We have situations of diversity in our classes, in our society and either we continue towards collective failure or we take account of this diversity)*

Le plurilinguisme, il faut le préparer, petit à petit, il faut surtout ne pas demander des choses impossibles aux enseignants *(plurilingualism needs to be prepared, little by little ; it's imperative that we don't ask the impossible of teachers)*

Là, c'est un peu comme quand tu lances un produit : je crois que l'étiquette maintenant est bien présente. Mais […] l'impression que j'ai, c'est qu'il y a des idées très très différentes *(This is a bit like when you launch a product: I think the label is there now. But [...] the impression I have is that there are very, very different ideas)*

The differences of points of view about plurilingual education mustn't be allowed to harden into chapels

(Again, anything they would like to add)

10.20/25

4a) What you said about the ECML

Very positive – I'd like us to look at these in more depth – expand on/agree with/question – again, we have comments on the way the ECML works, on its aims and the impact it can have on people - if possible, thinking about how these comments relate to fostering the kind of professional growth and the plurilingual understandings you describe? If not, why not?

INTERVIEW EXTRACTS

C'est une situation un tout petit peu hors cadre/ le sentiment d'être dans une parenthèse pendant quelque temps qui est extrêmement bénéfique à tout le monde, c'est très riche ; les gens coupent aussi avec leur environnement habituel *(it's a situation which is a little bit out of context/ the feeling of being in a parenthesis for a while that is extremely beneficial to everyone, it's very rich; people are away from their usual environment)*

Aller vers un outil qui correspond bien au ressenti, aux priorités, aux besoins, à l'expérience des gens ; on est directement dans un défi de mise en œuvre *(move towards developing a tool that is well suited to people's understandings, priorities, needs, experiences ; the centre is directly involved in the challenge of implementation)*

A space of safety with a nice atmosphere where we can exchange

C'est un enrichissement intellectuel continu *(it's continual intellectual enrichment)*

Ici on a toujours été en train de chercher à ouvrir *(here we are always looking to open up)*

you feel almost a tangible network which is European-wide, and it makes you feel kind of strong and happy

Ces rendez-vous réguliers avec une équipe qui nous encadre …qui est un soutien et un contact intellectuel avec lequel on progresse *(these regular meetings with a team that oversees our work... which is a support and intellectual contact which accompanies our progress)*

Le CELV est en train, justement peut-être d'être compris dans sa fonction, pas uniquement technique, mais au niveau vraiment de construction, de lieu de construction d'une identité européenne pour l'éducation *(the ECML is in the process of being understood in its function, not only in technical terms, but in terms of construction, as a place to build a European identity for education)*

Le Centre…il y aurait quand même quelque chose d'assez féminin *(the Centre… there is definitely something feminine about it)*

x

Democratic, as revolutionary, as to do with society, changing society (the Council)

Le Conseil comme passerelle entre recherche et pratique; c'est la seule voie justement de perméabilité (The Council as a bridge between research and practice; it is the only way research becomes permeable)

(If short – weaknesses/threat. Probes -Features we can replicate or can't? (Question of guru/ of zdp) local v global (national v European event); technical v values; policy, research and practice; how to strengthen?)

10.45

<u>4b) METAPHORS</u>

Choose one you like (not your own), ask "owner" to say more. Agree/disagree/expand

<u>INTERVIEW EXTRACTS</u>

Le mixeur de cuisine, c'est-à-dire où il y a plein d'ingrédients, des idées, des thèmes, des recherches, des thèses…on mélange tout et on a un produit comestible dont on peut plus dire quel est l'origine de tel ou tel élément …qui sublime un peu ces différentes composantes *(the kitchen blender, that is to say where there are lots of ingredients, ideas, themes, research, theses... we mix everything and we have an edible product where the origin of individual elements is no longer apparent and which is greater than the sum of its parts)*

Jack-in-the-box! Impression that so many things you haven't thought of become possible and things which are closed can open up

