LANGUAGING AT WORK:

CROSS-LINGUAL COMMUNICATION IN A MULTILINGUAL TEAM

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ABSTRACT

Academic literature pays little attention to languages at work, regarding them largely as communication tools. Language difference is viewed as a mechanical translation problem to be solved with a range of mechanical solutions, taking little account of the people involved. Language is thus largely considered as code. This thesis argues that language is a means of communicating and maintaining relationships. It takes a person-centred view of language, exploring how cross-lingual communication is experienced in face-to-face interactions. It also explores culture’s involvement, arguing that language and culture should be decoupled, whilst acknowledging their interrelatedness. This thesis draws on a conceptual combination of work by Alison Phipps (2007), Pierre Bourdieu (1977a; 1991) and Michel de Certeau (2011) alongside intercultural pragmatics theory, organisation studies, international business and management and diversity management. In so doing, it argues that problems of linguistic diversity experienced in the moment of interaction are resolved through social practices involving the interplay between different forms of cultural and linguistic capital.

Drawing on a series of interviews and observations, this thesis analyses how members of a multilingual team in a UK public sector organisation practise and experience language and cross-lingual communication at work. Given increasing linguistic diversity in domestic organisations, this thesis contributes primarily to organisation studies, arguing that organisations are constructed through language and hence through cross-lingual communication between their linguistically diverse employees. It also contributes to international and business management and diversity management, arguing that, although inextricably linked, language and culture should be decoupled, since they are both distinct elements of diversity. Furthermore, it extends Phipps’ concept of languaging from the field of tourism into organisation studies. In so doing, it is indicative of more subtle workings of Bourdieu’s concept of capital and expands de Certeau’s concept of space to the cross-lingual communication phenomenon, thereby also contributing to theory.
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CHAPTER 1 Introduction

1.1 Reflections of a working linguist on languages at work

The initial idea for this research did not emerge from hours spent poring over academic literature, but from a moment of professional reflection whilst pouring a cup of coffee. At the time of that coffee break in spring 2008, I had been using my language skills in various workplaces for eleven years. I had spent the first five years in customer services for two UK companies and the latter six as a self-employed translator and interpreter.1

As I drank my coffee, I reflected that whenever I had been required to communicate face-to-face or voice-to-voice with my non-English speaking interlocutors, two assumptions were being made. The first was that my foreign language skills enabled me to communicate in the lingua franca I shared with my interlocutors, thereby eradicating any language barrier between us. The second was that my language skills were sufficiently well developed such that mutual understanding would be unproblematic. The latter assumption concerned me, since it seemed to involve considering me merely as a language-processing medium rather than a person engaging in the challenge of face-to-face communication and meaning-making. Thus, it appeared no thought was being given to any relationship between my experiences, and indeed my interlocutors’ experiences, of the challenge of traversing the language barrier and the outcome of the job at hand. Given today’s globalised economy, I considered there must be many people in organisations around the world who spend some or all of their working day communicating cross-lingually in a lingua franca that is not their native language. I wondered how they were experiencing this cross-lingual communication and whether their experiences were connected with how they fulfilled their roles. I considered that organisations should be concerned about how cross-lingual communication is experienced by their employees. But were they concerned about or even aware of this?

1 There is a professional distinction between translators and interpreters. Translators translate the written word; interpreters interpret the spoken word. Translators usually translate in one direction, i.e. from one (source) language into another (target) language. Interpreters may provide interpretation in both directions between two different languages.
These questions sparked my interest in researching how people in organisations put languages to work in the workplace, which has resulted in this thesis. I explain its aims, focus and context below.

1.2 Aims, focus and context of this thesis

This thesis documents an exploratory empirical study with two key aims. Firstly, it aims to explore how members of a multilingual team in one UK organisation practise and experience communication with each other across the language barrier, primarily, though not exclusively, using the *lingua franca* of English. This aim responds to Charles’ (2006: 279) call for "research that helps us to better understand the complex process of how people relate to each other across language barriers". Secondly, it aims to explore how interlocutors make meaning as they communicate cross-lingually in order to fulfil their roles. This aim follows Brannen *et al.* (2014: 496) who recognise that "the widespread use of English as a *lingua franca* […] gives an illusion that by controlling for national language diversity the transfer of meaning becomes relatively unproblematic".

The focus of this thesis is on members of one team practising and experiencing cross-lingual communication at work. I refer to cross-lingual communication rather than intercultural communication, as I wish to emphasise this thesis’s exploration of practices and experiences relating to language, albeit whilst also exploring culture’s involvement. I thus focus on team members’ cross-lingual communication experiences and how these are associated with the way they fulfil their organisational roles. This person-centred focus follows Janssens and Steyaert (2014), who argue that language should be understood as a social practice. It moves beyond conceiving language merely as code, considering it as a means through which people interact socially. In so doing, this thesis follows Blommaert’s argument, cited by Janssens and Steyaert (*ibid.*: 630), that language as a social practice "is not necessarily [about] the language you speak but how you speak it, when you can speak it, and to whom it matters. It is a matter of voice, not of language".
The context of this thesis is also important, since it details an empirical study conducted within a UK public sector organisation. Whilst there is some discussion of the language problem amongst international business and international management scholars, there is little in organisation studies. Given my professional experience and awareness of migrants working in UK organisations before beginning my research, I knew that language potentially matters to domestic as well as international organisations. The main contribution of this thesis is therefore to call scholars of organisation studies to attend to language issues facing domestic organisations. I argue that this is important, following Parker’s (2000) argument that organisation is a process of making, rather than something that exists as a bounded entity. Organisations are arguably made through communication between their employees. Therefore, when these employees are not all native speakers of the organisation’s primary language, their cross-lingual communication is similarly integral to organisation making. This thesis therefore seeks to understand and question how language issues are dealt with. In approaching the literature across disciplines relevant to my inquiry, I follow Alvesson and Sandberg’s (2011) recommended method of problematisation. In this way I identify and challenge the assumptions underlying this literature, as well as identify gaps within it. I present the contributions made by this thesis in section 1.9.

Having explained the motivation for and aims of my research, the remainder of this chapter charts its course. Therefore, sections 1.3 to 1.8 provide an overview of the six subsequent chapters in this thesis. Sections 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 outline the literature I consulted to establish my contribution and how I would frame my enquiry. Section 1.6 states the research questions that resulted from my initial interest, subsequent reading and preliminary understanding of the organisational context of my study. These sections together provide an overview of chapter 2.

Section 1.7 provides an overview of chapter 3 and thus the organisation where I conducted my research and my chosen methodology for data generation and analysis. Section 1.8 outlines the contents of chapters 4, 5 and 6: the three data analysis chapters which address each of my research questions in turn. Section 1.9 closes this introduction

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2 I regard the data for my study as being generated rather than collected (Byrne, 2012). This is based on my adopted epistemological position and is fully explained in section 3.2.2.
with conclusions and discussion points arising from my study and presents the contributions made by this thesis, as detailed in chapter 7.

My research journey in the management academy has required excursion to other academic disciplines. I now begin with an overview of the key literature informing and directing my research.

1.3 Overview of management literature

I begin chapter 2 by reviewing the international business and international management literature. Henceforth, I group these two overlapping areas under the single heading of international business and management (IB&M). This follows Jack and Westwood’s (2009: 30) explanation that, among other things, the field of international business "incorporates investigations of international trade, […] internationalisation processes, […] international strategy and so on, but may still include issues such as managing international operations, expatriation and the effects of culture on international business".

My assessment of the various forms of attention paid by IB&M scholars to language in the workplace confirms its importance. Indeed, Guirdham (2011: 7) argues that "the significance of any activity at work can be judged by the amount of time employees spend at it and by its impact on how effectively and efficiently the work is carried out". She subsequently suggests that communication is the most important workplace activity. Ferraro and Briody (2013) state that English is the lingua franca of the business world. It therefore follows that international business communication requires negotiation of the language barrier. Ferraro and Briody (ibid.) suggest that organisations often use employees who are native speakers of other languages to bridge the communication gap. However, this suggestion fails to address two of my concerns. My first concern is whether communicating in a lingua franca that is not a person’s native language may be problematic. My second concern is for the implications of organisations seeing such native speakers as communication vehicles rather than communicating human beings.
Brannen et al. (2014) echo my first concern with their assertion that international organisations’ use of English as a *lingua franca* leads to linguistic diversity as being considered relatively unproblematic. Regarding my second concern, Feely (2003) identifies the language barrier as a complex phenomenon, causing problems for native (or first) language users, non-native (or second/third/fourth, etc.) language users and their interpersonal relationships. Thus communication via a *lingua franca* is potentially problematic for everyone involved. Furthermore, in considering interpersonal relationships, Feely (*ibid.*) clearly sees the communicating parties as human beings rather than merely communication vessels. This consideration therefore justifies this thesis’s person-centred focus on cross-lingual communication.

Other IB&M scholars echo my concerns and raise others. Welch et al. (2005) criticise some companies for reducing the management of language diversity to little more than a mechanical translation problem that can be overcome with the increasing sophistication of computerised tools. Indeed, in ignoring the human beings putting language to work, it could be argued that companies regard a shared language as just another mechanical solution to the language problem. Expatriates are recognised as another ostensibly human solution to the mechanical translation problem in multinational corporations (MNCs) (Buckley et al., 2005; Guirdham, 2011; Mayerhofer et al., 2004). However, as merely a local substitution for a head office manager, they are arguably viewed more as a cog in the translation machine rather than a person involved in the communication process. The assumption underlying all these mechanical solutions is that language can be detached from people. This thesis is constructed on a conceptual framework, outlined in section 1.5, which challenges that assumption.

Despite the foregoing assumption, IB&M scholars discuss three particular problems associated with linguistic ability that, like this thesis, suggest that language and people are connected. Firstly, Jack (2010) notes the problem that language skills acquired by means other than formal education may not be certified, other than by subjective self-assessment. Secondly, Welch and Piekkari (2006) recognise that low self-confidence or shyness may hamper a person’s ability to practise their language skills. Thirdly, Vaara *et al.* (2005) assert that limitations in language ability may make people feel robbed of their professional competence. These examples and the others discussed in section 2.2.2 could equally apply in a domestic organisation employing non-native English-speaking
personnel. Since this thesis documents one such case study, I continue this discussion of linguistic ability as it relates to my investigation.

The aforementioned concerns of IB&M scholars about languages at work are naturally not explored within domestic organisations. Nevertheless, Guirdham (2011) argues that the domestic issue regarding communication at work requires greater focus than the international one. This is partly due to diversity in domestic organisations being a growing concern, given the increasing global mobility of labour. I therefore turned to consult the diversity management (DM) literature, to explore the consideration of linguistic diversity in domestic organisations. DM scholars discuss the problems of managing differences relevant to a globally mobile workforce. According to Litvin (1997), differences are managed according to six primary dimensions of diversity, these being age, ethnicity, gender, physical attributes/abilities, race and sexual orientation. The absence of language here may be due to diversity being managed as an economic concern (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000). Language has arguably never been conceived of as an asset affecting a company’s bottom line (Prasad and Mills, 1997). Therefore, linguistic diversity is deemed irrelevant (Tatli, 2011). Nevertheless, some studies imply problems with linguistic diversity exist, albeit that reference is made merely to cultural diversity (Zanoni and Janssens, 2007) or ethnic diversity (Ogbonna and Harris, 2006). Therefore, diversity of language is either conflated with diversity of race, ethnicity or culture or it is ignored. Either way, the assumption underlying the DM literature I consulted is that the concept of language can be subsumed into the concept of culture. The overview of literature on culture in section 1.4 indicates how this thesis challenges that assumption.

Despite DM scholars conflating language with culture, IB&M scholars argue for decoupling them. Feely’s (2003: 207) argument that "language represents and expresses [the] culture" although they are not one and the same thing is redolent of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This hypothesis, also known as linguistic determinism, proposes that the language surrounding us shapes how we view and think about the world (Tietze et al., 2003). Thus, language shapes and represents culture. Despite the different perspectives held in the fields of DM and IB&M on the association of language and culture, scholars in both fields agree that language and culture are inextricably linked. This suggestion of the omnipresence of culture directed me to refer to foundational
works on culture and intercultural communication. I now present an overview of the literature I consulted in this area.

1.4 A multidisciplinary lens on the culture concept

There is no consensus amongst scholars on how to define culture. Nevertheless, I needed a definition that would assist my understanding of culture’s relationship with cross-lingual communication in my organisational case study. Culture is conceptualised in this thesis as an internal variable. I follow Smircich’s (1983: 344) invitation to consider the organisation, or rather team, being researched as a culture-producing phenomenon, which is in turn situated in a wider cultural context. This thesis therefore takes account of the socio-cultural qualities that develop within the team. I now outline the key references I consulted in this regard.

Well-known scholars of culture, such as Hofstede (2003; first published in 1980) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), attempt to quantify cultural differences, categorising people as static national cultural types. However, McSweeney (2002) argues that Hofstede’s study is conceptually and methodologically flawed. Furthermore, Osland and Bird (2000) argue that such bipolar cultural dimensions constitute a form of sophisticated stereotyping. Thus, I considered such static, nationally programmed cultural types to be of limited use in analysing individuals’ face-to-face encounters. Instead, this thesis follows anthropologist James Clifford’s (1997) argument that, although culture incorporates some structure and stability, it is constantly undergoing construction and change by movement, rather than being permanently fixed. Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) similarly reject the argument that culture is programmed by nation. Instead, they argue that individuals use the idea of national culture as a symbolic resource for constructing their national identity. In this way, individuals choose to recreate stereotypes rather than being programmed by them. Holliday (1999: 241) similarly argues for culture to be untethered from the idea of nation, preferring to conceptualise culture as "cohesive behaviour in activities within any social grouping". He calls this ‘small culture’, explaining that "small cultures can be any social grouping from a neighbourhood to a work group" (ibid.: 247). This concept seems ideally suited to my study of a small team within a larger organisation.
Given the foregoing discussion, intercultural communication (ICC) theories that demonstrate a similar essentialist approach are also unhelpful. Gudykunst (2003a) provides a comprehensive overview of ICC theories, including his own anxiety and uncertainty management theory. He also acknowledges the lack of consensus on how to define culture - his own conceptualisation sees culture as delineated by national boundaries. Thus, Gudykunst’s ICC theory and others in his compendium tend to be based on national cultural differences, replicating broader tendencies in the social sciences and organisation studies. Furthermore, they tend to focus on intercultural encounters between people who are not well acquainted. The assumption underlying this focus is therefore that intercultural communication only takes place between strangers or people whose interpersonal relationships are in their infancy. However, this assumption is inappropriate for my study where people have established working relationships.

In searching for a way of conceiving of cross-lingual communication, ICC was one place I considered would be helpful given its focus on communication and the inextricable link between communication and culture. For the purpose of framing my research questions and analysing my data, I follow Angouri (2010: 218) who views culture as "an active process in meaning making". She suggests that culture complements language to facilitate people’s understanding of each other as they socially construct meaning in their interactions. This in turn points to Kecskes’ (2012) intercultural pragmatics (ICP) theory as being appropriate for my study. Kecskes views cross-lingual communication as a person-centred communicative interaction, rather than mere exchanges of linguistic code. He considers that people make rather than transmit meaning in their cross-lingual encounters. Therefore, language and culture are both seen as knowledge resources, acquired from prior experience, which people use to understand each other. Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory supports this thesis in three ways; firstly it resonates with my foregoing explanation of how culture is conceptualised in this thesis. Secondly, it supports the person-centred focus of my study. Thirdly, by considering culture at the level of individual interactions, it provides a lens for viewing culture’s involvement in the cross-lingual interactions of team members at my empirical site.
Given Kecskes’ (2012) view of language as a resource, I also consider how the multilingual participants\(^3\) in my study choose language(s) for their cross-lingual exchanges. I follow Cohen and Cooper’s (1986) study of language choice amongst foreign tourists and host country nationals and apply this to my study’s workplace setting. In so doing, I also refer to Warren’s (2012) argument that interlocutors in the workplace choose language according to the context in which they are communicating, their interpersonal relationships and their communicative intentions. Following Snow (2004), this thesis therefore considers language choice as a process of negotiation, according to what is pragmatically useful in each cross-lingual exchange. These scholars’ theories and insights support my conceptual framework, introduced in section 1.5 and summarised in the table in section 2.5.7.

Having introduced how I conceptualise culture in this thesis and the ICP theory that supports my conceptual framework, I now turn to focus on the people at the centre of my workplace study. Alvesson and Sandberg (2011: 255) argue that professional “competence does not consist of two separate entities; instead, person and work form an inseparable relation through the lived experience of work”. Similarly, this thesis argues that person and language are inseparable. Therefore, my study focuses on the lived experience of cross-lingual communication to investigate whether there is any relationship between these experiences and team members’ fulfilment of their duties. I now present the concepts which frame my exploration of how individuals experience cross-lingual communication in different social settings within the workplace.

### 1.5 Overview of conceptual framework

As I explained in section 1.3, there is little discussion of language matters, and thus language experiences, in the organisational literature. However, there is research in the field of tourism that investigates language as experienced rather than as code. In *Learning the Arts of Linguistic Survival*, Phipps (2007) presents her auto-ethnographic study of her experiences of learning and using a foreign language. The human

\(^3\)I regard the people in my study as participants rather than respondents. This is based on my adopted epistemological position and is fully explained in section 3.2.2.
experience is central to Phipps’ (2007) study, since she regards languages as tools for maintaining and communicating relationships. Furthermore, she argues that language skills are not ‘bolted on’ to the individual, but rather embodied within them. Phipps’ concept of languaging is pivotal to my study since it considers that person and language form an inseparable relation through the lived experience of languaging. Additionally, Phipps’ conceptual framework includes three particular concepts which I considered would also assist in framing my study. I introduce these in turn below and explain their significance.

Firstly, Phipps (2007) draws on Bourdieu’s (1977a) concept of habitus to argue that languages are embodied within and thus inseparable from the individuals who have acquired them. In his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977a), Bourdieu explains that habitus is an embodied system of structures, acquired through life experience. This helps us to shape the way we undertake future social actions, the experience of which further shapes the habitus. I follow Phipps’ (2007) argument that languages are embodied and argue that they are part of the habitus. This supports my person-centred focus of cross-lingual communication in the workplace, since it enables me to investigate how experiences of cross-lingual communication shape its practice and what this means for the people involved and the organisation employing them.

Secondly, Phipps (2007) draws on Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital to argue that language skills are a form of personal asset or wealth. In *Language and Symbolic Power* (1991), Bourdieu explains that people gain power in different social settings, which he calls fields, according to the amount of capital they possess. There are many forms of capital, although Bourdieu (ibid.) sees the four main types as economic, social, cultural and symbolic. However, it is cultural capital that is particularly relevant to this thesis, since it offers a means of conceptualising culture at the level of its constituent components. This deconstruction of culture provides a means of analysing how culture is operationalised in cross-lingual exchanges; it is also supported by Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory. Furthermore, Phipps’ (2007) explanation of language as a form of capital enables me to investigate how this linguistic form of cultural capital is involved with other forms and the significance of this involvement for cross-lingual communication at work.
Thirdly, Phipps (2007) draws on de Certeau’s theory of *The Practice of Everyday Life* (2011). De Certeau (ibid.: 117, original emphasis) argues that "*space is a practiced* [sic] *place". Giving the example of a street, as a place defined on a map, he argues that this place becomes transformed into a space as people make their way through it. De Certeau also applies his theory metaphorically, suggesting that the act of reading transforms a written text, as a place, into a space as readers bring their own experiences into their reading of the text. I take this metaphorical example of de Certeau’s theory to extend Phipps’ (2007) concept of languaging and posit my argument that language is a textual place, which is transformed into a space when it is used, or languaged. This enables me to explore some of the effects of languaging in the workplace.

The foregoing sections 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 constitute my introduction to the literature reviewed in chapter 2 of this thesis. Chapter 2 closes with the three research questions I formulated for my investigation. These questions were broadly orientated by my reading of the apposite literature. However, they were ultimately formulated according to the specific nature of the empirical site, which I explain in connection with my research methodology in chapter 3. I present these questions in the next section.

### 1.6 Three research questions

As explained above, my literature review uncovered little research into the phenomenon of cross-lingual communication as experienced by people in domestic organisational life. Therefore, my study seeks to address this shortcoming and explore the significance of such experiences for organisation studies and organisational life. The research questions I formulated are associated with the aims of this thesis, presented in section 1.2, firstly by seeking to understand how members of the team being researched relate to each other as they traverse the language barrier at work. Secondly, by exploring how team members make meaning in fulfilling the tasks assigned to them. My questions were born from the following three-stage approach.

Firstly, I drafted my research questions based on my own professional experience. This is deemed methodologically appropriate by Remenyi *et al.* (2003: 105), who say "within a non-positivist paradigm, it is acceptable for the generation of a research topic or
question to come from experience ". Furthermore, according to Weber (1949), an individual social scientist will not conceive of, investigate or conclude about a topic in the same way as another. Secondly, in consulting relevant literature, I followed Alvesson and Sandberg’s (2011) recommended method of problematisation in developing my research questions to ensure they were interesting to organisation studies. I did this not only by identifying gaps in the literature I consulted, but also by identifying and challenging the assumptions underlying it. Thirdly, once I had secured access to my empirical site, I formulated my questions in a way that enabled me to investigate them. I thus articulate my research questions as follows:

1. How, where and with whom is cross-lingual communication practised and experienced in the multilingual MECOS⁴ team? How is culture involved?
2. How are languages chosen and how are languages and languaging experienced in this team?
3. How is meaning made via cross-lingual communication in this team?

With these questions, I turn my attention to the empirical project and the methodology for conducting my study. Section 1.7 introduces my research design and fieldwork, which is detailed in chapter 3.

1.7 Research design and fieldwork

My fieldwork preparation involved determining the philosophical approach and research design I would adopt and the data generation methods I would use. My philosophical approach needed to be consistent with the philosophies underpinning the theories and concepts explained above. Similarly, my data generation methods needed to be consistent with my methodological choices, as well as feasible for me and the organisation being researched. Chapter 3 provides an account of my methods and choices. It begins by explaining the philosophical context of my research design. I state my ontological perspective of constructionism, thus explaining my view of the nature of reality as an ongoing social construction, rather than any concrete entity that exists

⁴ To preserve anonymity, the acronym MECOS is a pseudonym, as are the full team name stated on the next page and all other job titles and abbreviations mentioned later.
independently of me, the researcher, or indeed my research participants. I also state my epistemological perspective of interpretivism. With this view, I subjectively interpret social action in the empirical site rather than objectively observing and measuring it.

As I did not have empirical access when beginning my research, chapter 3 continues by explaining how I found and gained access to a research site and why I deemed it suitable. The empirical site is known as the Multi Ethnic Community Support (MECOS) team and is part of the wider organisation of Countyshire County Council (CCC). The MECOS team was established to provide linguistic and cultural support within the county’s public service organisations to adults and children with limited or no English skills. This service is principally, though not exclusively, delivered in schools. During the course of my data generation, there were 17 people involved in the MECOS team, whose linguistic diversity was very relevant to my research questions. I therefore considered that the work undertaken at this empirical site and the people involved would provide a rich setting within which to conduct my study.