Le centre joue un peu ce rôle aussi de trait d'union, d'espace de dialogue, de créativité, de propositions, de libre expression (the centre acts as a kind of hyphen, a link and is a space for dialogue, for creativity, for proposals and free speech)

For language education it's really like a window through which we see new perspectives, new ways of doing things would come

C'est une sorte de laboratoire d'idées; c'est une source, un resourcement pour le développement de nos idées *(it's a kind of laboratory for ideas; a source, a source of renewal for the development of our ideas)*

A beehive

Coffee break 11-11.30

4c) World without ECML - *Imagine we've gone/words, images, feelings that come to mind – spontaneously*

I wonder if these topics of minority speakers (Roma, deaf, hard of hearing, refugees ...) would be that present in our society without the efforts of the Council of Europe and the ECML!

11.40

5) InFo-TED INTRO

You've talked about your understandings of genuine professional growth (enumerate: agency, creativity, values, local to global, research-informed (get them to shout out key words?) about why plurilingual education matters and what the dangers are; you've talked about what's special about the centre. You've shared your metaphors for the centre and imagined a world without it.

Came across this-bit of background on models in general- why liked this one the best – by TEs for TEs, not blueprint, dynamic.

Time to read sheet. (be willing to explain any of it - see my version)

a) *Reactions to model*
b) *Can you see how your wishes (handout) fit?*
c) *How could we use it? If we replace "teach" with "act"? what other changes?*
d) *How could it foster that PD/PE you describe?*
e) *And finally, in your role – could you use it?*

INTERVIEW EXTRACTS

If you are at the cutting edge of times, understanding what is crucial, you will have a winning agenda

Donner la chance à ces États de prendre conscience que cette réflexion collective européenne est faite au service immédiat des chemins qu'ils sont en train d'en d'ouvrir (Give the member states the opportunity to become aware that this collective European reflection is in the immediate service of the paths they are already beginning to explore

Il faut toujours que le CELV innove lui-même sa façon de travailler (The ECML has to constantly innovate in terms of its working methods)

And the centre should try to find the simpler truth - it's there, to turn things out into a more user-friendly way, starting with the language used, making it more understandable, more palatable.

 Il a su se créer une identité en s'appuyant sur justement les meilleurs principes … du Conseil de l'Europe et le message c'est qu'il faut continuer à porter le flambeau (It has been able to create its own identity, based on the best principles of the Council and the message is – it needs to continue carrying the torch)

That the centre really does manage to get a harmony between different pedagogical traditions because it is possible to do, there are so many things in common.

11.40 – 12.15

(Comfort break before last question?)

   6) **ABOUT THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

How have they felt, telling me/each other their stories? What have they learned from this experience? Need to ensure they share their discomfort – e.g. when get back transcriptions. Other moments? Why? Something here about x-sectoral – my research group – new kind of learning community? Microcosm of ECML? Benefits? Link to a question on professional identity. How has it evolved/what role, if any, has the ECML played? Are you the "more capable peers"?

Which aspect was the most important for each of them? (Again about the key message for research report) /intervention etc.

Any other comments?

Appendix 5: Initial codes and possible themes

1) Agency (collective and/or individual)

2) Ahead of its time

3) Beliefs/values

4) Category of professional learning: transmissive, malleable, transformative

5) Change domains: personal, practice, consequence, external

6) Change sequences

7) Changing mindsets

8) Changing role of language education

9) Co-construction

10) CoE tools as catalyst for change

11) Commitment

12) Complex constructs

13) Complexity

14) Confirmation

15) Constraints

16) Constructivist

17) Context-specific

18) CPD principles

19) Creativity

20) Criticality

21) Cultural elements

22) Cyclical

23) Democracy

24) Dialogic engagement

25) Different pedagogic traditions

26) Divergence

27) Experiential

28) Expert others

29) Facilitator

30) Focus

- o on form

- o on content

- o on interaction

- on process

31) good student = good teacher

32) Growth networks (change in one domain leading to change in another/long-term change)

- For individuals (learning)

- Across policy- research -curriculum-practice

33) Higher order thinking

34) Holistic view of languages/atomistic

35) Imagination

36) ITE -Initial teacher education

37) Inquiry (same as self-reflection?)

38) Innovation

39) Interculturality (ability to navigate different world views/savoir-etre)

40) Knowledge (re) construction

41) Learner-focused/responsiveness to learners

42) Learning organisation

43) Learning styles

44) Learning theories

45) Linguistic hierarchies

46) Lifelong learning

47) Language teacher educator (LTE) equal to/different from Language teacher (LT)

48) LTE responsibility

49) Mediation

- Linguistic

- Cultural

- Pedagogic

- Social

50) Metaphors used by participants: bee-hive, mixer, jack-in-the-box, laboratory of ideas,

51) Mixed metaphors (does each one get analysed in opposite ways?)

52) More capable peers

53) Motivation

54) Networks?

55) Opportune moments/sense of anticipation

56) Opportunity: formal/informal; incidental/planned; bottom-up/top-down

57) Paradigm shift

58) Pathways

59) Pedagogic principles

60) Personal, social, occupational (or professional) as aspects of professional learning

61) Personal, social, occupational as benefits of language learning

62) Philosophies of education (values)

63) (philosophy; principles; theory; practice; and beyond practice

64) Professional learning community

65) Pleasure of learning

66) Political

67) Policy – power of policy drivers

68) Praxis

69) Preaching to converted

70) Professional Identity

71) Project-based learning (PBL)

72) Prophet in own land

73) Purpose of focus group conversation – higher-order thinking?

74) Purpose of professional learning : situational/external; transmissive/transformative

75) Reciprocity

76) Real language use

77) Reform – need for consensus

78) Research experience = learning experience

79) Response to professional learning: individual/collective; active/passive

80) Role of research (THEORY)

81) Safe spaces

82) Self-esteem

83) Self-reflection

84) Situated nature of programmes and practices

85) Social justice

86) Specific pedagogy for TE

87) Surprise finding

88) Taking ownership (appropriation/interiorisation)

89) Technicity

POSSIBLE OVERARCHING THEMES?

A) Border-crossing/learning at boundaries

    a. Role (Teacher –Teacher Educator)/identity

    b. Sector

    c. Levels: personal/institutional/national/supra

    d. policy-research-curriculum-practice

B) Tensions (ZDP/challenges/problem-solving/obstacles)

    a. Between levels

    b. Between what we say and do

    c. Facilitate v teach

    d. Individual v group/team/nation

    e. Products v process

    f. Top-down/bottom-up

    g. Within or outside systems

    h. Structure v creativity

    i. English-only v diversification

    j. Holistic v atomistic (re language education)

Theory

    k. Complexity/systems

        i. Learn and adapt

        ii. Contradictory mechanisms

        iii. Interlinked systems

        iv. Feedback loops (resulting in higher order thinking, e.g. FGC)

        v. Difficult to predict/curveball

        vi. Ecological

        vii. Self-organising

        viii. Multiple interacting agents

        ix. Non-linear

        x. Constant change

        xi. Emergence (greater than sum of parts)

    l. Constructivist

    m. Sociocultural + emotional

Is ecml the triangle that links the 3? Quite simple? Or is it the funnel?

transformative learning
beyond borders?

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Appendix 6: Data analysis codes grouped according to the three key constructs

PLURLINGUAL EDUCATION

ECML

Learner-centred agentive/ownership of learning

Dialogic engagement/more capable peers/expert others

Safe space

Community of practice – social constructivist learning

Action-oriented/task-based/experiential

Personal practice as starting point

Inquiry/Self-reflection/criticality

Action-research /praxis

Creativity and innovation

Knowledge construction

Professional identity formation

Beliefs/values

Project-based learning

Specific pedagogy

Research for innovation

- Social justice
- Beliefs/values/philosophies of education
- Recognition of individual potential
- Diversity as liberating
- Importance of L1
- Language for meaning-making
- Pleasure of language learning
- Holistic view of language learning/rethinking hierarchies
- Personal benefits before political
- Learner identity
- Learner-centred
- Methodologies – need to be context-specific
- Scenario building
- Different pedagogic traditions
- Ahead of its time
- Political banner
- Confusion
- Paradigm shift undermines professional identity