Chapter 3 continues by explaining how I arrived at my single case study research design. I explain the suitability of this research design from both a philosophical and a practical perspective. This explanation includes details of my sampling and recruitment of participants. I also discuss several potential desirable data generation methods before explaining methods that were actually possible. My final selection of one-to-one interviews, participant observation and respondent diaries were ultimately the methods determined by what was feasible for the MECOS team.

After presenting my chosen data generation methods, including their limitations, chapter 3 continues by presenting my chosen data analysis method and the limitations it imposed. As background to this choice, I also explain how I rejected my initial intention to use conversation analysis in favour of thematic content analysis, principally as a result of what I observed in the field. I then explain how I used the computer software program NVivo (version 9) to assist my analysis. More particularly, I explain my method of coding within this program and how the level of detail I used enabled me to arrive at an important finding for this thesis. Given all the foregoing considerations, decisions and actions regarding my methodological choices, I took similar care to ensure I conducted my research ethically. The penultimate section of chapter 3
documents this. Similarly, the chapter’s final section explains how I made every effort to establish a valid and reliable research project. This is in full recognition of the debate surrounding issues of validity and reliability for non-positivist projects, like mine.

Whilst generating data, I began my analysis. Therefore, in chapter 3, I reflect on the iterative nature of data generation and analysis. In particular, I explain how this iterative process led to my refining the wording of my initial research questions and informed my questioning in subsequent interviews. With the conclusion of my fieldwork and hence of chapter 3, I continued with my data analysis. Section 1.8 therefore provides an overview of this phase of my project, which is fully documented in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

1.8 Data analysis

As stated in section 1.6, this thesis addresses three main research questions. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 provide a detailed discussion of my findings, with reference to the apposite literature, addressing each of my research questions in turn.

The discussion in section 4.2 addresses the question of how and where cross-lingual communication is practised and experienced in the MECOS team. I provide a brief reminder of the MECOS team members who undertake cross-lingual communication as part of their day-to-day work. These are the non-native English-speaking (NNS) Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediaries (MELIs), the native English-speaking (NS) Educational Advisers (EAs) and the Team Leader (TL). I continue by describing the places where cross-lingual communication takes place, namely at head office, in schools and in other locations throughout Countyshire. I also explain who is involved in cross-lingual communication in these places. Naturally, MECOS team members communicate cross-lingually with each other. However, they also communicate with other people, such as schoolchildren, school staff, parents, employees of other organisations and the general public. I explain how my analysis of participants’ reports of their cross-lingual communication experiences found that they tacitly assume different sub-roles within their organisational role. Referring to apposite literature, I explain the significance of these sub-roles in participants’ cross-lingual communication practices and experiences.
Section 4.3 explores culture’s involvement with cross-lingual communication for MECOS team members. In analysing my interview and observation data, I refer to the concepts of culture and ICP theory presented in section 1.4. My analysis finds some involvement of the idea of national culture with cross-lingual exchanges within this team. However, it suggests there is a stronger relationship between cross-lingual exchanges and culture viewed at the level of Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) capital, more particularly at the level of cultural capital components. My exploration of the workings of Bourdieusian cultural capital in the MECOS team’s cross-lingual encounters enables me to explain culture’s involvement more precisely.

In chapter 5, I explore how my participants choose language and how they experience language and languaging in cross-lingual communication. Although all members of the MECOS team have English as a common language, this is not necessarily the language they use every time they communicate. My analysis therefore explains how language is chosen according to sub-role, context, and task, these being equivalent to Warren’s (2012) interpersonal relationships, setting and communicative intention. Furthermore I explain why languages other than the *lingua franca* are sometimes chosen. In exploring how language is experienced, I explain how NNSs experience the *lingua franca* as a range of different language registers. In so doing, their languaging capacity appears to vary according to the language register as well as the individual’s proficiency in the *lingua franca*. I also explain how the other language choices are experienced by all MECOS team members, why these experiences can be both negative and positive and what this means for the team.

My subsequent analysis of how participants experience languaging considers the phenomenon in two ways. Firstly I explain how languaging is experienced in terms of both how it feels to be languaging and how it feels to be on the receiving end of a colleague’s languaging efforts. Secondly, I explain how the positive and negative feelings arising from languaging relate to the success of languaging efforts and the meaning that is made as a result. In short, I suggest how feelings evoked through languaging may be associated with the outcome of cross-lingual communication exchanges. I conclude chapter 5 by analysing how MECOS team members acknowledge languaging and act upon it. Firstly, I explain forms of acknowledgement of languaging, for example, accent and intonation and an individual’s language
development. Secondly, I explain the action all team members take in response to their colleagues’ languaging, in order to minimise potential misunderstandings and support their language development. In this discussion, I also explain how the type of action taken in response to languaging can positively or adversely affect a person’s languaging experience and the relationship between this experience and the cross-lingual communication outcome.

Chapter 6 develops chapters 4 and 5 to explore how meaning is made in the MECOS team’s cross-lingual exchanges and sheds light on the extent to which team members are able to speak with their own voice. I begin by explaining the significance of the sub-roles adopted in interpersonal relationships for the meaning-making process. I then analyse the meaning-making strategies team members use to understand each other and make themselves understood. Here, I particularly refer to Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory, introduced in section 1.4, to explain the significance of sub-roles in team members’ choice of meaning-making methods. My explanation also draws on Ailon-Souday and Kunda’s (2003) concept of culture as a symbolic resource and Hall’s (1989; first published in 1976) concept of high-context and low-context cultures. With the latter concept, rather than using this in the same way as Hall to encapsulate national cultures, I apply the concept to the ‘small’ culture of the MECOS team and demonstrate its relevance in this context. My overall explanation is underpinned by Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of cultural capital. As I explore how the interaction of cultural capital components is involved in meaning-making for this team, so I explain how culture is operationalised in the meaning-making process.

The foregoing explanations all illustrate the interaction of cultural capital components in the meaning-making process. Finally, chapter 6 discusses one significant observation regarding the Bourdiesian concept of cultural capital. Here, I explain how cultural capital reserves may frustrate as well as facilitate cross-lingual communication. My analysis of two particular cross-lingual communication events experienced by two different MELIs suggests their capacity to speak is not purely determined by their linguistic proficiency. Indeed, they may or may not be afforded the power to speak according to the status they are perceived as having in the particular work contexts described. Chapter 6 concludes by recognising that combinations of cultural capital
components can hinder as well as benefit cross-lingual communication, depending on the social situation in which communication takes place.

1.9 Conclusion and thesis contribution

Having presented my data and discussed my findings, chapter 7 concludes my thesis by summarising the key findings and limitations of my study and identifying future research trajectories. I also fully detail the contributions made by this thesis, which I outline below.

This thesis makes its main intellectual contribution to the field of organisation studies through its novel application of Phipps’ (2007) person-centred concept of languaging to the domestic workplace. This offers insights into the complexity of linguistic diversity amongst one organisational team’s members. In so doing, this thesis identifies why language and languaging are important for this case of domestic organisation making and for how team members fulfil their duties.

This thesis makes further contributions to discussions in the fields of IB&M and DM by drawing upon and expanding aspects of Phipps’ (ibid.) conceptual framework. As I explained in section 1.3, IB&M and DM scholars recognise the interrelatedness of language and culture, albeit with differing views on how they should be handled. IB&M scholars argue for language and culture to be decoupled, whereas DM scholars tend to conflate linguistic diversity with cultural diversity. By drawing upon and expanding Phipps’ (ibid.) use of Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital, this thesis sheds light on culture’s involvement in cross-lingual communication between MECOS team members at a level of detail that remains unexplored in the literature I consulted. This enables me to follow recommendations by IB&M scholars to decouple language and culture. In exploring their interrelatedness, I gain an understanding of how language and culture interact in this team’s cross-lingual exchanges. This enables this thesis to make a further intellectual contribution to DM by arguing that DM scholars should consider language as a distinct marker of diversity so as not to render language problems as invisible. Language should not be subsumed under the umbrella of culture, since both are distinct phenomena involved in organisation making.
The final contribution made by this thesis is to expand on Phipps’ (2007) use of de Certeau’s (2011) theory of space as a practised place and extend its application to the concept of languaging and the field of organisation studies. Following de Certeau’s (ibid.: 117) assertion that "space is like the word when it is spoken", this thesis argues that language is a place. By using empirical evidence, it demonstrates how the word (or language) is transformed from a place to a space when it is spoken (or languaged) and what this means for the people involved in that process and their work within the organisation.

In the next chapter, I review the literature I consulted to situate my study, articulate my research questions and frame my investigation.
CHAPTER 2 Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

This thesis investigates how members of one multilingual team practise and experience cross-lingual communication at work in a domestic organisation. My method of consulting the apposite literature, reviewed in this chapter, followed Alvesson and Sandberg’s (2011) recommendation of problematisation. This required a two-pronged approach to my reading, enabling me to challenge the assumptions underlying the literature as well as identify gaps within it. I thus developed research questions that I considered would be interesting to the field of organisation studies, to which this thesis makes its principal contribution. This approach also enabled me to construct the conceptual framework for my empirical study. Furthermore, by problematising some of the assumptions underlying the bodies of literature reviewed in the following four sections of this chapter, this thesis also contributes to discussions in these fields and to extending the concepts used to frame my study.

Sections 2.2 to 2.4 review the literature from which I identified the research problem and developed my research questions. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 respectively review the international business and international management (IB&M) and diversity management (DM) literature I consulted. The domestic and international focus of the latter complements the uniquely international focus of the former. Furthermore, both highlight the significance of cultural diversity in the workplace, thus directing my attention to culture’s significance in my study. In section 2.4, I explore culture and its relationship with cross-lingual communication and formulate a concept of culture that is ontologically and epistemologically appropriate to my thesis. In applying this concept to review the intercultural communication (ICC) literature, I explain how intercultural pragmatics (ICP) theory supports my multidimensional conceptual framework in exploring cross-lingual communication as a means of social interaction. In viewing language as a social practice rather than merely linguistic code, I also consider the significance of language choice in my person-centred study.
In section 2.5 I construct the conceptual framework, which I use in answering my research questions. Central to this framework is Phipps’ (2007) concept of languaging. Phipps sees language as a social phenomenon for creating and sustaining interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, she argues that language and person are inseparably related through the lived experience of languaging. Phipps’ (ibid.) study is one of language learning and language education within the context of tourism. The workplace in my study is also a place where languaging, language learning and language education are undertaken. It is also a place where the employees being researched move between work locations, rather like tourists move between geographical locations. Therefore, this thesis makes a novel application and extension of Phipps’ concept to the workplace, arguing that it is as relevant to organisation studies as to tourism. Furthermore, Phipps’ concept of language as a personal asset rather than a functional tool enables me to challenge a key assumption underlying the use of mechanical solutions for cross-lingual communication problems presented in the IB&M literature, as outlined in section 1.3. Such mechanical solutions assume that language can be detached from people. In contrast, Phipps argues that language and people are inextricably linked.

To support her concept of languaging, Phipps (ibid.) draws on Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concepts of capital and habitus. Exploring these, I explain how the person-centred concept of habitus supports my view of cross-lingual communication at work as a person-centred practice. I then explain how the concept of capital enables me to conceptualise culture at a finer level of detail than that presented in the literature reviewed in section 2.4. I subsequently devised three research questions based on the literature reviewed in sections 2.2 to 2.5. In particular, these questions seek to address some of the gaps and challenge some of the underlying assumptions I identified in the literature. Furthermore, I considered I could answer them in the context of my empirical study. I present my research questions in section 2.6.

2.2 Cross-lingual communication: an IB&M perspective

As explained in section 1.2, my study is concerned with how members of a linguistically diverse team in one UK organisation communicate mainly, though not exclusively, in the lingua franca of English. Given Jack and Westwood’s (2009: 30)
assertion that the field of international business is adjacent to and even overlaps "a range of sub-discipline areas such as organisation theory (OT), human resources management (HRM) and organisational behaviour (OB)", I considered that IB&M research may also be relevant to domestic organisations. This section therefore explores the attention paid by the IB&M literature to linguistic diversity and cross-lingual communication at work. I follow Alvesson and Sandberg’s (2011) recommended method of problematisation in approaching this literature, identifying the attention lacking in and the assumptions underlying it. This enables me to formulate my research questions.

2.2.1 Attention to language in the workplace

Feely (2003: 210) laments "the dearth of business research on language" and Harzing et al. (2011) recognise that language is a largely neglected field in management studies. Fellow IB&M scholars critically explore the problem. Welch and Piekkari (2006: 421) criticise IB&M research, saying "if linguistic challenges are discussed, they are framed in terms of establishing equivalence of meaning between concepts across cultures". They attribute this to the "quantitative lens dominating IB research" (Welch and Piekkari, 2006: 421). When considering "the qualitative research interview, language is more than a translation issue" (ibid.: 422). Thus Welch and Piekkari (ibid.) appear to be suggesting that cross-lingual communication is about more than seeking the equivalence of words. Relatedly, regarding multinational companies (MNCs), Piekkari et al. (2005) criticise many studies of mergers and acquisitions (M&As): although these studies emphasise how communication helps to reduce employee resistance and achieve effective integration, they maintain a domestic context. Thus the domain of the MNC is frequently regarded as being unilingual. As a result, Piekkari et al. (ibid.) criticise scholars investigating cross-border M&As for frequently overlooking issues of language and communication competence.

When language difference is acknowledged as an issue, the problem is often regarded as one of code. That is to say, language is seen merely as a communication tool, rather than as a social practice. One study by Welch et al. (2005: 11) notes that many managers view language difference as a "mechanical translation problem" that
increasingly sophisticated, though flawed, technology can solve. Welch et al. (2005) also note how an organisation may deal with the language issue by adopting a designated company language. However, this is arguably another mechanical solution, given its simplistic aim to resolve issues of language difference by merely substituting one linguistic code for another. Such a solution may superficially overcome the language problem. However, Vaara et al. (2005) argue that viewing the language problem in this way may have social repercussions for the organisation. Their investigation into the adoption of a common corporate language in a merger between two MNCs draws attention to associated organisational and interpersonal power relations. This is because the organisation’s formal hierarchy was usurped by an informal hierarchy that emerged through degrees of competence in the corporate lingua franca.

As well as these two mechanical solutions to the language problem, a third solution can be to use expatriates to facilitate knowledge transfer between different branches of MNCs. However, Buckley et al. (2005: 48) argue that successful knowledge transfer requires shared social knowledge as well as a shared language. Thus they clearly recognise the limitations of considering the language problem as merely one of code. MNCs see expatriates, with their social knowledge of the organisation coupled with their knowledge of the subsidiary’s local language, as the ideal solution for bridging the language barrier and ensuring knowledge transfer within MNCs. Nevertheless, the expatriate solution may arguably still be a mechanical one, if expatriation is used simplistically as a means of substituting a local manager speaking one language with a manager from head office speaking another.

This expatriate solution has further downsides, not least the costs of relocation and subsequent repatriation, as identified by Mayerhofer et al. (2004). Furthermore, Feely and Harzing (2003: 47) argue that this solution "does not eliminate the language barrier, but merely shifts it down a level" within the organisational hierarchy. Relatedly, Piekkari et al. (2005) note, when employing a common corporate language solution, senior managers may have sufficient linguistic competence, but more junior employees may lack sufficient skills to interact effectively. Similarly, Barner-Rasmussen and Aarnio’s (2011) exploration of language use in MNC subsidiaries found that senior managers are less likely to experience language problems in their jobs than their more
junior counterparts. Language is thus considered to be an issue throughout the organisational hierarchy, regardless of managers’ linguistic competence or the imposition of a common corporate language.

In fact, Feely and Harzing’s (2003) aforementioned assessment of "Language management in multinational companies" also criticises the other two mechanical solutions for surmounting the language barrier. Firstly, the use of translation tools, including "external resources such as translators and interpreters […] is by no means an end to the language barrier" (ibid.: 44). Hiring language professionals can be expensive and their effectiveness may be limited by their lack of understanding of the organisational context (which Buckley et al. (2005) call social knowledge). Secondly, the common corporate language solution, in addition to the problems noted earlier, may not always be possible and is in any event a long-term strategy. The assumption underlying the foregoing mechanical solutions is that language, as code, can be detached from the people using it. This thesis challenges this assumption, arguing that language and people are inextricably connected. Thus, I argue that language should be considered as a social practice and not merely a code.

My argument follows two of the "three formative turns" (Brannen et al., 2014: 499) taken recently by IB&M research. The first turn has been in "the decoupling of language from culture" (ibid.). As I explain in section 2.4, this is also a crucial point on which this thesis turns. The second turn has been in "the shift of level of analysis from that of the individual to the organisation" (ibid.). Although this thesis analyses cross-lingual communication between individuals, it is with the intention of understanding how it plays out in the workplace and the significance of individuals’ experiences for the wider organisation.

In line with the second turn, Janssens and Steyaert (2014: 623) "point to the possibility of conceiving language as a social practice rather than a discrete entity". By this they mean that language should not be viewed just as a code, but rather as "a massive collection of heterogeneous constructions, each with affinities to different contexts, and in constant structural adaptation to usage" (Bybee and Hopper, cited in Janssens and Steyaert, 2014: 625). In short, language should be considered as a set of repertoires for communication that are mobilised in social interactions. Relatedly, Steyaert and
Janssens (2015) advise cross-cultural communication scholars to progress from trying to understand communication barriers and reasons for moving from one language to another, towards understanding how speakers mobilise their linguistic skills to express their own voice. Thus these scholars are challenging the assumptions that underpin the conceptualisation of the language problem as one of code. They are doing this by turning their attention to "performative aspects of language(s) and its role in constituting, enabling and, in some cases, debilitating MNC networks" (Brannen et al. 2014: 497). Thus, IB&M scholars are encouraged to become interested in language as a social practice in the workplace.

The foregoing overview charts some of the recent discussion concerning IB&M scholarship. It thereby highlights language as a distinct part of organisational life and a distinct element of diversity. However, understandably, this discussion is within the context of international business and management. Language issues are discussed as they arise within the context of organisational life in MNCs, as part of M&As and as part of doing or managing business internationally. However, little attention is paid to the language issue in the wider organisational literature. This is despite Guirdham’s (2011: 16 emphasis added) study of communication across cultures in the workplace, which cites Tung in noting that "diversity in domestic organisations is a growing concern, ‘as more and more minorities are brought into domestic workforces’". This thesis provides empirical support for Guirdham’s observation, being concerned with how the practice of cross-lingual communication plays out within the social context of one domestic workplace employing migrants. I consider linguistic diversity in domestic organisations further in section 2.3. For now, I continue by focusing on the attention paid by IB&M scholars to linguistic ability when considering the use of a lingua franca in the workplace, as this is the main solution used in my study. In so doing, I consider why such attention may be just as relevant to domestic as to international organisations.

2.2.2 Attention to linguistic ability in the lingua franca

The people employed in the Multi Ethnic Community Support (MECOS) team being researched have different levels of ability in the lingua franca of English, having acquired their skills in different ways. Therefore, there are three reasons why this thesis
needs to consider linguistic ability. Firstly, I need to address a gap in the extant management literature, which pays little attention to this issue. Secondly, I need to understand how the adequacy of applicants’ language skills was assessed at the recruitment stage. Thirdly, I need to understand the significance of ability in a language when it is used as a resource in practising and experiencing cross-lingual communication. Language skills acquired through formal education are usually evidenced by certificates of qualification. However, a person may acquire new language skills by residing in a country and learning the language through day-to-day use. Therefore, it may not be possible to certify the level of ability achieved. This method is highly likely for migrant workers and is evidenced in my data. Therefore, organisations recruiting migrant workers may have a problem in initially confirming their level of expertise in the organisation’s *lingua franca*.

To address the first issue regarding the gap in extant management literature, I turn to the attention paid by labour market studies to linguistic ability issues. In particular, Jack (2010: 11) notes "typically, in labour market studies, information on language proficiency is obtained through the self-reporting of the immigrant⁵". Such a measure of linguistic ability cannot necessarily be deemed consistent or reliable since migrants often measure themselves against other migrants rather than native speakers. Thus migrants may under- or overestimate their language proficiency. This observation also suggests that an individual's view of their own ability may even change according to the people against whom they are measuring themselves. Such a subjective and potentially fluctuating measure of linguistic ability could therefore pose a problem of uncertainty to both domestic and international organisations. Jack’s (*ibid.*) work is, in part, focused on labour market economics. As such, it is particularly interested in the significance of linguistic proficiency for labour market outcomes for migrants. This resonates with my thesis, which is interested in the significance of linguistic proficiency for cross-lingual communication experiences at work.

The second issue of assessing linguistic ability relates specifically to my empirical site, where recruitment interviews would have required some form of ability assessment. I therefore need to understand the potential problems facing interviewers in making this

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⁵ This obtaining of information is in the context of labour studies research, not HRM practice.
assessment. Regardless of any measurement, a person’s linguistic ability also depends on the extent to which they are able to operationalise their qualification or stated level of expertise. When recruitment interviews are conducted in an organisation’s *lingua franca*, which is not the interviewee’s first language, the interviewee is required to operationalise their skills in that *lingua franca*. However, their linguistic performance may be affected by things other than their linguistic ability. In their study of qualitative interviewing, Welch and Piekkari (2006: 428) note that “it may not be easy to judge whether an interviewee is non-communicative due to a lack of confidence in the interview language, or simply because he or she has a retiring and taciturn personality”. The same problem may arguably arise in recruitment interviews. Feelings of confidence and personality traits are thus seen as associated with cross-lingual communication performance, as well as levels of linguistic ability.

The foregoing insights suggest that the cross-lingual communication issue is present even before a candidate is recruited into the organisation. Organisations may seek to minimise problems of linguistic ability by language-sensitive recruitment. Peltokorpi and Vaara (2014) acknowledge that it is often easier and cheaper for organisations to solve any language problem by recruiting employees with the appropriate linguistic ability. However, they warn that little knowledge can be transferred if employees thus hired do not have sufficient skills with which to fulfil their organisational role. This warning echoes the dangers of seeing language as mere code, as discussed in section 2.2.1.

The third issue of linguistic ability potentially arises post recruitment. Therefore, I need to understand the nature of difficulties that may arise. Vaara *et al.* (2005) provide one example in their study of a Finnish and Swedish bank merger. Here, they note that senior Finnish managers often experienced difficulty when trying to communicate their views and expertise, particularly when writing reports, in the common corporate language of Swedish. As a result, many felt robbed of their professional competence. Whilst these Finnish managers were not new recruits to the organisation, they were arguably newly recruited to communicating in a shared *lingua franca* that was not their first language. As such, this problem could equally apply to domestic organisations recruiting people who do not have the organisation’s *lingua franca* as their first language.
To add further complexity, Feely (2003) notes that, when a person is communicating using a *lingua franca* that is not their first language, both first and second language users face challenges, albeit different ones. There are three key problems that second language users may experience: firstly, the problem of a failure of rhetorical skills. For example, Feely (*ibid.*: 216) questions whether a manager can really manage if they are "a competent second language user [who] may be capable of clear communication, but [who is] robbed of the interpersonal skills of humour, negotiation, persuasion and even coercion". As a managerial role requires discussion and negotiation, this problem could reduce the manager’s ability to manage the conversation, causing them to lose self-confidence and potentially even the respect of their staff. Following my discussion in section 2.2.1 of the language problem throughout the organisational hierarchy, I would also argue that non-managerial staff could face the same problem of reduced ability to manage their conversations with managers and colleagues. Therefore, they could also suffer similar losses of self-confidence and respect.