European identity

Agentive in change process

Cross-border, cross-sectoral, cross-linguistic – different pedagogic traditions – professional learning community

Free of local/national/institutional constraints

Process and products as catalysts for change

Project-based learning; safe space

Nurturer of talent

Mediation: linguistic, cultural, pedagogic, social

Preaching to converted

Contributing to confusion around plurilingualism

Removed from national realities

Appendix 7: Sample of a coded extract (individual interview)

	EXCHANGE	CODING
INTERVIEWER	Tell me your story; your story in terms of your career in terms of language education, how you became involved in language education, not thinking at the moment about the Council of Europe but just in general, why you wanted to go into this field of work/ did it happen accidentally ?	REFLEXIVITY: SELF-CRITICAL-SUGGESTED RESPONSE
PARTICIPANT	Yes, it was almost completely accidental; I started off after studying English language and literature, as a teacher in a school in England and did that and enjoyed it for a couple of years.	PERSONA: POSITIVE
PARTICIPANT	Then one day I was sitting in the staffroom and looking at people and said did I want to be sitting there in 40 years' time?	CRITICAL INCIDENT COMMONPLACES: PLACE/TIME/SOCIALITY REMEMBERING; PERCEPTION
PARTICIPANT	And thought it would be nice to go and live somewhere else, so I got a job which lots of people did at that time, teaching adult education English in Sweden, north of Sweden, which I did for 2 years, and got interested in doing it .	BORDER-CROSSING IMAGINING PERSONA: POSITIVE
PARTICIPANT	It was a time when you got responsibilities quite young, so I sort of did one year and then the 2nd year I was looking after a group of people in terms of mentoring and tutoring, and after that I was asked to move from Sweden to Norway where, at a very young age I was head of the English department in the adult education section of Oslo University which I did equally for a couple of years .	COMMONPLACES: TEMPORALITY REMEMBERING REFLECTION-IN-ACTION: IDENTIFICATION PERSONA: CARING NARRATIVE COGNITION: SPEED OF PROFESSIONAL PROGRESS PERSONA: SELF-DEPRACTING REFLEXIVITY-EMOTIONAL/INTELLECTUAL RESPONSE -ADMIRATION
PARTICIPANT	So, if I were to describe myself , as being very much, for a long time a practical teacher , quite a long time, being, not a teacher trainer, but setting up systems which involved training people who were coming from a non-structured or very different pedagogic background into a different one, and then in (…) my first jobs were related to training and getting a group of teacher trainers within schools and doing that, so I 'm a sort of non-academic in lots of ways, having picked up bits of the trade as I went along.	PERCEPTION REFLEXIVITY: POWER-RELATED He's quite nervous, had prepared for interview OWN LEARNING: PERSONAL PRACTICE AS STARTING POINT BORDER-CROSSING- ROLES – FLUIDITY OF ROLES REFLEXIVITY: LOCATING SELF – IDENTIFICATION – not quite assuming role of Language TE PERSONA: SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES (focus on form - "non-structured") BORDER-CROSSING: DIFFERENT PEDAGOGIC TRADITIONS

| | | PERSONA: doesn't want to come across as an intellectual. Yet so well read; self-taught.

FOCUS ON FORM: « trade » rather than "profession"
PERSONA: self-deprecating – makes it sound easy, more like a hobby |
|---|---|---|
| INTERVIEWER | Interesting, fascinating, thank you very much. | REFLEXIVITY: AIM OF UTTERANCE – MEANT GENUINELY. WAS WONDERFUL STORY |

Appendix 8: Sample of a coded extract (focused group conversation)

	EXCHANGE	CODING
PARTICIPANT 4	What I want to add is that we are talking about plurilingualism and learning of foreign languages, and of course having in mind repertoires of speakers of other languages, but for example I can say that in my country this plurilingual approach to education, what was really the big added value, was the awareness of having speakers of other languages within the classroom for other subjects, so it's the language of instruction that was put under the question: do the students really understand the teacher and so on, so I think that the effect of plurilingualism went in the direction of the language of instruction and to take into consideration that perhaps all the students are not speakers of the language of instruction as the first language, this is where I see I would like to make a difference because otherwise, for the modern languages, I see a kind of frustration of the teachers of modern languages because somehow now "is there still need for us to really teach foreign languages?" and so on, so perhaps these 2 sides, language of instruction, modern languages …	PLURILINGUALISM – COMING OF AGE DIVERGENCE - She's disagreeing with participant 3 in that what has brought plurilingualism to the fore is in fact diversity in schools – not foreign language teaching in secondary schools. In a sense where the abstract idea became a reality - Enrico says this in his first interview – the reality is in there now in our classrooms and we can't ignore it. But plurilingualism and its place in the teaching of foreign languages is still unclear. PLURILINGUALISM -PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY – for foreign language teachers this is under threat. And if you add to this that for participant 6 they aren't even considered professionals. CONVERGENCE – participants 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6
PARTICIPANT 5	I couldn't agree more, this is where the CoE and the ECML are serving human rights and democracy very clearly.	PLURILINGUALISM REFLEXIVITY AS DIRECTOR – there's still a challenge for FL teaching
PARTICIPANT 1	Yes, I'd just like to follow on from what Enrico was saying, that I get the impression that a lot of teachers are methodologically and didactically lost in this confusion and that I feel that sometimes the responses we've made so far, haven't really answered that challenge . If I can take one example from one of the projects which I'm accompanying, where they've been producing a lot of activities which are designed to make people aware of the fact that language learning and teaching is	PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY ECML- NEGATIVE PERSONA – PART OF ECML Us – ECML – we haven't helped this confusion. Form: uses the pronoun "us" – collective responsibility. He's also suggesting that it's not binary – it's about bringing the two together and we don't yet have an answer to this. PLURILINGUALISM NEGATIVE – IT GOES BEYOND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY ISSUES, IT'S ALSO ABOUT APPROACHES. PLURILINGUALISM NEGATIVE – WE CAN'T MOVE BEYOND THE AWARENESS-RAISING. IT'S NOT ENOUGH. WE CAN'T PLOT PROGRESSION.

	diverse and pluricultural and there are lots of things there, and almost the only point of the activities is this awareness-raising, and that beyond – I'm not saying that that's not a good thing – but beyond that there's the question about what then do you do next over a period of years ? How do you differentiate between the different cultural backgrounds, you know, how do you really cope methodologically with diversity? It seems to me an enormous challenge and if we think what the role of the ECML is, it seems to me that that is – what kind of learning theories are we applying, what kind of methodologies, what kind of classroom practices allow you to do it over the long period of the primary school and secondary school, and at the moment, neither countries, nor centrally, it seems to me, do we have a satisfactory response, or at least a satisfactory response which is widely understood	PLURILINGUALSIM NEGATIVE – IT'S NOT BOUNDARY CROSSING – NOT GOING BEYOND VALUES INTO PEDAGOGIES, NO CLEAR PROGRESSION FOR LEARNERS. ECML- NEGATIVE PERSONA – COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY LTE RESPONSIBILITY And if we understand the ECML as the LTEs who develop projects/offer Training and Consultancy here, then there must also be confusion in their heads – so still big challenge at level of CONTENT
PARTICIPANT 5	If I can go on from what colleagues have already said, in my country the situation is very similar, and what Sutra said about the role of kids with multicultural backgrounds entering the classrooms, that has put a certain kind of pressure and the political agenda in a way, has entered in the classrooms in order to safeguard the mutual learning opportunities for children with multicultural backgrounds, with backgrounds of cultures and languages different from the dominant ones, so that's one thing . The other thing which hasn't been mentioned, the role of English turning more and more the global lingua franca which is pushing aside the interest towards other languages and then again, in Finland for example we have some minority languages, which like, globally so many minority languages, are in danger of disappearing and again, that is a	REFLEXIVITY AS DIRECTOR – THIS IS A COUNTRY WHERE THERE IS COHERENCE ACROSS THE LEVELS YET STILL STRUGGLING. IN MOST COUNTRIES THERE ISN'T THIS COHERENCE. REFLEXIVITY AS DIRECTOR – CHALLENGE THE ECML NEEDS TO ADDRESS SOCIO-POLITICAL COHERENCE; CONTEXT-SPECIFIC PLURILINGUALISM – CONFUSION/COMPLEXITY If it's still "fuzzy" in this country with support at all levels and development opportunities – indicates how much more needs to be done. BORDER- CROSSING LEVELS -ACROSS LEVELS/COHERENCE Where policy supports and informs practice, rather than being in opposition to it. Importance of context/ of place. PLURILINGUALISM – HOW TO ADDRESS