Secondly comes the problem of second language users potentially losing track of a discussion, causing them embarrassment. The strong need to avoid such embarrassment may cause a manager to commit to agreements s/he has not fully understood. Again, I would argue that this may also be the case for more junior employees. Thirdly, a second language user’s restricted language ability may also compromise their authority when talking to a first language user, who can enjoy the benefit of the language as a tool of influence. "The result of such a divergence of power and authority will be affective conflict and disputes between the two parties" (*ibid.*: 217). Whilst this is clearly a problem for managers, I would argue it could equally pose a problem to relationships between more junior employees.

First language users face three different problems associated with the aforementioned issues. Firstly, they may experience miscommunication resulting from their own assumptions of what the second language speaker is trying to say. Feely (*ibid.*) warns that communication received "from non-native speakers will [often] be confused, incomplete and inexplicit". As a result, "first language speakers will act to recast, pad out and filter these incoming messages to make them congruent with their expectations and beliefs. Such are the seeds of misunderstanding […]" (*ibid.*).
Secondly, Feely (2003) notes the problem of code-switching, arguing that when second language speakers move between their first and second language when communicating with each other, such code-switching may make first language speakers feel excluded from the conversation; they may also perceive the practice as conspiratorial. Relatedly, this thesis notes how definitions of code-switching vary. This concept has been studied in depth by sociolinguistics scholars such as Gumperz, Hymes, Schieffelin and Auer. Woolard (2004: 73) broadly defines code-switching as "an individual’s use of two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange". However, she notes how Gumperz further classifies code-switching as either intersentential (between sentences) or intrasentential (within sentences). Relatedly, Auer (1999: 2) suggests "a possible continuum from ‘code switching’ to ‘mixed codes’". He argues that single words borrowed from one language being inserted into the main language being used for conversation "contribute to the formation of mixed codes" (ibid.: 17). In this regard, Muysken (2001: 1) defines code-switching as "the rapid succession of several languages in a single speech event" and code-mixing as instances of intrasentential switching. Noting these aforementioned arguments, this thesis uses the term ‘code-switching’ when referring to intersentential switching and ‘code-mixing’ when referring to intrasentential switching.

Thirdly, Feely (2003) notes the problem of attribution. This may arise when the first language user overestimates the fluency of the second, thus assuming greater cultural proximity between them than is the case. However, when the second language speaker responds in a way that is inconsistent with the first language user’s assumption, the ensuing confusion could "generate a sense of mistrust and even dislike between the two parties" (ibid.: 217). Kassis-Henderson (2005: 75) echoes the problem noting that, when people work in a lingua franca that is not everyone’s first language, there is a danger of a "fundamental misassumption that we all speak English and therefore we all understand each other". Parties may thus falsely assume that they share the same context and the same interpretation. Similarly, Usunier and Lee (2013: 84) state that an international business context may mislead communicating parties into considering themselves as culturally similar when they are not: "similarities are often illusions, especially when foreigners seemingly share an ‘international culture’".
Furthermore, when communicating via a *lingua franca*, parties may assume "that the same words in the same expressions have the same connotations" (Kassis-Henderson, 2005: 75). Usunier and Lee (2013) refer to the linguist Edward Sapir to warn against this assumption. Sapir argued that "language influences our way of observing, describing and eventually constructing our reality or world view (ibid.: 77)." Indeed, the works of Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf led to what is known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. This hypothesis, also referred to as linguistic relativism, proposes that "the way in which we think about the world is influenced by the language we use to talk about it" (Duranti, 1997: 60). In short, language affects how we perceive reality (Duranti, 2009; Tietze *et al*., 2003). Here, Whorf argued that the different grammars people use point them towards different types of observation and different evaluations of similar observations. In this way, people as observers are not equivalent but necessarily arrive at different views of the world (Duranti, 2009). Usunier and Lee (2013) argue this theory may be less valid in this age of extensive travel that affords people opportunities to borrow language and culture. However, it remains useful in alerting communicating parties that even if words "are translated with no apparent difficulty, [they] offer only an illusion of sharing in the same vision of reality" (ibid.: 83).

Charles (2006) finds other communication challenges between native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) of English as a *lingua franca* that are associated with linguistic ability. Respondents in one MNC suggest that NSs’ sophisticated language poses comprehension difficulties for NNSs. Furthermore, misunderstandings are deemed to be caused by less than adequate language skills on the part of NNSs. This view of cross-lingual communication from the perspective of both the NS and the NNS further suggests that *lingua franca* usage is hard work for both parties. NNSs have to work hard in communicating in the English language (or other *lingua franca*) as well as in understanding NSs, whose own communication skills may leave something to be desired. Therefore, any shortcomings in communication are not solely one party’s responsibility.

This section has explained why levels of ability in the *lingua franca* and general communication skills are significant for interaction between individuals. I therefore argue that cross-lingual communication needs to be problematised from the perspective
of all communicating parties and not just treated as a problem of linguistic (in)ability for NNSs of the shared language. This is therefore the perspective taken by this thesis. Given the organisational context of cross-lingual communication in my study, I also need to consider how such interaction via a *lingua franca* might be significant for the organisation concerned. Therefore, I now explore the attention paid by scholars to how cross-lingual communication via a *lingua franca* may result in repercussions for the wider organisation.

### 2.2.3 Attention to organisational repercussions of linguistic ability

IB&M scholars identify problems arising from cross-lingual communication via a *lingua franca* which may have significance for the organisation as well as individual employees. Buckley *et al.* (2005: 55) assert that "the success of knowledge transfer depends on the level of the language skills of both managers and shopfloor workers". Thus, both knowledge transferor and transferee need to have sufficient language skills for explaining and understanding the task at hand. Otherwise, there is arguably a higher risk of a task being misunderstood and incorrectly performed. This in turn entails risk for the organisation’s day-to-day operations.

Another problem recognised by Kassis-Henderson (2005) and Charles (2006) is the difficulty of making small talk in a language that is not a person’s first language. Kassis-Henderson (2005) remarks that small talk is important for relationship building between team members. Similarly, Charles (2006) notes that interviewees in her study within a banking organisation found it straightforward to learn banking terminology in another language. However, finding appropriate expressions in small talk and expressing opinions in meetings proved difficult. Relationship building and discussions in meetings are both an integral part of organisational life. Therefore, difficulties with small talk may be significant for the organisation’s operations and should not necessarily be trivialised as chit chat.

Fatigue from working in a foreign language is another problem noted by Volk *et al.* (2014). Fatigue may arguably impact on an individual’s performance, not just in the *lingua franca* but in their job as a whole. Volk *et al.*’s (*ibid.*: 865) MNC-based study of
"the effects of foreign languages use on cognitive processes ‘inside’ the individual […] explain[s] how foreign language use results in higher working memory load". Thus, they propose that where a common corporate language is used, "foreign language processing increases organizational members’ working memory load, leaving fewer processing capacities for other cognitive tasks" (Volk et al., 2014: 867). They use one example of board members who may be required to make decisions whilst operating in a foreign language, arguing that these board members will tire due to the toll taken by increased cognitive processing.

Welch et al. (2005) voice two further concerns. Firstly, they cite an example of employees discarding important information written in the common corporate language of English because they were unable to use it due to insufficient linguistic competence. This shows how potentially useful information may not be properly disseminated, hence affecting the performance of personnel across the wider organisation. Secondly, they warn that where cross-lingual communication is negatively experienced, there may be social as well as performance implications for the organisation’s employees. "Social exclusion through language can […] affect the individual’s sense of belongingness […] thus affecting attempts to develop corporate cohesion across diverse operations" (ibid.: 18). Thus, a lack of linguistic ability amongst individuals may have repercussions for the wider organisation’s operations.

The foregoing examples all illustrate the point made by Charles (2006) that language matters are significant for organisations as a whole; they are not just challenges for individuals. Furthermore, she considers that managers should be concerned with the language issue, arguably as much as the academics I have cited. Nevertheless, these academics suggest that further research is also needed. Next, I identify key gaps in the IB&M literature that motivate my research within the field of organisation studies. Furthermore, I note the key assumptions underlying earlier research resulting from the critiques of some IB&M scholars, which this thesis challenges.
2.2.4 IB&M research: knowledge gaps and underlying assumptions

My foregoing review explores some of the problems associated with cross-lingual communication in the workplace as identified in IB&M research. However, the literature I have consulted tends to focus more on the functional linguistic problems encountered by managers and less on how these problems are encountered amongst employees lower down in the organisational hierarchy. Furthermore, these problems have naturally only been explored as occurring within MNCs or as part of M&As. No attention is paid to domestic or smaller organisations or even smaller organisational units and there are no references to any public sector organisations. That said, Volk et al. (2014) do recognise that their research has implications for any multilingual organisation, including domestic organisations employing people from multiple language backgrounds.

Moreover, although this literature warns that the ‘mechanical solution’ of a lingua franca is no linguistic panacea, it nevertheless tends to focus on language itself (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014). The assumption underlying this approach is that language is treated as a code rather than social practice, where people are using language to create and maintain relationships. Furthermore, there is an assumption that language, as code, can be detached from the people using it. Consequently, in considering the problems of ‘code cracking’, this literature can overlook the struggle experienced by the ‘code crackers’, these being the people traversing the language barrier in their everyday cross-lingual encounters. Therefore, in their consideration of people primarily as ‘language vehicles’, these studies are largely language-centred rather than human-centred (ibid.).

As stated in section 1.2, my thesis is a person-centred study of language in the workplace. I thus explore the significance of individuals’ experience of cross-lingual communication for themselves, their communicative exchanges and the team within the organisation employing them. In so doing, I problematise cross-lingual communication in a significant way. I challenge the assumption underlying mechanical solutions to the problem that language, as code, can be detached from the people using it. In making this challenge, I argue that language and people are inextricably connected and therefore language should be considered as a social practice and not merely a code. My argument follows Saussure’s (cited in Tietze et al., 2003: 28) claim that "a language never exists
even for a moment except as a social fact, for it is a semiological phenomenon”. As Tietze et al. (2003: 28) explain, "semiology sees language and meaning making as essentially social processes”. For this reason, this thesis problematises cross-lingual communication from the perspective of all communicating parties, arguing that problems of linguistic (in)ability for NNSs of the shared language are everyone’s concern.

Whilst the foregoing IB&M studies provide a rich resource to inform my research, they provide limited insight into a domestic organisational context, as pertains to my study. I therefore turn to the DM literature, to see what forays it has made into exploring this issue.

2.3 Language as a marker of workplace diversity

2.3.1 Initial perspectives on linguistic diversity

Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) warn that sharing a common language does not necessarily ensure successful communication. This is because, as explained in section 2.2.2, people from different cultural backgrounds using a shared language do not necessarily share views and cultural meanings. Furthermore, from a "deeply rooted vision of language as an independently existing object [arises] the belief that there is an easy linguistic remedy for inter-ethnic communication problems" (ibid.: 131). These scholars therefore argue that, whilst a common language may simplify communication, it is by no means a ‘cure-all’ remedy. Furthermore, this argument appears to be based on their implied rejection of the assumption underlying the common language solution that language exists independently of the people using it.

Relatedly, Kassis-Henderson (2005), referenced in section 2.2, conducted a specific study of "Language diversity in international management teams”. Here, she acknowledges that "working across languages gives rise to obstacles and tensions and has significant consequences on teamwork and relationship building" (ibid.: 67). However, she argues that "if language diversity is managed effectively, it is a key factor contributing to teambuilding and group cohesion" (ibid.). Kassis-Henderson’s positive
view of linguistic diversity arguably arises from her considering language as part of socialisation processes and teambuilding rather than existing independently of these activities.

One of the keys to effective management of language diversity lies in her finding that, where a lingua franca is used in the workplace, "although such teams are monolingual on a surface level [...] individuals are, in fact, operating across languages as in multilingual contexts but are often unaware that they are doing so" (Kassis-Henderson, 2005: 79). She thus appears to be arguing that cross-lingual communication inevitably underlies any communication via a shared language. This is a key premise on which this thesis turns. Furthermore, Kassis-Henderson (ibid.: 75) also states that, in conversing via a lingua franca, "team members continue to use diverse expressive and interpretive mechanisms derived from their respective language systems". Therefore, effective management means being aware that, although people may hear the same thing in a shared language, they may not share the same interpretation of the message. Thus, she calls for language diversity (or similarity) not to be conflated with cultural diversity (or similarity). For this reason, she argues that language and culture are distinct, albeit interrelated, types of diversity and should be studied and managed as such. This decoupling of language from culture is another key argument on which this thesis turns and is discussed further in sections 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6.

Kassis-Henderson’s (ibid.) aforementioned study explicitly refers to an international management setting. However, as cited in section 2.2.1, Guirdham (2011) argues that diversity in domestic organisations is a growing concern. Her insight therefore suggests that the issue of linguistic diversity warrants consideration by domestic organisations and scholars of organisation studies. Guirdham explains that expatriate numbers are likely to decrease due to the rising cost of expatriation packages. Furthermore, she warns the changing workforce demographic requires a greater emphasis on the domestic issue of diversity rather than the international one. An example of this is reported on the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development’s website. Here, Elizabeth Truss, Environment Secretary, states that Britain is actively seeking "migrant workers from the EU to fill unskilled jobs in the agricultural sector" (Lewis, 2014). Since no other country within the EU has English as its first language, such migrant workers and their UK colleagues inevitably face the challenge of cross-lingual communication within
domestic organisations. Managers therefore need to consider this challenge as relates to this linguistic diversity of their organisations.

Starting from this premise, it seems reasonable to assume that language would be a marker of diversity of interest to both DM scholars and practitioners. However, I found little evidence of this in the DM literature I consulted. Furthermore, I found some criticism of the ontologically objectivist and epistemologically positivist perspective of diversity adopted within the literature, which is at odds with the constructionist, interpretivist perspective of this thesis, as explained in section 3.2. I now explore these problems as they relate to this thesis.

2.3.2 Dimensions of diversity

"The term ‘diversity management’ can be traced back to 1987" (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000: S20) when the US Hudson Institute published a report entitled Workforce 2000. This report gave rise to both scholarly and practitioner interest in diversity management in stating that, by the year 2000, the majority of the US workforce would consist of ‘minority groups’ and would not be dominated by the ‘native’ white male. The question therefore arose as to how this ‘new’ heterogeneous workforce could be managed (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000; Zanoni et al., 2010). The key to answering this question appears to be in the way diversity is conceptualised. Litvin (1997: 199) explains that texts on organisational behaviour tended to conceptualise diversity as a set of primary and secondary dimensions: "the texts generally stated that there are six primary dimensions of diversity: age, ethnicity, gender, physical attributes/abilities race and sexual orientation". These primary dimensions are essentially "immutable differences" (Northcraft and Matteson, cited in Litvin, 1997: 200) "that make up the essence of who we are as human beings" (Moorhead and Griffin, cited in Litvin, ibid.). Secondary dimensions are non-permanent aspects of diversity that we can change during our lives. These are arguably numerous, although Litvin (ibid.: 199) identifies eight, including "educational background, […] religious beliefs and work experience".

More recently, diversity is still seen as dimensionalised, although "more abstract constructs have already begun to percolate through the literature" (Harrison and Sin,
2006: 199). For example, some researchers propose ‘surface’ versus ‘deep’ levels of diversity, which may otherwise be defined as ‘visible’ versus ‘invisible’ levels. Nevertheless, Harrison and Sin (ibid.) argue that "diversity as a viable construct in research needs to be accompanied by some adjective or modifier". However, their examples of adjectives or modifiers include ethnicity, age, gender, thereby suggesting the persistence of Litvin’s (1997) dimensions. Thus, DM becomes the process by which people differing along the lines of these dimensions are managed. Whether considering diversity in terms of dimensions or more abstract constructs, language remains conspicuous by its absence. Indeed, if language were included, would it be as a primary or secondary dimension? I would argue it is potentially both. Language gained through education or socialisation would appear to be a secondary dimension. However, as I explain in sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2, as a language is acquired, so it becomes an inextricable part of who we are. Thus, language could be construed as a primary dimension of diversity. Either way, its absence from the DM literature is a concern for this thesis.

The reason for this absence remains unclear. However, the root of any explanation may lie in how diversity management emerged as an economic concern. In the mid-1990s, firms were warned that lack of immediate attention to managing diversity would jeopardise their organization’s performance or image (Lorbiecki and Jack, 2000). Firms were thus led to believe that diversity management affected the bottom line. This led to diversity being "conceptualised as a corporate asset, in terms of contributing indirectly to the performance of the firm" (Prasad and Mills, 1997: 10, original emphasis). Despite mixed support from academics for this view, "the popular press continues to endorse the notion that greater workplace diversity translates into greater workplace productivity" (ibid.). The problem with valuing difference in terms of its effect on a firm’s bottom line is that it "inevitably leads to a focus on differences which are deemed ‘relevant’" (Tatli, 2011: 247). If, as explained in section 2.2.1, organisations and DM scholars believe that cross-lingual communication via a lingua franca eradicates any language difference, I would argue that could be one reason why language difference is not considered to be a ‘relevant’ dimension of diversity. Furthermore, there appears to be an assumption underlying this DM literature that language exists separately from the people using it to communicate. As explained in section 2.2.4, this thesis challenges this assumption. In support of my argument, I found studies suggesting that language
diversity is not problem-free. Furthermore, they appear to suggest that language and people are inextricably linked. I discuss two of these studies below.

2.3.3 Linguistic diversity: an overlooked dimension?

In the first example, Zanoni and Janssens' (2007: 1381) empirical study investigates a Belgian hospital that recruits Turkish and Moroccan women to cope with the increasing cultural diversity among patients. When necessary, these women also translate between doctors and patients. All communication in the hospital is in Dutch. Although the first language of these women is not stated, whatever it is, cross-lingual communication is clearly happening between them and either the patients or hospital staff. Nevertheless, the hospital staff seem to consider that these women effectively eradicate the language difference and thus that no issues arise from linguistic diversity. However, one woman says that when "the doctor wants detailed information about where it hurts […] or people want to be reassured before an operation […] if they get angry, or if they don’t agree with what I say … I try to make the translation softer … You can’t translate literally […] I try to… use a bit of tact" (quoted in ibid.: 1390). This respondent appears to suggest that she experiences difficulties associated with the linguistic diversity of the situation. Zanoni and Janssens do not consider this experience in terms of how it may affect the respondent or her interlocutors. However, employees in the organisation nonetheless appear to consider that problems of linguistic diversity are resolved by these new recruits.

In the second example, Ogbonna and Harris (2006) analyse relationships between ethnically diverse employees, to explore the consequences of this diversity for the people involved. Although their study takes ethnicity as one of diversity’s dimensions, they note that "relationship difficulties are accentuated where communication is frustrated by linguistic or paralinguistic differences between the ingroups and outgroups" (ibid.: 383). Thus, perceived or actual language differences may increase tension and group dysfunction. They go on to say, ironically, that "the ‘business case’ [for diversity] may provide the justification for not recruiting diverse groups since such

6 The manner of speaking, including gesture and facial expression (rather than the lexical content of what is being said).
groups are [...] likely to encounter social difficulties (including social and cultural differences as well as linguistic and paralinguistic problems) which may hamper organizational efficiency” (Ogbonna and Harris, 2006: 383). The foregoing extracts thus suggest that linguistic diversity is not something that organisations ignore, even if the DM literature tends to. Linguistic diversity appears to be conflated here with ethnic and/or cultural diversity. However, as explained in section 2.2.1, IB&M scholars recognise the need to decouple language from culture. This thesis pursues this argument in the field of organisation studies. Therefore I argue that DM scholars should consider doing the same.

The foregoing discussion finds two problems with the representation of linguistic diversity in the DM literature I explored. The first problem is the assumption that language is separate from the people using it to communicate. As such, it is selectively isolated from study and potentially disregarded. Yet, both the above studies suggest that linguistic diversity issues are being experienced by the people involved. Therefore, there appears to be some contradiction between the assumption DM scholars are making and what studies report is happening. This thesis challenges this assumption and argues that DM scholars should do the same. My argument finds support from Litvin (1997), in the paper discussed earlier, and Yanaprasart (2015). Litvin (1997: 206) suggests any theory of diversity should be considering individuals as “evolving and multidimensional […] rather than as unidimensional representatives of demographic categories”. Yanaprasart (2015) acknowledges the reluctance of organisations to include language in their diversity management portfolio. Nevertheless, she argues that language is indeed a distinct element of diversity in organisations. Furthermore, it is time to view multilingualism as an organisational asset, since increasing professional mobility means more and more people are working together without sharing the same language.

The second problem is DM scholars’ conflation of language with race, ethnicity or culture. In being subsumed within these discussions, language is potentially rendered invisible. In contrast, IB&M scholars criticise the conflation of language with culture, arguing that these should be decoupled. These two opposing views are important to this thesis since they nevertheless agree that the concept of culture is omnipresent. I therefore need to consider what culture is and how it relates to cross-lingual communication. After all, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, explained in section 2.2.2, posits
that cross-lingual communication does not take place within a cultural vacuum. Therefore, in the following section I explore how scholars conceptualise culture. In so doing I continue to follow Alvesson and Sandberg’s (2011) method of problematisation as I challenge the assumptions underlying these concepts. This enables me to establish an appropriate concept of culture for this thesis.

2.4 Conceptualising culture

To explore how culture relates to cross-lingual communication, I will first provide a definition of culture for use in this thesis. There is no single definition; anthropologists alone propose more than 164 (Schneider et al., 2014). Furthermore, defining culture hinges on how it is conceptualised. Well-known studies of culture such as Hofstede’s *Culture’s Consequences* (2003) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s *Riding the Waves of Culture* (2012) conceptualise culture from an epistemologically positivist and ontologically objectivist perspective, claiming that it is a set of homogeneous behavioural traits rooted in nations and thus delimited by geographical territorial boundaries. Put simply, culture ‘is’. However, adversaries of this perspective conceptualise culture as being a process that is continually "in the making" (Jack et al. 2008: 875). They see culture as heterogeneous; continuously evolving as each individual makes their ‘route’ through social life, rather than being ‘rooted’ in any "homeland" (Clifford, 1997: 12). Indeed, in taking issue with the reductionist approach that shackles culture to notions of ethnicity and nation, Holliday (1999) argues for culture to be conceptualised as a process of social construction that explains cohesive behaviour within small social groups.

Given the above dichotomy, for this thesis to make any meaningful correlation between culture and cross-lingual communication, it has to state how culture is conceptualised, given my ontological and epistemological commitments as outlined in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. Therefore, I now present some objectivist, positivist and constructionist,
interpretivist perceptions on culture\(^7\), in order to explain how I conceptualise culture and why I challenge other conceptualisations.