	nice political agenda – do what you can at school in order to maintain minority languages, but the thing which Enrico said about the fuzziness, the danger of fuzziness in teaching and learning about this is present in my country as well, but luckily our famous core curricula say that we are to teach and learn about cultural diversity and linguistic diversity as well, in this order.	CHALLENGES – NEED COHERENCE FROM POLCY THROUGH CURRICULA THROUGH TRAINING TO PRAXIS; INCOHERENCE MAKES IT VULNERABLE AND DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN PERSONA; ECML + LEVELS – ACROSS LEVELS/COHERENCE DIVERGENCE very proud of national identity and context; unlike participant 6 who is despairing at national system. Role of ECML – for people to step out of their systems, the good and the not so good – For participant 5 – national and individual persona are in harmony. Not so for participant 6. Feels she is making a genuine contribution. REFLEXIVITY: HOW DO YOU RECOGNISE COMPLEXITY YET MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE? PLURILINGUALISM NEGATIVE – WE'VE OVERSIMPLIFIED ON THE ONE HAND (KEPT IT LEVEL OF AWARENESS RAISING) YET ON OTHER, PRESENTED COMPLEXITY IN A WAY THAT HAS FRIGHTENED PEOPLE. WHAT IS THE ECML'S ROLE IN ALL OF THIS? ROLE OF LTEs – to make complexity accessible through right kind of training
	How we do that, we are looking at the ECML at least in part… and this is in a way my point here: how can we make these extremely complex issues simple enough for teachers and also for educational politicians to adopt them and to turn them into classroom practice in the end of developments? So, I'm very hopeful that this will happen.	
	I would like to come back to Enrico' suggestion to have a tool or a manual with simplified version of how to do things, but I think this is impossible, because I think the only way to do it is by experience, so unless you do something in this direction in your classroom and then discuss it and then repeat it, you will never understand, so we have to prepare the surroundings that would encourage teachers to try it, then to discuss it, then to retry it, and then perhaps at this moment all these concepts would become clearer and clearer to the teacher or teacher trainer, I mean	DIVERGENCE PERSONAL PRACTICE AS STARTING POINT; EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING; SOCIOCONSTRUCTIVIST – ARTICULATE/REFLECT/ENGAGE/INTERIORISE MORE CAPABLE PEERS Professional learning community? Disagreement - we don't need more documents/ more tools. We need actual experiential learning in safe spaces – learn by doing, by making mistakes. With help of more capable peers – Sociocultural. More like community of practice? NEED TO CREATE THE ENVIRONMENT

	it's the same. Unless you do it always by experience you can't understand. Just reading and reading and looking – you would be more and more afraid of everything and would say it's not for me, I do not understand it.	LEARNING STYLES – DIVERGENCE

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