### 2.4.1 An objectivist, positivist perspective on culture

Foundational works on culture, as it relates to organising, tend to focus on cultural difference as being one of the major obstacles to successful intercultural communication at work. Hall (1989) broadly classifies culture according to two national types: high-context and low-context. Warren (2012) neatly summarises Hall’s concept by explaining that people from high-context cultures have greater levels of shared understanding and thus have a less direct communication style\(^8\). In contrast, people from low-context cultures have lower levels of shared understanding and therefore their communication style is more direct and explicit. Scholars such as Hofstede (2003) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) attempt to elucidate and quantify cultural difference, producing national cultural typologies intended to assist cross-cultural business dealings. Hofstede (2003) argues that culture consists of five dimensions of national difference that remain stable over time. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) identify seven dimensions, differently named than those of Hofstede, but rooted in the same objectivist ontology and positivist epistemology and similarly delimited by national geographical boundaries. Such nationally determinist models of culture, particularly that of Hofstede (2003), have subsequently proven irresistible to many scholars of IB&M and, as I shall explain in section 2.5.2, intercultural communication. This may well be because they pin culture down as "something self-contained and stable that can be identified and generalised" (Bjerregaard et al., 2009: 207). Culture is thus simplified into packages of generalisable behaviour.

However, such simplification on Hofstede’s part is comprehensively problematised by McSweeney (2002), who argues that Hofstede’s cultural model is conceptually and methodologically flawed. Conceptually, McSweeney (ibid.: 92) criticises the model for its endorsement of "national cultural determinism". He argues that, whilst a national

\(^{7}\)The dichotomous presentation of ontological and epistemological perspectives on culture in section 2.4 is intended purely as a heuristic to illustrate contrasting positions on the ontological and epistemological continua. These continua are discussed more fully in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

\(^{8}\)I refer to Hall (1989) in greater detail in section 6.3.4.
culture may be assumed, it is not necessarily responsible for causing unique patterns of behaviour among a nation’s people. Furthermore, Hofstede’s concept of culture as "'mental programming'[or] ‘software of the mind’" (McSweeney, 2002: 92) is fundamentally flawed in its assumption that culture is a fait accompli of early socialisation. The notion that we are all programmed with national culture before we become adults takes no account of our continued socialisation throughout the greater proportion of our lives.

Methodologically, McSweeney criticises Hofstede for basing his concept on several flawed assumptions, three of which are particularly relevant to this thesis. Firstly, in situating his study within one organisation – IBM – Hofstede assumes that the same organisational culture prevails for every IBM employee, whatever their occupational category or geographical location. McSweeney argues that there is much literature recognising multiple cultures in organisations. Organisational culture is thus neither singular nor constant and therefore cannot necessarily be indicative of any national culture. Secondly, Hofstede claims to have identified national cultural tendencies in a micro-local setting. McSweeney argues the study was of a US-owned high-tech company employing middle-class personnel. Therefore the limited segment of national populations represented by Hofstede’s data could hardly represent entire national societies. Thirdly, Hofstede claims his questionnaire responses were created by national culture. McSweeney (ibid.) argues that any similarities and differences attributed to nations failed to consider the possibility that respondents could have manipulated their answers, given their prior knowledge of the end purpose of the surveys.

Such a systematic challenge of the assumptions underlying the aforementioned model of national culture explains why it is misguided. Furthermore, given my constructionist ontological and interpretivist epistemological positions, as explained in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2, an objectivist, positivist view of culture is problematic for this thesis.

However, there are IB&M scholars who develop a broader concept of culture than this. For example, Schneider et al. (2014) consider culture as a set of interacting spheres of influence, rather than static dimensions. They see national/regional culture as just one sphere, with other spheres being identified as industry (e.g. type of business activity), professional (e.g. type of education and training undertaken by individuals), functional (e.g. nature of the task undertaken by individuals at work and the time taken to complete
it) and company (e.g. organisational culture). This broader concept does arguably omit other potential spheres such as, for example, age and gender. However, Schneider et al. (2014) do not suggest people are programmed by these spheres, but rather move within and between them. Their concept therefore provides for interaction between spheres of culture, thus suggesting culture’s dynamic nature.

Nevertheless, the idea that culture can be compartmentalised into spheres still represents something of an underlying objectivist and positivist view. Thus, although useful to some extent, such undertones also have limitations for the ontological and epistemological perspectives adopted by this thesis. I explain why in the following section.

2.4.2 A constructionist, interpretivist perspective on culture

Critics of the aforementioned objectivist, positivist view of culture argue that culture is not a self-contained static monolith, but rather an ever-changing process (Jack et al., 2008). For Clifford (1997), culture incorporates a degree of structure or stasis. However, rather than being rooted within national geographical boundaries, it undergoes construction as we move en route through life. Cultures "can be traced back to their articulation of homelands" (ibid.: 7). However, cultural action is essentially "the making and remaking of identities" (ibid.). This necessarily takes place when people move and come into contact with each other. This more dynamic concept of culture sees movement within culture and culture as socially constructed through movement.

For intercultural communication, Bjerregaard et al. (2009: 208) agree that "a static view on culture detached from context is particularly damaging […]. As an interaction process, communication yields changes among the participants and thus alters their perception during the encounter". Bjerregaard et al. (ibid.) therefore recommend a theoretical shift from "a culture-as-code to a culture-in-context view". This enables a further understanding that "cultural influences exist at multiple […] levels, have many different sources of origin and thus should not be reduced to national culture" (ibid.: 212). Following this argument, viewing culture as rooted in the national seems all but redundant for a thesis assuming a constructionist ontology and interpretivist
epistemology. Nevertheless, the idea of national culture may still be relevant, but under particular conditions of social interaction, as I now explain.

Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003) studied a merger of a high-tech company in Israel with an American competitor. Here, they claim that conceptualising culture as ‘programmed’ by nationality is "overly objectivist and essentialist" (ibid.: 1074). National identity is not passively embodied, but rather "constitutes a symbolic resource that is actively and creatively constructed by organisational members to serve social struggles which are triggered by globalisation" (ibid.: 1073). In other words, individuals in the organisation studied do not behave according to any pre-programmed national cultural template. Rather, they use the concepts of nation and national culture as ideas with which to construct their national identity. Thus, Hofstede’s (2003) essentialist claim that "Israelis are less individualistic than Americans must be tackled with the possibility that many Israelis simply like to see themselves that way" (Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003: 1090). In this way, people can be seen to be continually recreating the stereotypical assumption "rather than being passively determined by it" (ibid.). National culture is thus a symbolic resource rather than mental programming.

The aforementioned ethnographic study was conducted in a single Israeli company and included interviews with 130 organisational members. The participants could therefore be considered as a relatively small social group. Nevertheless, despite, or perhaps because of, its small size, the study provides evidence of cohesive behaviour amongst group members. It thus supports Holliday’s (1999: 241) argument that culture should be conceptualised as "cohesive behaviour in activities within any social grouping". Importantly for this thesis, Holliday explains that a work group may constitute one such form of social grouping. Again, this constructionist, interpretivist concept of culture contrasts with the objectivist, positivist concept, which relates to "essential features of ethnic national or international group[s]" (ibid.). Holliday calls the former concept ‘large culture’. In contrast, he calls the latter concept ‘small culture’, thus attempting "to liberate ‘culture’ from notions of ethnicity and nation" (ibid.: 237). Holliday also considers the concept of small culture to be particularly appropriate given "that the world is becoming an increasingly cosmopolitan, multicultural place where cultures are less likely to appear as large coherent geographical entities" (ibid.: 244).
Holliday’s (1999) aforementioned concept of small culture provides a useful framework for my study of a small, multicultural, micro-local work group. In addition, Ailon-Souday and Kunda’s (2003) concept of culture as a symbolic resource provides a means of understanding how culture is reproduced and recreated within the group. Furthermore, both of these concepts are consistent with the ontological and epistemological positions adopted in this thesis. However, neither offers a means of understanding how culture is enacted at the moment of face-to-face interaction. Therefore, to explore culture’s relationship with cross-lingual communication and how it is operationalised at this level of detail, I considered that an appropriate theory of intercultural communication (ICC) would enhance this thesis’s conceptual framework, detailed in section 2.5. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to review the extensive body of ICC literature. Therefore, in the following two sections I present two examples of ICC theory that demonstrate an objectivist, positivist and a constructionist, interpretivist perspective on culture. Furthermore, by challenging the assumptions underlying these theories, I explain how I decided which was relevant for this thesis.

2.4.3 An objectivist, positivist perspective on intercultural communication

It is worth explaining at this point what is meant by the term intercultural communication. Gudykunst (2003b) distinguishes between intercultural and cross-cultural communication. He argues that studies on the latter focus on comparing communication across cultures, whereas studies on the former focus on communication between people from different cultures. Cross-cultural communication studies usually compare the communication systems of different groups "independently of any form of social interaction" (Scollon et al., 2012: 17). In contrast, intercultural communication generally refers to face-to-face communication between people from any number of different cultures. As such, ICC scholars are interested in situations of social interaction using language and do attend to cultural differences. However, they seek to go beyond the limits of cross-cultural communication studies’ general representations of differences, in order to explore the messier and more social business of face-to-face communication (Gudykunst, 2003c; Scollon et al., 2012).
The foregoing explanation of how culture is conceptualised in this thesis requires any supporting ICC theory to be consistent with this. Gudykunst (2003d: vii, emphasis added) explains that "research on intercultural communication generally focuses on communication between people from different national cultures". However, other researchers define culture more broadly and include studies of communication between people from other groups, such as, for example, those related to race, age or profession. Gudykunst (ibid.) views these latter types of grouping as social rather than cultural. He sees them as subcultures and prefers to conceptualise culture as a national phenomenon. He thus adopts an objectivist, positivist perspective of culture, conceptualising ICC as communication between people from different national cultures.

Gudykunst’s (1995) own ICC theory is referred to as anxiety/uncertainty management (AUM) theory. He argues that "when strangers communicate with hosts, strangers experience uncertainty and anxiety" (ibid.: 182). Whilst cultural adjustment does not require complete eradication of anxiety and uncertainty, levels of both should be neither too high nor too low. Excessive uncertainty and anxiety results in inaccurate interpretation of messages and oversimplification of processing information. Insufficient uncertainty and anxiety can make a stranger feel overconfident that they understand their host’s behaviours and reduce their motivation to communicate with their host. A key problem with this theory for my thesis is its objectivist, positivist positioning, relying upon Hofstedian dimensions of culture, particularly power distance and uncertainty avoidance. However, another problem is that the theory specifically applies to communication between strangers and hosts. The definition of ‘stranger’ is debateable. However, I do not regard the participants in my study as strangers to each other. Therefore, this theory does not seem appropriate for studying cross-lingual communication between people who have already established a working relationship.

In summarising the major ICC theories in his compendium, Gudykunst states that the majority of them are objectivistic. According to Gudykunst (2003e: 167), objectivists⁹ "see a ‘real-world’ external to individuals, look for regularities in behaviour and see communication as ‘determined’ by situations and environments". In contrast, subjectivists "contend that there is no ‘real world’ external to individuals [and] try to

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⁹ Gudykunst’s reference to objectivists and subjectivists combines the notions of ontology and epistemology.
understand individual communicators’ perspectives” (Gudykunst, 2003e: 167). This latter perspective is in keeping with the ontological and epistemological perspectives of this thesis, as presented in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. Therefore, Gudykunst’s remarks strongly suggest that these dominant ICC theories are unlikely to provide a suitable lens for my study. As a result, I now consider the constructionist, interpretivist perspective on intercultural communication and, in so doing, explain a suitable theory for this thesis.

2.4.4 A constructionist, interpretivist perspective on intercultural communication

Constructionist, interpretivist ICC scholars, like Holmes (2012), argue that any objectivist, positivist, ‘nationalist’ concept of culture is of limited value to studying intercultural communication in today’s workplaces, which are becoming increasingly complex, ambiguous and pluricultural. Importantly for this thesis, Nair-Venugopal (2015: 32) considers culture within the workplace context as operating "at the level of interaction between individuals as members of the same organisation". Therefore, any readings of culture along national lines are merely "homogenised representations of locality [that] get in the way of understanding contextually dependent and relational situations in transnational workplaces […]" (ibid.: 33). Furthermore, Angouri (2010: 218) cites Street’s view that "culture is an active process of meaning making". This suggests that, when people communicate cross-lingually, culture is working alongside language to assist, or possibly impede, their understanding of each other.

Angouri’s reference to meaning making suggests that meaning is socially constructed by communicative interaction rather than merely transmitted by language. This view is consistent with Tietze et al.’s (2003: 22) argument that "meaning-making is not purely individualistic or idiosyncratic. Rather, […] meanings are generated and agreed within particular social and cultural contexts". Following Saussure’s semiological approach to meaning-making, Tietze et al. (ibid.) argue that meaning is inextricably linked with context and that meaning-making is a dynamic, social and negotiated process. For them, "language does not exist in a vacuum" (ibid.: 28). Rather, language only exists as a social fact. They argue that language, as a symbolic sign system, is used to make
meaning. However, the meaning of symbols is not inevitable but rather, relational according to the context in which they are used. This thesis also adopts this perspective of meaning-making as it supports my argument posited in section 2.2.4 that cross-lingual communication should be investigated as a person-centred social activity, rather than as a linguistic ‘code-cracking’ exercise.

Intercultural pragmatics (ICP) theory is consistent with this perspective, considering how language systems are used in social encounters between people who communicate in a shared language, even though they have different first languages, and who usually originate from different cultures. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an overview of the entire ICP field. However, I make selective use of one particular perspective to assist my exploration of face-to-face cross-lingual communication in the different workplace contexts in my study. I explain this particular ICP theory below.

Kecskes (2012: 67) suggests that "intercultural pragmatics represents a sociocognitive perspective in which individual prior experience and actual situational experience are equally important in meaning construction and comprehension". This sociocognitive perspective "emphasises not only the role of co-construction but also the importance of prior knowledge in the interaction" (ibid.: 74). Considering meaning as socially constructed rather than merely transmitted is particularly important for this thesis, as it supports a person-centred exploration of cross-lingual communication. This is because ICP focuses on communicative interaction rather than just linguistic exchanges. This interactive perspective acknowledges that language is not just a tool for communication; language, together with culture, also constitutes the prior knowledge that interactants bring to a conversation. Thus, in "intercultural discourse, […] there is mutual transformation of knowledge and communicative behaviour rather than transmission" (ibid.: 69). Cross-lingual communication can thus be considered more as transformation, rather than transmission, of meaning. In this way, Kecskes’ theory demonstrates an ontological position of constructionism and an epistemological position of interpretivism, which are consistent with this thesis.

Another instrumental factor in people’s "ability to comprehend and produce a communicative act is […] pragmatic competence" (ibid.: 68). Amongst other things, this concept "usually includes awareness of social distance [and] speakers’ social status"
Pragmatic competence thus arguably takes a person-centred approach to cross-lingual communication, in considering the people, not just the language, involved in the interaction. Despite Kecskes (ibid.) identifying pragmatic competence as instrumental in cross-lingual interactions, the literature reviewed so far provides little evidence of any attention to this. However, Cohen and Cooper’s (1986) study in the field of tourism serves to illustrate Kecskes’ concept of pragmatic competence in cross-lingual interactions between foreign tourists and host country nationals. In studying these interactions, Cohen and Cooper identify the importance of roles in the use of language in tourist situations. By grouping ‘participants’ either as foreign tourists or host country nationals, they construct a typology of roles assumed by members of these two groupings according to the contexts in which they meet. Applying this typology, they identify that communicating parties use different strategies to communicate cross-lingually via the lingua franca of tourism, namely English. The strategies employed depend firstly on who the participant is (i.e. tourist or host country national) and secondly on the role they adopt in relation to each other within their respective groupings. The roles adopted could be explained in pragmatic terms as a demonstration of speakers’ awareness of each other’s social status. Role adoption could even be considered as the means by which the interactants create or perpetuate their social status. Hence, Cohen and Cooper’s roles demonstrate how speakers’ pragmatic competence is involved in cross-lingual communication via a lingua franca. Although situated in the context of tourism, I consider this finding is useful for my investigation in the workplace.

As sociolinguists, Cohen and Cooper (ibid.) also concern themselves with language choice, arguing that this is not necessarily a foregone conclusion. Language choice may not appear to be directly associated with culture’s relationship with cross-lingual communication. However, I argue that it cannot be ignored when considering how culture and language come to be united, since language is the means people use to socialise. Therefore, language choice is involved in cultural (re)production. Furthermore, as it is people who choose language, language choice is a person-centred consideration. Given the person-centred approach of this thesis, I consider language choice in the following section and its relevance to my study of cross-lingual interactions at work.
2.4.5 Language choice

In touristic settings, Cohen and Cooper (1986) find that language choice is not necessarily determined by the host country national’s language or their levels of fluency in the tourist’s language of English. It is more likely to be determined by the level of power or social status assigned to each party in their social roles. For example, where tourists from "richer, highly developed societies […] travel to poorer, less developed ones" (ibid.: 537) the tourist, with a role as guest, has a higher status in the relationship with the local person, as host. Thus, the host is expected to speak the foreign guest’s language, rather than the foreign guest being expected to speak the host’s language. This is regardless of either party’s level of fluency in the other’s language.

In workplace settings, IB&M scholars similarly recognise that language choice is not always straightforward. Schneider et al. (2014) state that the working language needs to be decided upon before any cross-lingual communication can begin. Ferraro and Briody (2013) acknowledge that bi-/multilingual people may speak one language at home, another at work, and so on. However, the work context itself may consist of different social contexts according to areas in which people work, the people present and the matter at hand, and any of these phenomena may affect language choice. With reference to the workplace, Warren (2012: 489) asserts that language choice is influenced by the "setting, interpersonal relationships and communicative intention". Yanaprasart’s (2015: 121) study develops this assertion, noting that language choice in the multilingual organisational setting studied can be "more complex than just choosing one common working language, or respecting the rule that everyone shall be able to speak his or her [own] language". In her study, language choice is negotiated during the course of the interaction, according to the linguistic profiles and competence of the communicating parties. In other words, notwithstanding any official common working language, multilingual individuals may choose to operationalise any of their other linguistic assets alongside it, as they deem befits the interaction.

The assumption underlying the foregoing discussions is that language choice is not a foregone conclusion, but rather a process of negotiation between the communicating parties present in a social interaction. This negotiation is not necessarily overt, but can be undertaken tacitly according to each communicating party’s role or social position in
the social context. This thesis supports this assumption, arguing that the form of language chosen in any cross-lingual interaction is linked to the social context in which that interaction is taking place. I posit this argument based on Woolard and Schieffelin’s (1994: 55) discussion of language ideology, which they define as "a mediating link between social structures and forms of talk". Following this definition, I argue that, if language ideology is a mediating link, then the act of language choice forms part of that link, since the act of choosing determines the form of talk undertaken within a social context, or structure. Thus the process of language choice falls within the concept of language ideology. This definition of language ideology is by no means the only one. Indeed, Woolard (1992) explains that the meaning of this term is far from straightforward and has been much debated. However, Woolard and Schieffelin’s (1994) definition is useful to this thesis in two key ways: firstly, it helps to explain why language choice is an important consideration in my study. Secondly, it supports the person-centred approach, seeing language as part of social action, rather than merely semiotic code.

Another study in tourism by Snow (2004) illustrates how language choice is part of language ideology and why it is significant in cross-lingual interactions. Snow (ibid.) investigates why Creole English survives in a village in Central America; a country whose official national language is Spanish. Many of the villagers are bilingual in Creole English and Spanish. However, they find English is "more pragmatically useful [...] than Spanish" (ibid.: 119) in their encounters with ever-increasing numbers of international tourists. Snow argues that the villagers’ increasing contact with multilingual groups results in an increased need to negotiate language choice, regardless of any national dictates on language. Thus, language is something that villagers can choose to represent themselves in their social encounters. These encounters are therefore "a locus for the production and reproduction of language ideologies" (ibid.: 122). Snow’s use of the word ‘pragmatically’ also resonates with Kecskes’ (2012) concept of intercultural pragmatics, discussed in section 2.4.4. I therefore argue that this illustrates the involvement of language choice in the pragmatic competence of people undertaking cross-lingual communication. Thus, it explains why language choice is important to this thesis.
The gaps and problems I identified in reviewing the foregoing bodies of literature orientated my research questions. However, having reviewed this literature, and as I explain in section 3.3.1, I had no idea at this stage where the empirical site would be. Furthermore, I had no conceptual lens through which to research the site. Therefore, I was not yet in a position to precisely articulate my research questions. In section 2.5, I build my conceptual framework, which enables me to articulate my three research questions in section 2.6. Before moving on to those sections, it is helpful to pause briefly and summarise the key gaps and problems identified in the literature reviewed thus far.

In section 2.2, I explored how IB&M scholars consider language use in the workplace. I thus identified a key underlying assumption that language tends to be conceived of as a discrete entity, or code, rather than a social practice. This thesis seeks to challenge such a language-centred perspective by adopting a person-centred approach to studying cross-lingual communication at work. Furthermore, a key limitation of the IB&M literature is that it does not consider language use in domestic organisations. Therefore, this thesis uses the knowledge accumulated in IB&M, as well as its gaps and limitations, to address questions that are of interest to domestic organisations and hence the field of organisation studies.

In contrast to the IB&M literature, the DM literature, discussed in section 2.3, considers the management of people in domestic organisations. However, I identified an underlying assumption that language can be separated from the people using it to communicate. This thesis challenges that assumption by considering language as linked to and thus inseparable from the person using it. A further limitation is that the DM literature does not consider language as distinct from culture, thus language is not seen as a marker of diversity. This renders any language problem invisible, even though there are references to such problems in some of the DM research discussed.

As I explained in section 2.4, scholars of culture, ICC, ICP and sociolinguistics do consider language and culture as separate phenomena. Furthermore, in conceptualising communication as a social activity, they go some way to considering cross-lingual communication as person-centred. Nevertheless, there are still some shortcomings. ICP scholars see ICC primarily as speech acts within intercultural interactions. Therefore,
they fall short of considering interactants’ experiences of intercultural communication and the significance of those experiences for interactants and the organisation employing them. ICC and sociolinguistics scholars view ICC as a social undertaking. However, studies are not always specific to the workplace and, even when they are, they do not necessarily consider communicating parties to be well acquainted with each other. Furthermore, there is little exploration of how interaction is actually experienced.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore individuals’ experiences of cross-lingual communication in the moment of human interaction at work. The notion of communication ‘in the moment’ is particularly important, since this is when interactants are constructing meaning whilst simultaneously experiencing cross-lingual communication. In that moment, the person is at the centre of the communication activity. Thus far, it appears that none of the reviewed literature has focused sufficiently on the moment of cross-lingual communication at work in terms of what it means for the people experiencing it. Consequently, I now turn to build the conceptual framework for this thesis and explain how it enables me to fulfil the purpose of this thesis. I begin by discussing one person-centred concept of language applied in the field of tourism and its usefulness in my study of the workplace.

2.5 Building a conceptual framework

The cornerstone of my conceptual framework is Phipps’ (2007) person-centred concept of language and language learning. Being located in the field of tourism, I explain my innovative use of this concept in organisation studies and why it is so useful in my study of the workplace. I also identify three concepts in Phipps’ framework as being useful to my own. My conceptual framework therefore includes Bourdieu’s (1977a) concept of habitus, which enables me to explain how language and person are inextricably linked. I also draw upon Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital, which serves two key purposes in this thesis. Firstly, it provides me with a means of exploring how culture is involved in cross-lingual communication at the level of individual interpersonal interactions. Secondly, it enables me to explore how language skills are mobilised in the workplace according to the power these skills afford to the people using them. The final component of my conceptual framework is de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space as a
practised place. This supports my argument that language is embodied and enables me to explain how languaging is experienced at my empirical site. These primary aspects of my conceptual framework are explained in sections 2.5.1 to 2.5.6.

2.5.1 Experiencing cross-lingual communication: languaging

Phipps’ (2007: 8) study of *Learning the Arts of Linguistic Survival* is "a form of auto-anthropology" regarding her own experience of tourist language learning. Her perspective of language differs from many others discussed so far in this chapter, as she views languages as a means of maintaining and communicating relationships rather than merely as code. Phipps (ibid.: 2) considers that we need to "analyse the social and intercultural dimensions of language [...] experience, as it is encountered through everyday life" if we are to understand how people engage with each other across languages and within contexts. Phipps’ advice resonates with claims in the IB&M literature. As I explained in section 2.2.1, IB&M scholars remark that organisations tend to see barriers resulting from linguistic diversity as little more than a mechanical translation problem, which can be easily overcome by employing mechanical solutions. However, such a narrow view fails to take account of the people involved in such mechanical processes. It thus exhibits no understanding of the human processes at work in cross-lingual communication.

Phipps’ (ibid.: 3) study seeks to understand what happens "in the ‘quick’ of human relatedness" through language. The idea of the ‘quick’ is pivotal to my person-centred study of cross-lingual communication, since "‘quick’ is an old English word used to refer to vibrancy and to anything characterised by the presence of life" (ibid.). Being in the ‘quick’ thus amounts to being ‘in the moment’. In exploring how cross-lingual communication is experienced by a linguistically diverse team in the moment of their inter-relatedness at work, this thesis explains how language is involved in empowering, dividing, unifying and challenging my participants in their work. I argue that language should not simply be regarded as a disembodied tool with which to communicate, as it cannot be considered to the exclusion of the people using it.
In solving cross-lingual communication problems, Phipps (2007: 6) views languages as "functional necessities". However, she argues that "languages are fully embodied, not detached and ‘acquirable’" (ibid.: 3). In other words, languages are not simply ‘bolted on’ to an individual, who then uses them like a set of tools. Languages and language skills are inalienable¹⁰: an inextricable part of the individual. Phipps (ibid.: 12) refers to the process of putting languages into practice as "languaging". For Phipps, languaging is about more than just "the effort of using languages [...]." It is about "the effort of being a person in that language in the social and material world of everyday interactions [...]" (ibid.). Languaging is thus the activity undertaken by anyone making use of their non-native language skills in undertaking cross-lingual communication at work, or in any other social context. It forms part of the "human struggle to make meaning" (ibid.: 26).

Phipps’ concept of languaging places the person at the centre of any cross-lingual exchange. Considering my participants’ languaging experiences in the workplace enables me to explore how these experiences might shape cross-lingual communication practice and the significance this has for my participants and the organisation employing them. In framing her study, Phipps draws on a number of conceptual sources. In applying the concept of languaging to my research, I considered that some of these sources would also serve to frame my own study. Therefore, the following sections focus on those concepts used by Phipps that are also useful to this thesis. I begin each section by introducing a concept with reference to Phipps’ findings. I then explore the concept in detail and explain its relevance for my study.

2.5.2 Language as embodied: habitus

Phipps’ (2007) perception of language and language learning as embodied and inalienable is underpinned by Bourdieu’s (1977a) concept of habitus, as explained in his Outline of a Theory of Practice. According to Phipps (2007: 54) "by habitus, Bourdieu understands a set of learned dispositions for action in the world". It is important to bear in mind Phipps’ (ibid.) argument that language acquisition develops the habitus, since

¹⁰ I follow Phipps’ (2007: 107) explanation of languages as inalienable goods, which "do not detach well for the market". In other words, the use of language in any linguistic exchange fully depends upon the person with the language skills putting them to use.
language acquired is a form of learned disposition for action in the world. Language becoming part of the habitus thus explains how language becomes embodied within and inalienable from the individual.

Bourdieu (1977a: 72) defines the habitus as essentially comprising "systems of durable, transposable dispositions". By "disposition", Bourdieu (ibid.: 214, original emphasis) means "the result of an organizing action"; thus, it results from any action we undertake to make sense of our social life. Bourdieu (ibid.: 72) explains how the habitus is useful as a system of "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures". This means the habitus we develop through our social actions is in turn used to shape the way in which we undertake our future social actions. Thus, "practices produced by the habitus [are] strategy-generating principle[s] enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations" (ibid.). Life is an ongoing practice and "Bourdieu points out that habitus changes constantly in response to new experiences" (Blackledge, 2012: 130). The habitus is thus a constantly developing form of internal reference framework with which we navigate our social life.

Importantly for this thesis, Bourdieu also sees linguistic competence as consisting of dispositions. Therefore, if dispositions are embodied elements common to both the habitus and linguistic competence, this suggests a connection between linguistic competence and the habitus. Furthermore, if the practice of linguistic competence, or languaging, is produced by the habitus, then languaging is necessarily involved in communicating parties generating a strategy to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing cross-lingual communication situations. This connection between linguistic competence, languaging and the habitus suggests that cross-lingual communication is as much about the person as it is about the language. Therefore, in my person-centred study of cross-lingual communication, I consider language as an element of the habitus. In this way, I see language as an integral part of each person, rather than merely a tool for communication. Habitus is therefore an important concept for this thesis, as it facilitates a shift of focus away from language as code towards considering language as experienced through social interaction.

Habitus is also important for this thesis in requiring the application of further Bourdieusian theory to my study. As explained above, the habitus is a form of internal
reference framework, thus suggesting that it is something of a personal resource. If language is part of habitus, then it is also part of that personal resource. Phipps (2007) posits this argument, viewing linguistic skills as a form of personal asset or wealth, drawing on Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital to make her case. In the next section, I take Phipps’ argument as an introduction to a detailed exploration of Bourdieu’s concept of capital and its involvement in social practice. In so doing, I explain how this is also important for framing my research.

2.5.3 Language as personal asset: linguistic capital

In regarding language skills as inalienable from the person possessing them, Phipps (2007) views them as a form of personal wealth, existing in the form of embodied capital. She likens this linguistic capital to the foreign currency we might bring home from a holiday to keep for our next trip. However, where foreign currency exists in the externalised form of notes and coins that are available for use as soon as we arrive at our destination, the embodied nature of linguistic capital means that it needs to be converted into linguistic currency before it becomes useful. In other words, linguistic capital, or linguistic skill, needs to be converted into meaningful messages for communication purposes. This conversion requires the person to put their linguistic capital, or skills, to practical use by languaging.

Thus, following Phipps, whenever a person practises languaging, they are converting linguistic capital into linguistic currency, thereby aiming to achieve meaningful communication. In studying languaging in the workplace, I also need to consider the concept of linguistic capital in order to explore its significance to my participants’ interactions. In fact, Phipps’ reference to linguistic capital draws on Bourdieu’s (1991) wider theory relating to Language and Symbolic Power on how people use different forms of capital to move through social life. I now explore this theory and explain its significance for this thesis. In so doing, I expand upon Phipps’ application of this theory in three ways. Firstly, in this section, I explain the place of linguistic capital within the wider context of Bourdieu’s theory. Secondly, in section 2.5.4, I explore how linguistic capital connects with cultural capital and the significance of this connection in cross-lingual exchanges. Thirdly, in section 2.5.5, I explain how linguistic and other forms of
capital are valued and the significance of this for cross-lingual communication in organisational life.

Bourdieu (1991) proposes that how people move through social life is influenced by achieving power in different social contexts according to the volume of the various types of capital they possess and the extent to which each social setting, or field\textsuperscript{11}, permits them to convert one form of capital into another. Sociolinguists Mesthrie \textit{et al.} (2009) explain that these forms of capital are principally economic (represented by financial wealth), cultural (represented by educational qualifications and knowledge), social (represented by the status accorded to an individual in a given social context) and symbolic (represented by prestige). It is worth noting here that symbolic capital differs from the other forms inasmuch as it “is the form assumed by these different kinds of capital when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate” (Bourdieu, 1991: 230). Whilst Mesthrie \textit{et al.} (2009) note that Bourdieu considers there to be four main forms of capital, Bourdieu (1977a) also identifies other forms, including linguistic, political, functional, personal and professional. This thesis is not concerned with all these forms. However, linguistic capital is of particular relevance, not least because of its involvement with languaging, as explained earlier. It is also relevant because of its relationship with cultural capital both theoretically and in the context of my empirical research. I shall now illustrate this relevance by further analysing these forms of capital, focusing particularly on the cultural and linguistic.

\subsection*{2.5.4 Connecting linguistic capital with cultural capital}

The concept of cultural capital is perhaps best introduced by aligning it with economic capital. Bourdieu (1977a: 186) proposes that "economic wealth cannot function as capital until it is linked to an economic apparatus", namely a system that recognises it as a form of wealth. Similarly, cultural competence (e.g. education) cannot function as cultural capital until it is part of a system (e.g. the education system) that recognises it as a form of wealth. Cultural capital obtained through education is objectified as qualifications, these being the currency of cultural capital, just as money is the currency

\textsuperscript{11} Field is the term Bourdieu uses to describe a social context or setting.
of economic capital. Both currencies have a value and, being objectified, they are not embodied within the individuals who hold the currency. This means that whoever holds the currency, be it money or qualifications, may legitimately offer it in exchange for the items, or jobs, they desire.

However, Skeggs (2004a) argues that not all forms of cultural capital exist in an objectified state. In analysing Bourdieu’s concept, she identifies three states in which cultural capital may exist. Firstly, she identifies the objectified state as referring to cultural capital in the form of cultural goods, like works of art. Secondly, the institutionalised state is seen as referring to the educational qualifications discussed in the previous paragraph. Thirdly, and importantly for this thesis, she identifies an embodied state of cultural capital, described as the "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (ibid.: 16). In fact, this embodied state of cultural capital echoes Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, explained in section 2.5.2. Since Bourdieu also sees linguistic competence as being made up of dispositions, it would seem to follow that linguistic capital cannot be completely objectified.

If, as noted above by Mesthrie et al. (2009), linguistic capital is not one of the four principal forms of capital, it must fall within one of those forms. As cultural capital exists in the form of educational qualifications and knowledge, I argue, following Grenfell (2012a), that linguistic capital is a subcategory of cultural capital. This is because linguistic capital can be acquired through the formal education of language learning and/or the informal acquisition of skills by residing in a foreign country, watching foreign TV broadcasts, or, as with one’s mother tongue, amongst family members. Nevertheless, in conceiving of linguistic capital as a subcategory of cultural capital, it still needs to be considered as a form of capital in its own right, as Bourdieu (1991) himself argues. Following Skeggs (2004a), this thesis argues that linguistic capital can exist as two states of cultural capital, namely as an embodied state and as an institutionalised state. I explain the reasoning behind and significance of this argument below.

Linguistic capital, on the one hand, exists as an institutionalised form of cultural capital as language qualifications gained by following a course of study. On the other hand, it exists as an embodied form of cultural capital, this being the linguistic competence a
person gains by (formal) education and inculcation, or informal education and socialisation. In fact, Bourdieu (1977b: 660) expressly states that “linguistic capital is an embodied capital and […] language learning is one dimension of the learning of a total body schema. […] Language is a body technique […].” This concept of language being embodied applies to our mother tongue and other languages we may learn. An important point here is that this form of linguistic capital may not have been gained by means of formal education and so may not be evidenced by any certificate. In short, it is embodied but may not always be institutionalised. Moreover, even if a level of linguistic expertise is evidenced by a certificate, in order for that linguistic capital to be used, it has to be put into practice by the person within whom the capital is embodied.

Following the above argument, cultural capital consists of forms other than just linguistic capital. Mobilising constructionist, interpretivist concepts of culture presented in section 2.4.2 enables me to understand what these other forms of cultural capital might be. As Clifford (1997: 31, original emphasis) argues, “cultures [are] sites of dwelling and travel”. In other words, cultures arise from dwelling within the boundaries of, for example, ethnicity, race and gender. However, they also arise as we move through social life. Thus, as Holliday (1999: 248, original emphasis) notes ”in the newly forming small culture […], each member will bring small culture residues from other […] collegial and peer experiences”. Following these arguments, other forms of cultural capital may be seen to include, for example, professional experience gained throughout a person’s working life.

Understanding cultural capital as a collection of different elements is important for this thesis for two reasons. Firstly, it provides me with a way of conceptualising culture that is unexplored in the foregoing literature. This enables me to explore how culture is enacted in cross-lingual communication between participants in my empirical study. Secondly, it enables me to decouple the language element from other elements of cultural capital. This offers a means of exploring the relationship between language and other aspects of culture by studying the interaction between these various elements of cultural capital. In so doing, it maintains the understanding that language is inextricably linked with culture, but not reducible to it.
The above explanation of cultural capital enables me to explore the contribution made by linguistic and other forms of cultural capital to cross-lingual exchanges. However, I cannot evaluate this contribution without understanding how value is attributed to linguistic and other forms of cultural capital in social settings or fields. I explain this below.

2.5.5 Valuing capital

From explanations thus far, it follows that any form of capital, cultural or otherwise, needs to be put to use in order for its value to be realised. Grenfell (2012b) points out that Bourdieu draws on Marxist sociology to posit his theory of social practice. Thus, Bourdieu (1977a; 1991) sees the value of capital as being linked to its potential to be exchanged, and thus converted from one form into another. Marx’s value theory argues that the exchange value (EV) of an asset (in this case, Bourdieusian capital) is in relation to its use value (UV) in a given set of circumstances (Fine and Saad-Filho, 2010). Thus, for example, cultural capital in the form of a language qualification would acquire EV when being offered to a prospective employer in exchange for a job that required use of language skills. Following Bourdieusian logic, this token of cultural capital is exchanged in return for economic capital (in the form of a salary) and arguably also social capital, arising from any status enhancement resulting from the job. However, according to Bourdieu, a form of capital can only be exchanged or converted into other forms if the right context, or field, exists. Thus it follows, at a simple level, that cultural capital in the form of linguistic capital would have no EV if offered in exchange for a job that did not require the use of language skills. This is because there would be no appropriate field in which the individual’s linguistic capital could be used; hence it would have no UV. Skeggs (2004a) acknowledges the importance of being able to exchange one form of capital for others. However, as the following analysis shows, she suggests that the value of capital is more complex than simply its EV in a given field and thus identifies limitations to Bourdieusian theory that are relevant to my study.

Skeggs (ibid.) notes that when an asset, or form of capital, is exchanged, the capital under new ownership is not necessarily identical to that possessed by the original owner. The capital is transformed as it is traded. Furthermore, the original owner of the
capital may nevertheless retain use of it. Therefore, they do not sustain a loss of capital. This theory can be illustrated within the context of language use at work. A person with language skills may apply for a job that specifically requires those skills. In being offered the position, they exchange their language skills in return for a job (social capital) and salary (economic capital). At the same time, the employer offering the job undertakes to exchange payment of a salary (economic capital) in return for a resource of linguistic capital (cultural capital) that can now be used within their organisation. However, although this exchange of capitals takes place, the employee retains use of their linguistic capital, even though the employer now also owns it. Indeed, for the organisation to benefit from the economic value of this linguistic capital being realised, the employer needs the employee to put the linguistic capital to use. The employer cannot do this for themselves.

This example illustrates Skeggs’ (2004a) assertion that forms of capital have a UV, with this UV extending beyond the EV. EV and UV must therefore be kept separate and everything should not be reduced to EV. Furthermore, the UV of one form of cultural capital varies according to the value attached to other forms of cultural capital being used in that field. Thus, with linguistic capital, any certificate for language skills learned at an educational institution can initially be exchanged in return for a job (economic and social capital). However, it is only through that person’s use of their acquired language skills that they continue to be of value in fulfilling the organisation’s objectives. This concept of UV is of further significance to this thesis and indeed links to a third aspect of Bourdieusian theory framing my study, as I now explain.

Skeggs (2011: 496) argues that "discussions of value are either remarkably precise, as matters of economic calculation of exchange-value, […] or notoriously slippery, via moral understandings of what matters to people". She also states that the individual, possessing a set of dispositions, for example skills, may consider them as property. Although this property belongs to them, they can offer it in exchange for something they wish to acquire, for example a job. The value of this disposition is then called into question. Skeggs (ibid.: 499) draws on Marx to argue that such value "can only be known in exchange" and the notion that all conditions are equal for the exchange is pure myth. This therefore suggests that the value of a disposition put to use (its UV) varies according to the conditions in which it is used. Furthermore, as Marx also noted,
"exchange value is not always directly apparent but is often embedded in relationships" (Skeggs and Wood, 2012: 230). This suggests that EV is arbitrary and varies according to social context. In addition, Skeggs (2004b: 89) refers to Spivak to assert the similarly arbitrary nature of UV: "use-value [...] is beyond value, understood in traditional economistic terms. Moreover, use-values can only be known when they are put to use". This volatility of EV and UV is important when considering my participants’ use of linguistic and other forms of cultural capital in the workplace, since it means I cannot assume that such capital will have the same value in whatever social context, or field, it is used. This volatility of value, as it pertains particularly to linguistic capital, can be explained with reference to the aforementioned third aspect of Bourdieusian theory. I explain this below.

According to Bourdieu (1991), a purely linguistic analysis of communication, which only takes account of linguistic competence, ignores everything that the linguistic utterance owes to the social conditions of its production: "The competence adequate to produce sentences that are likely to be understood may be quite inadequate to produce sentences that are likely to be listened to, likely to be recognized as acceptable in all the situations in which there is occasion to speak" (ibid.: 55, original emphasis). Social acceptability is not merely a matter of grammaticality. A lack of legitimacy (rather than linguistic competence) means that speakers are "excluded from the social domains in which this competence is required or are condemned to silence" (ibid.). Bourdieu (ibid.: 67) argues that the value of utterances is in relation to a market and not to the linguistic competence of the speaker alone: "The value of the utterance depends on the relation of power that is concretely established between the speakers’ linguistic competences, understood both as their capacity for production and as their capacity for appropriation and appreciation". In other words, value does not just depend on the production of grammatically correct expressions, it also depends on the speaker's ability to make him/herself heard and believed. The notion of acceptability replaces that of grammaticality, "or, to put it another way, in place of ‘the’ language [..., comes] the notion of the legitimate language. In place of relations of communication, [..., come] relations of symbolic power, and so [...] the question of the meaning of speech [is replaced] with the question of the value and power of speech" (Bourdieu, 1977b: 646, original emphasis). In short, this means that an utterance needs to be "performative" (Thompson, 1991: 8).
To be performative, an utterance is inevitably tied to an institution. An institution need not be any particular formal organisation; it may simply be a social group. This institution, or group, is "any relatively durable set of social relations which endows individuals with power, status and resources of various kinds" (Thompson, 1991: 8, original emphasis). It gives the speaker the authority to deliver a performative utterance by investing the speaker "with the authority to speak in its name" (Grenfell, 2012a: 61, original emphasis). A performative utterance thus presupposes authorisation to speak by the institution, or group, which others recognise according to the "rank, position [...] of someone in terms of the field in which the group is placed" (ibid., original emphasis). This theory of the value of linguistic competence being dependent upon the utterance being performative is important for my thesis since it suggests that even the richest reserves of linguistic capital may not be all that is required for successful cross-lingual communication. Furthermore, it supports my study of cross-lingual communication as person-centred rather than language-centred. This is because rather than reducing language to "an intellectual encoding-decoding operation" (Bourdieu, 1977b: 649), it sees language as a relationship of symbolic power, where "listening is believing" (ibid.) as well as simply hearing and decoding the message.

In addition to the aforementioned aspects of Bourdieusian theory, there is one more concept used by Phipps (2007) that I apply to language in framing my study. This is explained in the following section. As before, I begin by introducing this concept, proposed by de Certeau (2011), in terms of its application in Phipps’ study. I then explain its importance for framing my own investigation.

### 2.5.6 The place of language in cross-lingual communication

Within the context of tourism, Phipps (2007) refers to maps as being a means of finding one’s way through unfamiliar territory, or space. A place on a map "is fixed and relatively stable" (ibid.: 73). However, when going there in practice, it becomes transformed into a space as something that is experienced, providing memories that are recounted later, sometimes to orientate others. There is seemingly no connection here with language until Phipps invokes the argument posited by de Certeau (2011: 115) in *The Practice of Everyday Life* that "every story is a travel story - a spatial practice".
Following this argument, movement within an organisation may also be viewed as a travel story or spatial practice, as may movement between languages. Given the movement of participants in my study between different organisational locations and different languages, Phipps’ application of de Certeau’s concept can be usefully expanded to explore cross-lingual communication in this workplace. I now explain this concept in greater detail, its link with concepts already explained in this section and hence its relevance to my study.

De Certeau (2011: 117) argues that a street, geometrically defined on a map, is a place that "is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs". He therefore argues that "space is a practised place" (ibid., original emphasis) and that this argument may be applied to text as well as geographical locations. De Certeau likens the act of reading to inhabiting a text, rather like a tenant inhabits an apartment. Tenants transform "another person’s property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient" (ibid.: xxi). Similarly, in reading a text, the reader travels through it, bringing their own world to bear on the world of the other, in this case the author. The reader thus insinuates their own meaning into the author’s text.

This results in the reader understanding the text in ways that might be both similar to and different from the author’s understanding. The text is thus a stable place, as provided by the author, through which the reader moves whilst bringing their experiences to reside there. In ‘moving in’ to the text, the reader transforms it into a space that they inhabit by furnishing the text with their own memories and experiences. This concept of space is less stable than the original place, since the nature of the space will change according to the reader creating it. Conversely, the text as place remains as it was originally created by the author.

This thesis extends Phipps’ (2007) use of de Certeau’s concept and expands her concept of languaging, arguing that the practice of languaging could be seen as a way of inhabiting a text, and thus a place. In this thesis, rather than the text, or place, being a book, it is the foreign language being languaged. Like a reader reading a book, a person who is languaging moves into the language, insinuating their own meaning into it by bringing their experiences to bear on the language in question. The person practising a foreign language may thus understand the language in ways that are both similar to and
different from the way that native speakers understand it. The language, as place, is thus transformed by languaging into a space, which will change according to the languager creating it. Understanding language as a space, rather than just a place, has implications for cross-lingual communication.

The act of speaking requires a person to be able to make appropriate use of language and not simply possess knowledge of it. This suggests that languages, or words, do not have one definitive meaning but rather a range of meanings that are determined according to how the language in question is used on a specific occasion. Therefore, it follows that the outcome of a person’s attempt to use a foreign language depends upon their ability to language their personal stock of embodied linguistic capital. However, although the acquisition of that stock of embodied linguistic capital may begin by a person learning a list of words in a second language and their equivalent in their first language, using the language for the purpose of speaking requires a person to insinuate their own meaning into their stock of language.

According to Borges (cited in de Certeau, 2011: 169), reading is an operation that modifies the object of that operation, namely the text. Following this assertion, this thesis argues that languaging is an operation that modifies the object of that operation, namely the language. Language therefore becomes a construction produced by the languager, as they create meanings within the language. Whereas there may not always be repercussions for others when a reader insinuates their own meanings into a text, there will always be repercussions for others when a languager insinuates their own meanings into communication, since communication is never a solitary activity. If all conversing parties insinuate the same meaning into the language being used, cross-lingual communication may well be successful. However, if they insinuate different meanings into the same language, misunderstanding may ensue. Thus, successful cross-lingual communication requires communicating parties to either share the same linguistic space or move between their own linguistic space and that of the other. If people create their own linguistic space by bringing their experiences to bear on the language in question, then it follows that they may have difficulty moving into each other’s linguistic spaces, and thus understanding each other. This may well be due to different linguistic knowledge or different reserves of linguistic capital. However, it
may also be due to different life experiences embodied by each person, resulting from different reserves of other forms of cultural capital.

Applying de Certeau’s (2011) concept to argue that language is a place which, when practised, becomes a space, relies upon and supports the aforementioned theories in my conceptual framework in three key ways. Firstly, it relies upon Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital as being the elements which constitute a person’s life and linguistic experiences being brought to bear on their cross-lingual exchanges. It supports this concept by explaining how this capital is operationalised through movement in and out of the *lingua franca* and between different organisational locations in my participants’ cross-lingual encounters. Secondly, it relies upon Bourdieu’s (1977a) concept of *habitus* by conceiving of life experiences and language reserves both as embodied and as continuously changing. It supports this concept by the notion cited earlier that "every story is a travel story" (de Certeau, 2011: 115). Thus, the habitus is yet another travel story, since it changes as we journey through life. Thirdly, this application of de Certeau relies upon Phipps’ (2007) concept of *languaging*, since this is the practice through which language is transformed from a place to a space. It supports this concept by conceiving of language as text that is inhabited differently by each person moving into and within it.

### 2.5.7 Summarising the conceptual framework

The foregoing is a rich conceptual framework. Table 1 on the next page summarises this framework, defining each concept and describing its application in this thesis:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Primary conceptual frame</strong></th>
<th><strong>Author</strong></th>
<th><strong>Concept</strong></th>
<th><strong>Definition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Application in this thesis</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bourdieu (1977a)</td>
<td>Habitus</td>
<td>A set of embodied dispositions - including language - that is shaped by and used to shape our social actions.</td>
<td>Supports the argument that language is embodied and inalienable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bourdieu (1977a; 1991)</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Personal resources which facilitate or hinder our movement in and between different social contexts.</td>
<td>Enables decoupling of language and culture and explains how culture plays out in this team’s cross-lingual interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>De Certeau (2011)</td>
<td>Space as a practised place</td>
<td>A stable place, such as language, is transformed into a less stable space when practised, through languaging.</td>
<td>Explains how languaging is experienced and how experiences shape cross-lingual communication practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary conceptual frame</strong></td>
<td>Kecskes (2012)</td>
<td>Intercultural pragmatic theory</td>
<td>How language is used in social, intercultural encounters where interactants with different first languages communicate in a shared language.</td>
<td>Supports the Bourdieusian concept of capital by offering a means of understanding how different forms of cultural capital are operationalised in cross-lingual encounters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cohen and Cooper (1986); Warren (2012); Yanaprasart (2015)</td>
<td>Language choice</td>
<td>A process of negotiation according to roles, context and communicative intention.</td>
<td>Supports ICP theory by illustrating the significance of language choice for pragmatic competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Snow (2004); Woolard and Schieffelin (1994)</td>
<td>Language ideology</td>
<td>&quot;A mediating link between social structures and forms of talk&quot; (Woolard and Schieffelin, 1994: 55).</td>
<td>Provides the rationale for considering language choice in this thesis; hence also supports ICP theory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Summary of conceptual framework
This conceptual framework forms the link between the gaps and problems I identified in the literature reviewed in sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 and the empirical problem to be investigated. I can now apply this framework to articulate my three research questions, which this thesis seeks to address.

2.6 Research questions

From the literature reviewed in this chapter, I constructed three research questions that I consider are important to explore empirically in order to contribute to existing academic knowledge. These questions are as follows:

1. How, where and with whom is cross-lingual communication practised and experienced in the multilingual MECOS team? How is culture involved?
2. How are languages chosen and how are languages and languaging experienced in this team?
3. How is meaning made via cross-lingual communication in this team?

My first research question arises primarily from IB&M research discussed in section 2.2. In particular, it responds to Janssens and Steyaert’s (2014: 623) call, cited in section 2.2.1, for a conceptual shift to see "language as a social practice rather than a discrete entity". This question therefore investigates cross-lingual communication as a social undertaking and hence as a person-centred, rather than language-centred, activity. Furthermore, by regarding culture as separate, albeit interlinked, with language, this question is consistent with the formative turn in language research noted by Brannen et al. (2014), in decoupling language from culture. The person-centred orientation of this question contributes to recommendations made by IB&M scholars that cross-lingual communication should not be considered as a purely mechanical problem. The separate focus on culture also contributes to discussions amongst DM scholars, by seeking to illuminate a distinction between language and culture which is barely visible in the DM literature. By investigating this question within the context of a UK organisation, I bring discussion of the language problem into the domain of organisation studies, where it has so far received little attention.
My second research question considers language primarily as something that is experienced by individuals and a constituent part of what Bourdieu (1977a) calls habitus. The person-centred perspective on language taken by this question is made possible largely by Phipps’ (2007) concept of languaging. This concept considers language as a means of creating and maintaining relationships rather than just semiotic code. By investigating language from this perspective, this question seeks to understand how people’s lived experiences of languaging and language learning are associated with cross-lingual communication outcomes in the UK workplace being studied. This question therefore extends Phipps’ concept beyond the context of tourism into organisation studies. At the same time, it focuses on cross-lingual communication as a human practice that mobilises linguistic resources, rather than a mechanical process of encoding and decoding.

My third research question maintains the person-centred focus by investigating meaning-making as a social activity rather than a mechanical decoding exercise. I draw upon the Bourdieusian concept of capital to investigate how cross-lingual exchanges are experienced at a fine level of detail. This enables me to investigate culture’s involvement with language in meaning-making. I also draw upon Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory to investigate how pragmatic competence is involved in meaning-making in this workplace. In so doing, I demonstrate the relevance of ICP to organisation studies, thus contributing to both knowledge domains. This question enables me to investigate how my participants "mobilise multiple linguistic resources to express a voice" (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014: 637), as I explore how meaning is made as team members mobilise their linguistic resources in different organisational contexts.

2.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature across a range of disciplines to explore the extent to which cross-lingual communication at work via a lingua franca has already been researched. In so doing, I have used Alvesson and Sandberg’s (2011) method of problematisation to challenge assumptions underlying this literature as well as identify gaps within it. Therefore, in sections 2.2 and 2.3 respectively, I reviewed the attention paid by IB&M and DM scholars to linguistic diversity in the workplace. I found that
much of the extant IB&M research is language-centred rather than person-centred. Thus it focuses more on the functional problems posed by language and linguistic diversity and less on how these problems are experienced interpersonally. Furthermore, this research inevitably lacks a domestic focus. Whilst DM scholars include such a domestic focus, this excludes language as a marker of diversity. At best, language is conflated with cultural diversity; at worst, it is ignored.

The omnipresence of culture in the foregoing discussions led me to consider culture, as distinct from language, in section 2.4. In discussing objectivist, positivist and constructionist, interpretivist concepts of culture, I explained that the former are inappropriate for this thesis, which is underpinned by a constructionist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology. I argued that culture is not bounded by large national groupings, but is a process of continuous re-creation through cohesive behaviour in social groupings that, in themselves, may be small. Having established this concept of culture, I explained why ICC theories similarly established on objectivist, positivist notions of culture are unsuitable for this thesis. I also noted that theories considering communicating parties as strangers are likewise inappropriate for my study that focuses on people with established working relationships. I identified one ICP theory as useful for informing my study, since it recognises the importance of people’s prior and situational experience in the practice of cross-lingual communication. I also explained the importance of language choice in this thesis. In particular, I argued that language choice forms part of a mediating link between parties communicating cross-lingually and is thus a person-centred activity.

From sections 2.2 to 2.4, I had an idea of three research questions that I considered would be interesting to investigate in the field of organisation studies. However, I could only articulate these questions by drawing upon the conceptual framework adopted for this thesis, as presented in section 2.5. In section 2.5.1, I explained how Phipps’ (2007) concept of languaging views language as a means of maintaining and communicating relationships. Furthermore, I explained how Phipps’ concept considers language as a resource in the moment of social interaction rather than simply a stock of words to be converted by some ‘mechanical’ means. The concept of languaging is person-centred and concerned with face-to-face interaction and is therefore pivotal to framing my study, as well as articulating my second research question, in particular.
The rest of section 2.5 proceeded to explain how this thesis draws and expands on other concepts used by Phipps (2007), extending them beyond the field of tourism into organisation studies. I introduced each of these concepts with reference to how they relate to Phipps’ study before explaining how I expand them in this thesis to be of relevance to a domestic workplace. In section 2.5.2, I explained that Phipps’ (ibid.) view of language skills as embodied relies on Bourdieu’s (1977a) concept of habitus. I explained that habitus is a form of embodied reference system that we continuously construct during our lives through past experiences and which in turn informs our future actions. In arguing that languages are embodied, Phipps (2007) argues that language forms part of our embodied reference system, or habitus. Thus, this argument supports my thesis by enabling me to move away from viewing language as code, towards a person-centred view of language as experienced.

The notion of language as a resource was developed in section 2.5.3 by considering language as a form of personal asset, or capital. I explained how Bourdieu (1991) sees language as one of several forms of capital possessed by individuals, which they use in various combinations to move through social life. I linked this concept to Phipps (2007) and hence my own study by explaining that languaging is the practice through which linguistic capital, embodied within the individual, is mobilised. Then in section 2.5.4, I explained how linguistic capital can be seen as a subcategory of cultural capital. In doing this, I followed Skeggs’ (2004a) argument that cultural capital can exist in either an objectified, institutionalised or embodied state. This thesis argues that linguistic capital may be institutionalised or embodied but not objectified. In section 2.5.5, I then explained how different forms of capital are valued according to the fields, or social contexts, in which they may be used or exchanged. This led to a subsequent explanation that, with the value of capital being volatile rather than stable, reserves of linguistic capital alone may not be sufficient to ensure successful cross-lingual communication.

I presented the final constituent of my theoretical framework in section 2.5.6. Here, I explained my application of de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space being a practised place in this thesis. In considering language as a place, which when languaged becomes a space, this thesis argues that languaging is a practice that involves the languager insinuating their own meaning into language. Therefore, in cross-lingual exchanges, if two or more parties are each insinuating their own meaning into the same language,
they will need to move into each other’s linguistic spaces for cross-lingual communication to be successful. In section 2.5.7, I presented a table summarising the rich conceptual framework supporting this thesis.

Finally, in section 2.6, I articulated the three research questions developed from reviewing the aforementioned literature and explained the contribution my investigation of them would make to academic knowledge. Chapter 3 will now turn to explain the methodology I considered appropriate for addressing these questions in the empirical site of my inquiry.
CHAPTER 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe and evaluate the methodology, research design and methods used in my empirical project and to justify their use within the philosophical context of my research. Section 3.2 details my philosophical position as a researcher. In section 3.3, I re-state the focus of my research before explaining how I established the research site and my research questions. This includes details of how I located and gained access to the empirical site, a description of which is included. In re-stating my research questions, I also explain why I considered the empirical site suitable for investigating them. Section 3.4 details my case study-based research design. Here I explain the methods I used to generate data with the participants I recruited. I also explain why I selected these methods and consider the merits, issues and limitations of each, both individually and in combination with each other.

Sections 3.5 and 3.6 respectively explain how I planned and conducted my data generation. In section 3.7 I explain how I analysed my data and the reasons for my approach. This explanation is thus a prelude to the next three chapters of this thesis, which provide an in-depth data analysis. I considered ethical issues at every stage of research design, data generation and analysis and discuss some of these during the course of this chapter. However, section 3.8 provides a comprehensive explanation of the key ethical considerations pertaining to my project. Finally, section 3.9 addresses questions of reliability and validity which naturally arose as part of data generation and analysis.

3.2 Research methodology: the philosophical context

All research is inevitably set within a philosophical context. Therefore, this thesis must detail the philosophical context of my research. This context is underpinned by two considerations: ontological and epistemological. Ontology is concerned with the nature of the reality of the world. Epistemology is concerned with how we can gain knowledge
about the world. As a researcher, I must make my ontological and epistemological positions clear, in order to contextualise my inquiry and set the philosophical boundaries within which I conducted my research. There are arguably many positions on the ontological and epistemological continua that a researcher can adopt. However, according to Burrell and Morgan (1979), the position adopted is broadly based on whether the researcher has an objectivist or subjectivist approach to social science. In the following sections, I explain my own philosophical commitments, which informed my methodological choices.

### 3.2.1 My ontological position

A researcher’s position on the ontological continuum is based on whether they consider reality to be external to the individual or the "product of individual cognition" (*ibid.*: 1). An extreme objectivist approach to social science lies at one end of this continuum. Burrell and Morgan call this realism and explain that it can assume many forms. A more traditional form views the world as an external, concrete entity that exists independently of the researcher. It sees truth as singular and fact as something that exists and can be revealed. At the opposite end of the continuum lies the extreme subjectivist approach, which Burrell and Morgan call nominalism. This view considers there is no truth and that fact does not exist *a priori* but rather is something entirely created by humans (Burrell and Morgan, 1987; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2015) Of course, there are many other ontological positions on this continuum. Therefore, a researcher adopts a position according to how s/he views the world. Bryman and Bell (2015) use different terminology, seeing the continuum as having objectivism at one end and constructionism at the other. Objectivism is akin to realism, seeing social phenomena as existing independently of social actors. In contrast, constructionism is similar to nominalism, seeing social phenomena as being in a state of constant construction through social interaction.

In assessing the foregoing debate, I adopt the position of constructionism, arguing that reality is an ongoing construction of the world. Furthermore, I follow Gummesson (2000) inasmuch as I consider myself, as the participating social scientist, to be a key research instrument. Therefore, the construction of the social reality described in this
thesis also depends upon the theoretical and conceptual lenses through which I have viewed the social phenomena being researched. This worldview also shapes our belief in how we can acquire knowledge about the world. A constructionist worldview tends to reject the possibility of it being possible "to adopt any permanent, unvarying standards by which truth can be universally known" Lincoln et al. (2011: 119). In other words, there is not one single way of describing the world, but rather a variety of ways to understand, explain and interpret it. Thus, my ontological position also shapes my epistemological position, as I now explain.

3.2.2 My epistemological position

Similarly to the ontological continuum, there is an epistemological continuum, similarly based on whether the researcher's approach to social science is objectivist or subjectivist. Burrell and Morgan (1979) argue that the epistemological continuum ranges from positivism to anti-positivism. Bryman and Bell (2015) concur with this, but refer to anti-positivism as interpretivism. As with the ontological continuum, scholars occupy various positions on it. Social scientists committed to a realist ontology would tend to favour a positivist epistemology. Positivism sees the social world as having an external existence, whose properties can be measured using objective methods, "rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, by reflection or intuition" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015: 51). As such, positivism tends to advocate that social reality should be studied by applying methods used in the natural sciences. Broadly speaking, positivists see the purpose of gaining knowledge as a way of mapping out the social structure of the world and ‘freezing’ it into structured immobility so that it can be objectively measured and revealed (Morgan and Smircich, 1980). However, a key question for social scientists is whether the social world can or should be studied using the same methods as the natural sciences (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

A positivist epistemology would tend to favour quantitative research methods, to measure and quantify the properties of the social world being studied. However, constructionist researchers like me seek to explore and understand rather than measure social phenomena. Therefore, a positivist epistemology is not consistent with my ontological position. More appropriate to this thesis is an anti-positivist, or interpretivist
epistemology. This position considers that research should respect that there are differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences (Bryman and Bell, 2015). For the interpretivist researcher, the social world "can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 5).

With my epistemological commitment to interpretivism, I view myself, as the researcher, as being part of knowledge creation. Indeed, this is the reason for two terminological choices used throughout this thesis. Firstly, I refer to the people involved in my project as ‘participants’ rather than ‘respondents’. This is because I consider that I am constructing knowledge of the social world of the empirical site with them through my questions and observations. Furthermore, my view of the social world under investigation is through the set of conceptual lenses detailed in section 2.5, these being Phipps’ (2007) concept of languaging, Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concepts of habitus and capital and de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space as a practised place. As such, I can only claim to capture the subjective meaning of social action in this field. Secondly, I refer to data ‘generation’ rather than data ‘collection’ (Byrne, 2012). This is because, as mentioned earlier, I do not consider the data is ‘out there’ for me to find, but rather that it is constructed between me and the research participants, through our conversations and my observations. This perspective follows Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), who argue that the research interview is a place where knowledge is constructed between the interviewer and interviewee. Each acts in relation to the other and reciprocally influences each other. Therefore, the knowledge produced from the interview results from the specific interaction between these two parties in that particular situation.

Constructionists and interpretivists tend to eschew quantification of the social world to establish universally applicable laws. Instead, they see management research as a means of "understanding the processes through which human beings concretise their relationship to their world" (Morgan and Smircich, 1980: 493, emphasis added). For this reason, they favour qualitative research methods over quantitative; as did I for this project. Furthermore, interpretivism "requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action" (Bryman and Bell, 2015: 29). Therefore, an interpretivist epistemological commitment is in keeping with my ontological belief that my presence in the empirical field is part of the social action taking place within it.
As stated in section 1.2, my project seeks to explore and understand the social phenomenon of cross-lingual communication in this particular workplace and how it relates to the job at hand. Therefore, my study does not follow the conventional scientific methodology of deduction. Following Chalmers (2013), I am not applying laws and theories to this empirical site to deduce predictions and explanations of it. Nor am I seeking to specify or test any hypotheses. Instead, I am seeking to acquire knowledge to shed further light on the aforementioned concepts and extend their application. By doing this, I aim to understand the significance of cross-lingual communication practices and experiences for people and the organisation in day-to-day work. Following Easterby-Smith, et al. (2015: 84), it is my job as researcher to "illuminate different truths" and establish how particular claims for the truth and reality of cross-lingual communication are constructed in the everyday life of this team. Therefore, I considered a qualitative research design to be appropriate for my project. This research design also appears consistent with a social constructionist ontology and epistemology and is fully described in section 3.4. However, as well as following my ontological and epistemological commitments, my choice of research design was also determined by my research objective, research questions and the nature of the empirical site, as detailed in the next section.

3.3 Establishing the research site and my research questions

The subjectivity inherent in the philosophical positions I adopt for this research means my research questions reveal something of me, as the researcher, as well as of the empirical site I was researching. Indeed, this assertion resonates with my initial reasons for wanting to conduct this research, explained in section 1.1. My literature review in chapter 2 made me aware of how far my concerns had already been addressed and where further research was needed. Given this context, my research objective was to study the social phenomenon of cross-lingual communication. In this way, I hoped to begin to understand how people working together primarily, though not exclusively, in a lingua franca experience cross-lingual communication and the effect that these experiences have on their interactions with each other and the work they do.
3.3.1 Finding and gaining access to the empirical site

Having established my research interest in broad terms, my first task was to find and gain access to a suitable empirical site. My study was not requested or sponsored by any organisation. Therefore, on the one hand I had to find an organisation that considered my research to be of value to its day-to-day operations. On the other hand, the site had to offer me the potential to study cross-lingual communication in order to make an academic contribution. Following Bryman and Bell’s (2015) suggestions, I informed my friends and professional contacts of my research interest. This resulted in one potential opportunity to conduct my research in a multinational company (MNC) where English is the *lingua franca*. However, the cost of overseas travel and my ongoing professional commitments meant that this was neither financially nor logistically feasible for me. I therefore considered how I might study the same problem from a different perspective, namely in a domestic organisation employing migrant workers. The phenomenon being researched would still be cross-lingual communication. Therefore, it would still be informed by the literature reviewed in chapter 2. Furthermore, I considered that studying this problem in a domestic organisation, rather than an MNC, would provide a valuable contribution to the organisational literature, given the lack of attention paid to cross-lingual communication in domestic organisations.

Once again, I used my professional background to explore possibilities in the private sector for research within a domestic organisation employing migrant workers. I also approached one organisation through one of my colleagues on the PhD programme. Nothing emerged from these channels. However, from an Internet search, I located an event held in February 2011 by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) entitled "Understanding and Benefiting from a Diverse Workforce". This event was aimed at Human Resource professionals working in organisations employing a linguistically and/or culturally diverse workforce. As this resonated loudly with my research interest, I contacted the organiser to ask whether, as a non-member of the CIPD, I could attend. My request was granted and I was also invited to give a two-minute presentation about my research interest, in case anyone present was sufficiently interested to grant me access to their organisation. One private sector organisation expressed an interest. I followed this up in writing, but received no further response.
However, speakers from two council partnership centres for policy on refugee, asylum and migrant issues offered to include details of my research interest in their next newsletter, which would be circulated to both public and private sector organisations in their local areas. This resulted in my being contacted by Pauline Michaelson\textsuperscript{12}, the Team Leader (TL) in a public sector organisation in Countyshire, who heads the Multi Ethnic Community Support (MECOS) team; a department within Countyshire County Council (CCC).

Pauline was interested in my research idea and wondered if their organisation would be of interest to me. We therefore scheduled a meeting in May 2011 for me to outline my proposed project to MECOS staff and for them in turn to explain the nature of their team, employees and work to me. This initial meeting was between me, Pauline and two Educational Advisers (EAs), Michelle and Carol. The role of EA is principally to support schools in providing education to pupils of families who have recently migrated to England, who have little or no knowledge of English. EAs also support the MECOS team’s Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediaries (MELIs). The MELIs’ role is to provide linguistic and cultural support to the aforementioned pupils, their parents and staff in public service organisations\textsuperscript{13} who educate, care for or otherwise communicate with members of families from different ethnic backgrounds. The explanation of the team provided by Pauline, Michelle and Carol forms the basis of my description of the empirical site in section 3.3.2. With this meeting, all parties felt there was a mutual benefit to my conducting my research within their team. We therefore agreed that, in return for my being granted access, I would use my data analysis to provide the team with a management report. They asked for this report to show the benefits brought by my research to the team and the lessons learned by all involved.

I realised that this access granted to me was merely through the team’s ‘front door’ and that obtaining access is a continuous exercise. It was important for me to ensure that the ‘front door’ remained open but also to gain permission to open up any relevant ‘internal doors’. This would allow me access to individuals, as they were identified as potentially useful to my study (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Gummesson 2000). I therefore suggested

\textsuperscript{12} I have used pseudonyms for all research participants, roles, locations and organisations to preserve anonymity.

\textsuperscript{13} Principally education and NHS organisations.
options for data generation and asked how feasible these methods would be for the team. Full details of my resulting research design, data generation methods and reasons for their selection are presented in sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6. In section 3.4, I also revisit the question of access relating to individual informants and ‘doors within’ the wider organisation. However, I now continue by describing the empirical site in section 3.3.2. Then, in section 3.3.3, I reiterate my research questions, placing them within the context of this empirical site. In this way, I show why it emerged as being a suitable place in which to seek answers.

3.3.2 The empirical site

The MECOS team is a department within the larger organisation of CCC. MECOS is principally available to all schools within Countyshire. However, it also supports other public services in the county, if required. The main aims of MECOS are to support parents and children from different ethnic backgrounds whilst promoting diversity and preventing racism. In this regard, one of the key services that MECOS provides is linguistic and cultural mediation. In schools, such mediation is principally between the aforementioned multi ethnic pupils who are non-native speakers of English (NNSs), the native English-speaking (NS) staff responsible for providing their education and pastoral care and the pupils’ parents, who may also have little or no English proficiency. In other public services, such as for example the NHS, mediation is between healthcare staff who are NSs and patients whose first language is not English. Translation and interpreting are key services to provide the necessary linguistic support. However, mediation also includes promotion of cultural awareness between communicating parties, to alleviate communication difficulties which may arise from a lack of cultural understanding.

MECOS was established in 2009 and, at the time of conducting my research in 2011, was run as a project within CCC. It has since been outsourced to another organisation. The MECOS TL, Pauline Michaelson, founded the project, for which she sought funding from CCC. She enlisted the support of Tony Evans, Headteacher of Hillside

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14 Wherever the abbreviations NS and NNS appear, ‘of English’ is intended, unless otherwise specified.
Primary School, Countytown A as project sponsor to assist with obtaining funding and getting the project started. Tony is not officially a member of the MECOS team but remains a project sponsor and continues to be involved in and committed to MECOS’s work. Continuation of the MECOS project depended on continued receipt of government funding. Since the coalition government then in office was keen to reduce public spending, MECOS funding could only ever be secured for short periods. Therefore, the team’s future was always uncertain, since team members’ contracts could only be renewed with ongoing funding.

During the course of my data generation, 17 people were involved in the MECOS team\(^{15}\) at some point, albeit with one MELI and one EA exiting and two MELIs joining. Three of the MELIs were full-time (substantive) employees; the others were employed on a casual basis. To facilitate illustration of the current discussion, Table 2 on the next page provides an overview of all MECOS team members together with key information regarding their role and native language. Full nationality and linguistic profiles for team members and sponsor are given in Appendix 1 (MECOS team members’ biographical information).

\(^{15}\)This includes Tony Evans, although he is not a member of the core team.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team member</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Native language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>Team Leader (TL)</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>Educational Adviser (EA)</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agata</td>
<td>Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediary (MELI – Casual)</td>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akbar</td>
<td>MELI – Casual</td>
<td>Pashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>MELI – Casual</td>
<td>Latvian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izabela</td>
<td>MELI – Full-time</td>
<td>Czech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimberly</td>
<td>MELI – Full-time</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lukas</td>
<td>MELI – Casual</td>
<td>Lithuanian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rana</td>
<td>MELI – Casual</td>
<td>Turkish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
<td>MELI – Casual</td>
<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shilpa16</td>
<td>MELI – Casual</td>
<td>Not confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiktoria</td>
<td>MELI – Full-time</td>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yasmin</td>
<td>MELI – Casual</td>
<td>Punjabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Headteacher and MECOS project sponsor</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: MECOS team members: names, roles and native language

Michelle and Carol had line management responsibilities for the MELIs. Carol retired during the course of my project; fortunately after I had interviewed her. The native language profiles of the MELIs reflect the languages in heaviest demand in Countyshire at the time. Naturally, all MELIs can communicate competently in English, this being a key recruitment requirement. Some MELIs also have other language skills, which they are sometimes required to use (see Appendix 1). Nevertheless, English is the agreed lingua franca used by MECOS team members in their day-to-day work with each other. Although the sample of 17 potential interviewees appears small, given my ontological and epistemological positions as detailed earlier, I was seeking to explore this phenomenon rather than generate hypotheses. Therefore, such linguistic diversity within

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16 Shilpa left the organisation shortly after I began my data generation. Therefore, I was not able to interview her and have few biographical details for her.
a wide variety of workplace situations constituted a rich empirical site for my investigation.

Clearly, the language barrier is being traversed when NNSs communicate with NSs. However, at this empirical site, the language barrier is also being traversed when NNSs communicate with each other. Few of the MELIs share another common language and, even when they do, they may be less proficient in this language than in English. Therefore, they must inevitably resort to the lingua franca of English to communicate with each other at work. I therefore considered this team offered considerable potential for seeking answers to my research questions. I reproduce these questions below together with a brief explanation of why I considered this empirical site to be suitable.

3.3.3 Research questions

Question 1: How, where and with whom is cross-lingual communication practised and experienced in the multilingual MECOS team? How is culture involved?

Broadly speaking, the various locations in which MECOS team members work include schools, the team’s own head office and NHS establishments. Their work requires them to communicate cross-lingually with each other, and to communicate with various other people. This includes young children from different language backgrounds, their parents, school teachers and other educational or public service staff. As a result, I considered that the diverse range of people and languages working together in an equally diverse range of organisational contexts offered considerable potential for exploring how cross-lingual communication is experienced at this empirical site.

Question 2: How are languages chosen and how are languages and languaging experienced in this team?

In the initial meeting with Pauline, Michelle and Carol, I was struck by the rich diversity of language backgrounds of individual MECOS team members, coupled with the fact that very few share any language other than English. I realised that this meant that languaging would be an integral part of everyone’s day-to-day work experience. MELIs would naturally experience languaging when using the lingua franca of English.
to speak to the EAs and, equally, the EAs would experience the MELIs’ languaging efforts. However, because few of the MELIs share any language other than English, they would also need to language with each other. Therefore, not only would they be experiencing the languaging they were undertaking, they would also be experiencing the languaging undertaken by their colleagues. Once again, I concluded that such a substantial level of languaging experiences would provide a rich resource for addressing this particular question.

Question 3: *How is meaning made via cross-lingual communication in this team?*

The qualitative nature of my research means I do not intend to make generalisations about the cross-lingual communication experience for different types of multilingual organisation. In this under-researched area, my aim is to specifically explore the phenomenon of cross-lingual communication, to understand what is happening in this particular team. This would help me to continue the discussion on language issues at work, which has barely begun, in the organisation studies literature and make my main academic contribution. Furthermore, I hoped that my project would inform the direction which future research should take, as well as being of practical value to the organisation being researched.

Having established the suitability of this empirical site for answering my research questions, my next task was to formulate a suitable research design to fulfil my research objectives. This design also needed to be consistent with my ontological and epistemological commitments explained in sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. Furthermore, it also needed to be practical and feasible for the organisation, the research participants and myself as the researcher.

### 3.4 Research design and data sources

#### 3.4.1 The single case study design

"A research design provides a framework for the collection and analysis of data" (Bryman and Bell, 2015: 49). With this in mind, I needed to choose a research design
that would provide a suitable framework for my own project. This design also needed to be feasible within the financial and time constraints of the PhD programme and acceptable to the MECOS team and the wider CCC organisation. I therefore considered a single case study to be most appropriate and now explain the reasons why.

When positivist and non-positivist researchers choose to undertake a case study, they presuppose that something can be learned from a single case. A single case study does not typically seek or claim to be representative. Instead, it makes a detailed examination of the phenomenon of interest to the researcher. In analysing the data generated within the case study, the researcher then presents what can be learned from the case that others need to know (Stake, 2000). With this understanding, I considered a case study to be a viable option for my project for three reasons. Firstly, it would provide a suitable framework for my exploration of the empirical site. Secondly, it would enable me to learn something about the phenomenon of cross-lingual communication that would be of interest to the organisation. Thirdly, it would enable me to learn about the phenomenon in order to contribute to existing organisational literature and inform future research. Yin (2014) considers that the ‘case’, or unit of analysis, is usually the organisation, whereas Bryman and Bell (2015) advise that a case can be a single organisation, location, person or event. Stake (2000) is even more specific, proposing a typology of cases, these being essentially: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. The first is where the case itself is of interest, without there being any aim to generalise or build theories from it. The last is the study of a number of cases for the purpose of investigating a general phenomenon. However it is the instrumental case study which suits the requirements of my project, as I now explain.

An instrumental case study is where a "case is examined mainly to provide insight into an issue" (ibid.: 437). Silverman (2013b) recommends drawing careful boundaries around the case and defining the unit of analysis at the outset in order to clarify research strategy. Thus, if the case is an organisation, for example, a school, the researcher must be clear on which aspects of the organisation are being studied. For example, does the project include classroom behaviour, staff meetings and/or meetings with parents? And so the list goes on. In the light of the foregoing, I identified my case, or unit of analysis, as being the MECOS team, which as explained in section 3.3.1, is a department within the CCC. However, the issue that I am actually interested in is that of the cross-lingual
communication experiences of MECOS team members. Therefore, following Stake (2000), I would be studying the MECOS team to gain insight into the phenomenon of cross-lingual communication. For that reason, the boundaries of my case study would include meetings between MECOS team members only and potentially meetings between MECOS team members and other people outside the team.

Yin (2014) also considers that one of the key benefits of collecting data by means of a case study is the opportunity to use a number of different sources of evidence. These different sources of data provide a variety of perspectives on the same unit of analysis. In this way, a case study can help understand and explore complex phenomena and provide an opportunity to gain a more holistic perspective of a situation (Remenyi et al., 2003). I considered these strengths could be beneficial to my investigation as different sources of evidence and converging lines of inquiry would help enrich my data and subsequent analysis. My proposed single case study also offered the following three practical benefits.

The first practical benefit was that, in studying one team (or department) to which I already had access, I did not have to seek and gain access to other organisations. As explained in section 3.3.1, I would still need to obtain access to participants within the team. However, from the initial meeting, there was every indication that this would be granted. Finding suitable organisations and negotiating access can take time. Indeed, it took me six months to search for, find and gain access to this one team. Clearly, repeating this exercise is not conducive to the time constraints of any doctoral programme. With this major hurdle surmounted, I was able to begin data generation immediately in June 2011. This brought a second practical benefit to the team as they had requested that I begin my interviews as soon as possible. This was because, as explained in section 3.3.2, continuation of the MECOS project was not guaranteed. A third practical benefit was one of logistics. Although the empirical site was not local to my home, it was within reasonable driving distance. This enabled me to schedule my data generation such that I could also uphold my own professional commitments, whilst accommodating MECOS team members’ commitments. Despite these benefits, I realised that case studies have their disadvantages. I now explain the key disadvantages I needed to consider before I could ultimately decide whether the case study would indeed be the best form of research design for my project.
One criticism of case studies is that they cannot be used to make generalisations (Gummesson, 2000). However, this criticism presupposes that general knowledge is more valuable than concrete knowledge of a case. Flyvbjerg (2011) argues that knowledge does not have to be generalised in order for it to contribute to knowledge. Yin (2014) also contests this criticism, arguing that qualitative research, particularly case study findings, can be generalised in terms of theories rather than populations. The researcher should remember that a case study is not representative of a population and should not fall into the trap of seeing it as a way of making statistical generalisations about that population. Instead, the research objective is to shed empirical light on theories or principles (ibid.: 40). Remenyi et al. (2003) also agree that conclusions can be compared with other case studies, with such comparisons generating greater learning potential when considering situations which, though not identical, share some similarities.

As explained in section 3.3.3 when presenting research question 3, my research objective was to explore the under-researched phenomenon of cross-lingual communication at work. As such, I aim to contribute to an existing, albeit small, body of knowledge. My project also seeks to explore, rather than represent or generalise, in order to gain an understanding of participants’ experiences of cross-lingual communication. Furthermore, taking the ontological perspective of constructionism, the context of these socially constructed experiences is crucial to my understanding them. Thus, I am seeking to understand cross-lingual communication within this team and add to existing knowledge rather than establish any ‘hard’ facts or rules with which to make generalisations. As a result, I do not consider the foregoing criticism of case study research to be disadvantageous for my project.

Case studies are also criticised for lacking statistical reliability and validity (Gummesson, 2000). However, reliability and validity can both be interpreted in more than one way. For example, Bryman and Bell (2015) see external validity as broadly similar to generalisation regarding case study research; a criticism discussed in the previous paragraph. Gummesson (2000) sees validity more as a process that requires the researcher to openly discuss their research approach and its weaknesses and limitations as well as its results. Similarly, there are differences in the interpretation of reliability. I explain some of these differences more fully in section 3.9. I also explain the steps I
took to mitigate any risk that my research could be deemed unreliable or invalid. In so doing, I provide what is effectively an audit trail for each stage of my empirical research, the reasons for my actions and decisions and their inherent limitations. In this way, I address the aforementioned criticisms sufficiently to ensure that the reliability and validity of my research, as I define these concepts, is not compromised by my choice of research design.

Having assessed the potential benefits of this case study as well as the criticisms of case study research and my own personal constraints, I concluded that this single case study design would be the most feasible and suitable for conducting my research. My next task was to determine the potential data sources and which data generation methods to use. The following section considers who, what and where my data sources would be.

3.4.2 Data sources and generation methods

As I explained in section 3.1, this project originated from my interest in the cross-lingual communication experiences between co-workers, primarily communicating in a *lingua franca* that is not everyone’s first language. Therefore, my prime focus was on the MECOS team members. However, as stated in section 3.3.1, when drafting my research proposal, I had no idea where I would conduct my research. Having gained access to the MECOS team, it became apparent, as explained earlier, that as well as using the *lingua franca* to work with each other, MECOS team members also use the *lingua franca* in many of their other work situations. Therefore, I hoped to explore participants’ cross-lingual communication experiences in some of these other contexts.

Given the qualitative nature of my inquiry, I considered my data generation would ideally be a combination of ethnographic observation, one-to-one interviews and focus groups\(^{17}\), as well as any relevant documentation that the team could provide. As with the research design, my data generation methods had to be feasible, as well as suitable, both for me and the team.

\(^{17}\) In reflecting on data generation issues during the course of my empirical investigation, I subsequently decided to use language diaries as an additional data generation method, as explained in section 3.5.3.
I outlined the first three of the aforementioned methods to Pauline, Michelle and Carol at our initial meeting and they agreed I could conduct one-to-one interviews with all MECOS team members and observe the monthly MECOS team meetings. Pauline explained they would need to think about who would be involved in focus groups and also when and where they might be held. We therefore agreed to reconsider this option later. With this agreement, it appeared that my initial sample of participants would be all the members of the MECOS team at that time, as specified in the table in section 3.3.2. I explain my sampling method more fully in the following section.

3.4.3 Sampling method

In identifying potential participants, I used a combination of convenience and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling is a method by which sample participants are selected according to how easy it is to access them. A key disadvantage with this sampling method is that it serves no purpose for research that intends to generalise findings to fit a wider population. However, convenience samples are taken from a specific population which may likewise be of specific interest to a researcher. Furthermore, the convenience sample may be valuable in gaining new perspectives on old generalisations. After all, it only takes a convenience sample of one black swan to disprove the generalisation that all swans are white (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). As stated in section 3.3.3, I do not intend to generalise from this research. Therefore, I considered that the main disadvantage of convenience sampling was not an issue for my project. Indeed, as my research constitutes an exploration of a specific phenomenon, a population of specific interest seemed most fitting for my requirements. As my research is on cross-lingual communication in the workplace, my sample of participants needed to consist of a specific group of co-workers, traversing the language barrier. Therefore, the MECOS team, with its NSs and NNSs, represented a convenient sample of participants. Nevertheless, I still needed to use purposive sampling to ensure my convenience sample was fit for the purpose of my research, as I now explain.

Purposive sampling requires a researcher to seek out settings in which and individuals between whom the phenomenon being researched is likely to be happening (Silverman, 2013c). However, as Saunders (2012: 43) notes "samples ostensibly chosen for
convenience will also often address other sample selection criteria that are more relevant to the research aim". In my initial discussions with Pauline, Michelle and Carol, I realised that this was true for my convenience sample. Here, I established that the phenomenon of cross-lingual communication was happening between all MECOS team members. I also established that the main settings for their communication were at head office, in team meetings or one-to-one conversations and in schools, when undertaking pupil language assessments and in other communications with school personnel. Therefore, any cross-lingual communication between these people within these settings represented a purposive sample for my project. I also established that MELIs practise cross-lingual communication with other NSs in a variety of settings. This is mostly in Countyshire schools with schoolchildren, school and other educational personnel and children’s parents. Occasionally, the MELIs also work in other settings, such as the NHS, where their cross-lingual communication is with NHS staff and members of the public requiring linguistic support. Given that I would be generating my data primarily by means of interview and observation, I considered that extending my data generation to these other settings would not be feasible, for the following three reasons.

Firstly, MELIs have an irregular work schedule when not in head office. They can be called to undertake jobs at short notice and/or of short duration, anywhere across the county. Therefore, given the 70-mile distance between my home and Countyshire and the limitations imposed by my professional activities, it would not be feasible for me to travel to observe these ad-hoc cross-lingual exchanges. Secondly, I could not assume that the ‘front door’ access I had been granted to observe team meetings at head office extended to all other settings in Countyshire where the MELIs worked (Gummesson, 2000). I therefore considered it would not be feasible to negotiate access to all these other settings, given the time restrictions of a doctoral research programme.

Thirdly, following Gummesson (ibid.), I would also need to obtain cognitive access to understand what happens in these settings. This would mean gaining access to individuals in those settings in order to seek descriptions from them of what is happening. The MELIs work with a large number of children, school staff and parents, who would all have to consent to my being present to observe their communication. This would potentially be fraught with ethical issues, not least because of the children
involved. I considered that seeking access on this scale would not be feasible within the scope of my project. Therefore, I concluded that my participant sample would necessarily be limited to the members of the MECOS team only.

As I explained in section 3.4.2, I outlined three potential data generation methods at my initial meeting with Pauline, Michelle and Carol, these being one-to-one interviews, observation and focus groups. Having subsequently established my sample together with some of the limitations of my data generation, I needed to decide which of these methods I would use, how I would use them and why. In section 3.5, I discuss the methods I selected, the reasons why and their potential limitations. Then in section 3.6, I explain how I used these methods in practice, as well as the limitations actually encountered.

3.5. Planning data generation: methods chosen

3.5.1 One-to-one interviews: purpose and benefits

The qualitative interview is usually semi-structured or unstructured. With the former, the researcher seeks to guide proceedings with a set of questions on matters relevant to the research project. With the latter, conversation is allowed to flow more freely, with the interviewer using, at most, an aide-mémoire to prompt coverage of certain topics (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The researcher makes their choice depending on the extent to which they seek to steer the conversation. Both types are flexible, the semi-structured interview being akin to a purposeful conversation. Interviewees are encouraged to respond to the interview questions at length, in whatever way they feel is relevant.

Qualitative interviews as a data generation method appealed to me for two significant reasons. Firstly, given the limitations of sampling and access in my project, I considered that semi-structured one-to-one interviews would provide a good opportunity to have a purposeful in-depth conversation with each participant. They would enable me to find out about participants’ cross-lingual communication experiences with their MECOS team colleagues, as well as with other people they work with in other settings. Secondly, they would complement the data I generated using the other methods
discussed later in this chapter. For example, as interviews aim to elicit a free, detailed and authentic expression of interviewees’ experiences, they can complement observation by serving as a means of probing participants on what has been observed to obtain a richer account of the world from their point of view. Interviews can thus potentially uncover issues, such as feelings and emotions, which may be difficult to observe (Bryman and Bell, 2015). I considered this potential would be particularly advantageous to my project, since one of my objectives was to find out about participants’ cross-lingual communication experiences. By their nature, experiences are difficult, arguably impossible to observe.

Another potential benefit of qualitative interviews is that open-ended and flexible questions are likely to elicit detailed and considered responses (Byrne, 2012). As I was seeking to understand the MECOS team members’ experiences of cross-lingual communication, this was another reason for me to conduct one-to-one interviews. Another advantage of interviews is that they enable participants to answer questions "in their own words […] and, to a certain extent [interviewing] allows interviewees to speak in their own voices and with their own language" (ibid.: 209). The first two claims in this statement certainly applied to my project. However, the third claim of participants being able to speak in their own language was not entirely the case. Indeed, given the linguistic diversity of my participants, the language chosen for conducting the interviews was a methodological issue in itself. I discuss this in section 3.5.2. Nevertheless, interviews offered me a further benefit of exploring the voices and experiences of a group of people who have so far been largely ignored by the organisation studies literature (Byrne, 2012). Furthermore, interviews would enable me to learn about participants’ subjective experiences of cross-lingual communication at work, which is an area of reality I would otherwise be unable to access (Peräkylä and Ruusuvuori, 2011). There are also philosophical reasons why interviews would benefit my inquiry, as I now explain.

Philosophically speaking, qualitative one-to-one interviewing as a technique is consistent with the ontological perspective of constructionism taken by this thesis, as explained in section 3.2.1. With this perspective, I aim to gain some understanding of participants’ cross-lingual communication experiences by listening to and subsequently analysing their perceptions. As I explained in section 3.2.2, I consider that, as a
researcher, I am generating rather than collecting data. This is because, in following
Kvale and Brinkman (2009), I regard the interview data as a resource, constructed by
me and each participant. In other words, each interviewee only provides an account of
their experiences that relates to the questions I ask and my physical presence.
Furthermore, my analysis of this data is yet another construction of the participant’s
account of reality, since it is effectively my subjective interpretation of their recounted
experiences. Similarly, the interpretivist epistemological perspective taken by this thesis
regards interviews as being a process of knowledge creation resulting from the
interaction between the researcher and the research participants. As such, I consider that
whatever participants might tell me is not a definitive version of reality, but rather my
interpretation of their reported experiences, which are themselves subjective. Therefore,
the method of interviewing provides a means of ensuring a useful dialogue takes place
between me and my research participants. This in turn enables me to interact with them
in order to construct a meaningful report of my interpretation of this team’s reality and
thus knowledge for the organisation studies (Lincoln et al., 2011; Byrne, 2012).

The foregoing explains the potential benefits of interviewing and hence my reasons for
choosing this method as one method of data generation. However, interviews also have
their limitations. I now consider these and how they affect my research.

3.5.2 One-to-one interviews: limitations, issues and disadvantages

In section 3.5.1, I explained Byrne’s (2012) suggestion that one advantage of interviews
is to allow participants to explain things in their own language. However, this was not
necessarily the case for my project. In conducting interviews about experiences of
language and languaging with people whose first language is not English, a key
question for me was which language to use with participants who were not NSs. Should
I ask them to speak in their native language or English? Neither option was ideal. On
the one hand, the English option may compound the difficulty of answering searching
questions for the ten NNSs. Therefore, my data may not be as rich as if they were able
to speak in their native language. Nevertheless, since my research interest was
languaging, this option would give me the opportunity to experience their languaging
first-hand and thus gain valuable methodological reflections. I could then potentially
use these as an additional means of enriching my data analysis and hence knowledge construction.

On the other hand, the native language option would require me to recruit interpreters since I do not speak any of the NNS participants’ native languages. Although this would potentially enable them to give more detailed answers to my questions, their responses would be filtered through their interpreter. Hence, I would receive a third party’s interpretation of what the participant was saying, complete with any nuances they might cast on the data. Given my interpretivist epistemological perspective that considers knowledge to be created through the interaction between researcher and participant, I considered that external interpreters could be an unwanted intrusion in this interaction. There were also practical and ethical issues regarding the use of interpreters, as I explain below.

Having undertaken interpreting professionally, I am aware of the significant financial cost for this service. Furthermore, with so many languages, I would need to recruit a different interpreter for each one. This in turn would require me to take time, and thus incur more cost, to brief as many as eight interpreters on the purpose of my research project and academic research more generally. There would also be a geographical consideration, inasmuch as the suitably qualified interpreters may not live close enough to travel to the interview locations. I considered interpreting by telephone would be unsatisfactory in these circumstances. Finally, I would also need to obtain interviewees’ consent to involving a third party. Weighing up the advantages and disadvantages of both options, I concluded that the disadvantages of using interpreters were too onerous. Although conducting the interviews in English may restrict the participants’ ability to express themselves, I would nevertheless be listening to their account in their own words, if not their own language. I considered that this, together with the methodological advantage of having direct access to their languaging, was reason enough to conduct the interviews in English. Furthermore, when discussing the question of interview language with Pauline, Michelle and Carol, they considered English would be acceptable given that all MELIs are sufficiently fluent to fulfil their responsibilities.

Another issue with participants’ accounts of their experiences is that they can be affected by being aware of or speculating about the researcher’s interests (Silverman,
2013a). It thus follows that their responses may also be affected by being aware of their own interests, in particular, the ‘picture’ of their organisation they want to convey to the researcher. Indeed, reflecting on the interviews made me aware that MECOS team members tended to present their experiences in a positive light. I therefore had to keep this in mind during my data analysis. My ontological view of interview data is that it does not constitute any definitive reality. Rather, it is the participant’s view of reality, as filtered by their own worldview. Therefore, I recognise that such data is inevitably filtered by the participant’s view on a particular occasion, within the context of my interview questions. Full details of how I conducted these interviews are given later in section 3.6.1. However, at this point, I turn to consider the merits and pitfalls of observation, this being my second method of data generation.

3.5.3 Participant observation: purpose, benefits and limitations

Participant observation is a means of data generation often associated with ethnographic research. Indeed, definitions of ethnography and participant observation can appear very similar and these methods are in danger of being conflated. In both cases, the ethnographer or participant observer spends a period of time immersed within a social group in order to watch what is happening, listen to conversations and ask questions. For the ethnographic researcher, it is usually an extended period of time. With both methods, the researcher’s aim is usually to compile a written account of their research; with ethnographic research, this written account is also called an ethnography. (Bryman and Bell, 2015; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Participant observation need not always be for such an extended period of time and remains a useful means of data generation to supplement other methods used in research projects, such as mine, that are not purely ethnographic.

According to Gold (1958), the researcher essentially adopts one of four roles in participant observation. At one end of the spectrum is found the complete participant, usually associated with covert research. Here, the researcher does not advise those being observed of his/her true identity. This enables the researcher to play, or learn to play, an active role in the field being researched, without the research participants being aware that any research is being undertaken. At the other end of the spectrum is the complete
observer, who simply observes the field without interacting with the people under observation. In between these two extreme positions, the researcher may adopt one of two other roles, these being participant as observer, or observer as participant. The former emphasises the researcher’s participation within the field over observation of it. The latter favours more formal observation over participation. As I had sought the TL’s agreement to observe the monthly MECOS team meetings, my observation would not be covert. Furthermore, any covert observation would have been ethically problematic and, with such infrequent observation sessions, my opportunities to participate in the field would have been limited. Therefore I considered the roles of complete participant and participant as observer were inappropriate for my project.

Prior to entering the field, I envisaged I would potentially assume the role of complete observer. However, as I explain in section 3.6.2, I found myself assuming the role of observer as participant. As noted by Walsh (2012), this brought the benefit of preventing me from ‘going native’, since my limited participation did not permit me to fully assimilate myself within the MECOS team. Nevertheless, it afforded me other benefits as noted by Robson and McCartan (2016). One was the avoidance of any ethical dilemmas posed by covert observation. Participation also tends to result in a more informal approach to observation which is less structured, thus allowing the observer more freedom in deciding what information to gather and how to record it. This effectively renders the participant observer as the observation instrument, resulting in participant observation being direct and subjective. These attributes are in keeping with the ontological position of this thesis, inasmuch as a constructionist researcher such as me, who is in search of rich and complex data, would potentially be compromised by a more formal approach. However, in being the observation instrument, I needed to be aware that whatever I observed was through the subjective lens of my own worldview, rather than being any objective form of reality.

I also had to be aware of the disadvantages associated with the role of observer as participant, in particular that I may fail to observe things or misunderstand participants’ activities. It was also important for me, as researcher, to be aware of how I might be perceived by the host community. If the researcher is seen as an expert, the organisation or community may see them as someone who is well informed and thus equipped to identify ‘problems’ and ‘solutions’. However, this can also lead to the researcher being
seen as a critic, if the community perceives that the researcher is seeking to ‘sort things out’ for them. Thus, the expert may be welcomed, whereas the critic may be unwelcome (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Walsh, 2012). I considered the best way for me to present myself was straightforwardly as a doctoral student seeking to understand the nature of cross-lingual communication in the workplace, this being an under-researched area. Therefore, I did not profess to have any solutions. Nor did I assume that cross-lingual communication would only be problematic. Thus, I presented myself as neither an expert nor a critic, but rather someone who has engaged in cross-lingual communication at work and is interested in how others experience it.

My aforementioned interest in the language perspective resonated with Pauline, as TL and gatekeeper, and subsequently with the whole team. Furthermore, my position as a doctoral student resonated with the team’s chief purpose, which includes the provision of educational support. I was therefore welcomed and supported by everyone in the MECOS team. For reasons already explained in section 3.4.2, my research sample was limited to MECOS team members. Thus my observation of them was similarly limited to head office; the one place where they worked exclusively with each other. As I was unable to observe them in other locations, I was unable to observe the cross-lingual communication experiences outside head office described in interviews. Furthermore, during interviews, the MELIs found it difficult to recall specific details of language-related incidents in their day-to-day work. In reflecting on these problems, I considered the use of diaries as an additional means of data generation. Diaries would potentially give me further insight into participants’ experiences outside head office. My considerations of this method are detailed in the following section.

### 3.5.4 Diaries: purpose, benefits and limitations

The main purpose of considering diaries as a form of data generation was to potentially supplement and enrich the data I generated through observation and interviews (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In particular, I considered this method had potential for participants to record their feelings about specific cross-lingual communication events which can be difficult to explain and even more difficult to observe. Diaries
would also help to facilitate data generation from the participant’s perspective, rather than from my perspective, as framed by my observational lens or interview schedule (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015).

Thus I considered a diary would potentially enable participants to account more freely for their feelings, without being restricted by the way in which I articulated my interview questions. Furthermore, they could record experiences outside head office at, or soon after, the moment of the encounter, such that they would potentially have a better recollection of these. Nevertheless, diaries have disadvantages. Participants may tire of diary-keeping and thus the quality of data may deteriorate as their diligence wanes. Also, if participants do not record information quickly enough, they may find their recall somewhat lacking when they come to record information (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Therefore, this may not alleviate the MELIs’ recall problem as noted above. Nevertheless, I considered the benefits were sufficient to use this data generation method. Finally, diaries "reflect the interests and perspectives of their authors" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 127). Therefore, and as I explain in section 3.6.3, the data generated may be of limited use or interest to the researcher.

Throughout this section, I have explained the data generation methods I planned to use, considering the advantages and disadvantages of each. In the following section, I explain how I used these methods at the empirical site, together with the actual benefits and limitations encountered.

3.6 Undertaking data generation: methods in practice

3.6.1 One-to-one interviews

Given my decision to conduct one-to-one interviews with all members of the MECOS team, there were several practical matters to address. For example, when and where should the interviews take place? What form should questioning take, and how should responses be recorded and analysed (Byrne, 2012)? Considering the peripatetic nature of the MELIs’ role and my geographical distance from the empirical site, Pauline and I agreed to schedule three or four interviews per day, over a three-week period. I began
the process of arranging interviews by sending an information sheet to each potential participant, inviting them to take part in my research. This information sheet is given in Appendix 2. All MELIs and EAs responded positively to this invitation. Therefore, Pauline selected the dates in order to coincide with the MELIs’ work schedule and, on my behalf, allocated a date and time to each MELI.

I explained that interviews would typically be expected to last approximately one hour. However, two hours were allocated in each case, allowing for any overrunning. Pauline booked a room, at one of the head office locations, for all interviews. The only exception to this was my interview with headteacher Tony Evans, which was held in his office, on his school’s premises. In both cases, the interview room was spacious, comfortable and quiet, enabling all interviews to proceed undisturbed in a relaxed manner. Having decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, I had to compile an interview guide that would steer conversations in the direction of my research interests, whilst allowing sufficient flexibility for participants to talk about matters important to them (Bryman and Bell, 2015). In so doing, I considered that the cross-lingual communication experiences of NS EAs would in all likelihood differ from those of NNS MELIs. I therefore compiled two interview guides to reflect this possibility. These guides can be found in Appendix 3. I explain how I used them in the following paragraph.

Each interview guide consists of a large number of questions, grouped under several headings. However, I did not ask all participants to answer all questions, nor did I ask questions in any particular order. The level of detail served more as an aide mémoire for me to check that all potential points of interest to me were covered during the interviews, which I allowed to flow more like a purposeful conversation (Byrne, 2012). Furthermore, the detail helped to stimulate my conversations with MELIs in particular, given their different English language abilities. I began all interviews by summarising some of the key points in the participant information sheet (see Appendix 2). In particular, I summarised what my research project was about and why I was interested in the participants’ experiences. I emphasised that all interviews would be completely confidential. I also requested participants’ permission to make an audio recording of the interview. I explained this would benefit them by enabling me to listen carefully to what they were saying rather than focusing too heavily on note-taking. A recording would
also provide me with a complete record of all interviews, with no risk of missing anything by my failure to note any information. All participants agreed to their interview being recorded.

I then asked participants to introduce themselves and provide some basic biographical information, including which country they were from and which languages they spoke. In most cases, interviewees responded freely and enthusiastically, giving more detail than merely a direct answer. This enabled me to pick up on those references of interest to my research questions and use them to direct our conversation. Interviews thus proceeded as relaxed, yet focussed. This approach meant that, rather than asking my questions in a specific order or using specific wording, I referred back to my interview guide as participants were talking, to ensure they were covering the matters of interest to me. When the conversation faltered, went off track or came to a natural halt, I consulted my guide to select another prompt to encourage the interviewee to continue talking either on the same or different subject. By using the iterative process of listening carefully to the points raised by the interviewee and referring back to my interview guide, I ensured that all interviews covered all points of interest. I ended all interviews by asking participants if there was anything they wanted to ask me. I also checked that they were willing for me to e-mail them with any subsequent questions, if I felt that was necessary. All participants agreed, although no follow-up e-mails were required.

With sixteen audio recordings, averaging a length of one hour, the next question was who should transcribe the recordings: a professional transcriber or me? Both options presented advantages and disadvantages. Doing my own transcriptions would help me to become immersed in the data more quickly. This would potentially enable me to begin identifying emerging themes prior to undertaking a more detailed analysis. Another particular consideration for my project was that ten of the sixteen participants were NNSs. Thus, the various accents, intonations and even pronunciations of these ten participants were often very different from the other six NSs. Furthermore, they did not always speak in complete sentences that were grammatically well-structured. Bryman and Bell (2015) note Spender’s experience of using assistants to transcribe his interviews. The outcome was unsatisfactory because important data contained in the participants’ intonations and hesitations were not captured in the transcriptions. In Spender’s view, "the recording can help to recapture the actual data which is neither the
recording, nor the transcript, but the researcher’s experience of the interview in its own context” (Spender, cited in Bryman and Bell, 2015: 495). Therefore, I considered there could be a risk that a third party transcribing the MELIs’ interviews would not see these aspects as significant and thus fail to note them.

Moreover, not only could this potentially hamper my subsequent analysis, it could also constitute a missed methodological opportunity. In a project about the experience of languaging, transcribing my own recordings would give me another opportunity of experiencing participants’ languaging first-hand. I considered this could help me gain some valuable reflections on the very questions I was asking my participants. Therefore, in the light of my reflections on the foregoing advice in the literature, I considered the time I spent on transcribing the MELIs’ interviews would be valuable in enabling me to reflect further on my data and the data generation process. Nevertheless, transcription is a time-consuming process. I therefore had to weigh up the benefits of transcribing the interviews myself against the additional workload this would give me. I am not a professional transcriber and therefore would undoubtedly take longer to do the job than would a professional. I may also be more likely to make errors, although even experienced transcribers can make mistakes (Bryman and Bell, 2015). However, I considered that these disadvantages would be counterbalanced by my familiarity with each participant’s mode of expression, having conducted the interviews. Whether I or a professional transcriber transcribed the recordings, I would still need to proofread the transcripts. I therefore considered this proofreading stage would enable me to correct any errors I might have made. In the interests of using time efficiently, I considered that outsourcing the NSs’ interviews remained an option, since these would arguably present fewer difficulties regarding accent, intonation and sentence structures.

Considering all the foregoing benefits and disadvantages, I therefore decided to begin by doing my own transcription for the eight NNSs’ interviews I conducted in June 2011. This was indeed a lengthy process and time eventually became an issue, given the limitations of the doctoral programme. Therefore, I subsequently decided to outsource the six NSs’ interviews to a transcription agency. The two subsequent NNSs’ interviews I conducted later in 2011 were also outsourced to the same agency, as I considered by this stage I had gained sufficient methodological reflections without the need to transcribe any more interviews myself.
Having explained the interview method in practice, I now turn to my second method of data generation. The next section explains how I conducted my observation of the MECOS team and the reasons behind my methodological choice.

3.6.2 Participant observation

As with the interviews, there were practical matters to consider regarding observing the MECOS team meetings. Arriving at the first of these in May 2011, my initial concern was where to sit. Seating was typically arranged around a large central table in the meeting room. As team members entered the room, they chose freely where to sit. Any dilemma I might have experienced regarding whether to take a seat within this arrangement or to sit more ‘on the sidelines’ was immediately resolved on my arrival by being invited to sit at the head of the table. This invitation also signalled my role would potentially be observer-as-participant, rather than that of purely observer (Gold, 1958; Walsh, 2012).

When the meeting began, the MELI acting as chair welcomed me and asked me to introduce myself and explain my project. This was the first time I had met the MELIs, thus I had the opportunity to explain my project similarly to how I had presented it at my initial meeting with Pauline, Michelle and Carol. Although I had already asked at this initial meeting if I may make audio recordings of team meetings observed, I also sought the consent of the MELIs I was now meeting. Consent was unanimous. I therefore placed my recorder in the centre of the table, which I hoped would be sufficient to pick up everyone’s speech, given that some were closer to the microphone than others. I also explained to the MECOS team that, in addition to the recording, I would like to make a few handwritten notes. Again, this was accepted unanimously. The formal part of the meeting then began, following a designated agenda.

The first point on the team meeting agenda was always ‘Positive Round Table’. This saw each team member around the table take their turn to report a particular positive experience they had had in their work during the last month. I was also invited to contribute. On reflection, I also saw this agenda item as a further indication to that noted in section 3.5.2 of team members being encouraged to present a positive view of their
role and duties. The positive experience I presented was that of gaining access to the organisation, which had represented a significant step forward for my research. I thanked everyone for their interest and support for my project and invited participants to ask me questions about it at any time. My introduction was warmly received and resulted in my being asked a number of questions, with the general attitude being very positive. In subsequent team meetings, I began by setting up my audio recorder and sat anywhere that was available. I then took out my notebook and participated freely in proceedings as and when I was interested in a point of discussion or when I was invited to contribute. I felt very much included in the team meetings, which reinforced my role as observer-as-participant.

In recording observations, field notes are the conventional forms of record. They are often handwritten but may also be dictated into a portable dictation machine or other electronic device (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In observing these team meetings, making handwritten notes was the most convenient and easiest method for me. Furthermore, note-taking was an accepted practice, given that other people around the table were doing so. Nevertheless, I noted Hammersley and Atkinson’s (ibid.: 142) citation of Wolfinger’s assertion that field notes are inevitably selective as it is impossible to record everything. The researcher’s notes will therefore depend on what they consider to be relevant to their research questions and any prior expectations they may have. Therefore, prior to observing the first team meeting, I compiled a simple observation checklist to guide my observation and note-taking.

This checklist broadly comprised two headings for focussing my observation. Under the first heading of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour, my prompts were to observe any stories about languaging experiences as well as to observe languaging in action in the meeting. I also observed what other languages and forms of non-verbal communication were used in meetings and any other reflections on references to language and language use. Furthermore, I observed whether there was any whispering between people and, if so, in which language. Under the second heading of organisation, roles and responsibilities, my prompts were to observe who was speaking to whom, about what and in what context. I also observed which team members were more dominant, how they made meaning in their discussions and how they overcame potential problems in meaning-making. I looked for evidence of Bourdieusian forms of capital either directly
through people’s interactions or through references made during discussions. I also tried to get an idea of the MECOS team’s organisational culture. I listened for references to workplace settings outside of these team meetings and also formed a first impression of MECOS team members and their reaction to the situations being described or observed.

As with the interview process, I did not restrict my observation and notes purely to these two headings. Indeed, I noted other information pertaining to the MECOS team and team members, if I considered this could provide useful organisational context to support or enhance my analysis. In this respect, my observation experience was typical of that described by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), inasmuch as the focus and detail of my field notes changed over the course of my project. This was partly because I tried to work inductively and through rich description, rather than slavishly adhering to a priori categories with which to organise my reflections from the outset. Noting Hammersley and Atkinson’s (ibid.) warning that recall following observation can rapidly diminish, I typed up my field notes as soon after the meetings as possible. Furthermore, I tried to include as much detail as possible, including my own emotional reactions and reflections, which I considered could provide me with valuable methodological reflections.

As mentioned earlier, I also made audio recordings of these meetings. My reason for doing this was to potentially give myself the opportunity of analysing the content of cross-lingual communication from a sociolinguistic perspective. I anticipated that there would be a lot of cross-lingual communication activity around the meeting table. Therefore, I considered I could use this naturally occurring talk as an additional form of data, to be analysed, for example, using conversation analysis. However, talk at team meetings differed from my expectations. Rather than people conversing or having discussions with each other, individuals tended to report to the team, without necessarily seeking to open up discussion. As a result, there were few cross-lingual exchanges. Therefore, the audio recordings did not provide any data which I could usefully subject to conversation analysis. For this reason, I concluded there would be no point in transcribing these recordings and accepted that conversation analysis would not be a feasible means of data analysis for my project.
By the end of November 2011, after observing five team meetings and one team training day\textsuperscript{18}, I considered that this method of data generation had reached saturation point. In other words, I was continuing to make observations that confirmed earlier observations and interview data. However, observation was not generating any new data. Therefore, when I attended the next team meeting in January 2012, my sixth in all, I followed the advice for ethnographers provided by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) and Bryman and Bell (2015) to manage my exit from the field. This involved thanking and saying goodbye to participants, whilst leaving the door open to future data generation possibilities and making arrangements for any future contact. Clearly my study is not a classic ethnography. Nevertheless, I considered my exit warranted the same level of care that any ethnographer would take, even though my participation had been somewhat brief.

Therefore, at the end of the sixth meeting I explained that this would be my last observation session. I then updated everyone as to the stage I had reached regarding transcriptions and data analysis. I outlined my broad action plan over the coming months regarding what I would be doing with the data when I was no longer attending MECOS team meetings. I also explained I may hold focus groups at a later date and that I would arrange this with Pauline. The purpose of these focus groups would be to present some of my initial findings and to give participants the opportunity of providing me with feedback as to how reliably I had presented them in these findings. I thanked everyone for their support and enthusiasm and invited people to e-mail me at any time if they had any questions. I then gave everyone the opportunity to ask any final questions. Samuel asked if anyone else would be listening to the interviews. I said I intended to transcribe all the interviews myself. However, if time became an issue and I had to consider outsourcing this work, I assured him that I would first seek permission from the people concerned. I also made this point separately to Michelle so that she could inform the wider team in case of need. As mentioned in section 3.6.1, I did subsequently decide to outsource some interview transcriptions. Therefore, I sought the consent of the participants concerned before releasing my data to the transcription company. I also obtained a statement of confidentiality from the transcription company.

\textsuperscript{18} This was a professional development day for the MELIs to develop their storytelling techniques for use in schools. Being predominantly tutor led, it provided similar observation opportunities to team meetings, with few significant cross-lingual exchanges.
Having described my participant observation in action, the following section explains how I generated additional data by means of diaries and the usefulness of this method.

3.6.3 Diaries: usefulness of data generated

My research design did not initially include diaries as a means of data generation. As I explained in sections 3.5.3 and 3.5.4, this method emerged as being potentially useful when reflecting on my interviews. I therefore discussed this possibility with Pauline and we agreed on how it would work. She suggested that it would be more appropriate to ask the three full-time MELIs to keep these diaries, as there was no telling how much work a casual MELI would undertake during any period. Therefore, any diaries kept by them would be unlikely to yield as much information as quickly as those kept by the full-time MELIs.

To prepare these diaries, I followed some, though not all, of the advice provided by Corti (cited in Bryman and Bell, 2015). I began by compiling a diary template for completion, an example of which is in Appendix 4. Immediately after each interview with the three MELIs concerned, I explained how to keep the diary and what purpose it would serve. I also explained that, as the end of the school summer term was fast approaching, there was limited time remaining for this exercise, therefore they should keep a diary for one week. During that time, they should record particular languaging events in as much detail as possible, as soon as possible after they had happened. In particular, I was keen for these diaries to capture some of the feelings experienced during specific languaging events, which proved more difficult to recall in interviews.

As I wanted to encourage the MELIs to record their experiences as quickly as possible after the event, this diary needed to be extremely portable and quick to complete. Therefore, I considered the diary design needed to be minimal. For this reason, I did not make it unnecessarily lengthy by providing a model of a completed section of the diary, as advised by Corti (ibid.), nor did I provide any checklists to serve as memory joggers.

The MELIs returned their diaries to me promptly after the week had ended. However,

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19 My explanation did not use the term ‘languaging’; I explained this concept in more straightforward terms.
my initial reaction then was a combination of satisfaction and disappointment, for the following reasons.

I was satisfied that the experiences noted were in line with what participants had described in interviews. Thus, there was a high level of consistency between diary and interview data. However, I was disappointed that the extent of experiences recorded was extremely limited. I can draw no definitive conclusions as to why this was so. It may be due to problems noted by Bryman and Bell (2015), such as decreasing (or, in this case, a lack of) diligence of diarists regarding record-keeping or a failure to note experiences sufficiently quickly. On the other hand it may be due to the time window of one week being insufficient. It may even be because these MELIs did not fully understand the purpose of the diary and I had not documented sufficient examples with which to guide them or jog their memories. On receiving the diaries, I noted that many, though not all, entries focused on the feelings surrounding the outcome of the task rather than the languaging event. This made me acutely aware of the partiality of diaries in the extent to which they reflected the authors’ interests, rather than my own (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). As it was almost the end of the school term, I did not have the opportunity to extend the use of these diaries. Furthermore, in recognising the increasing resource pressures on the MECOS team, I decided not to continue with this method of data generation when MELIs resumed their duties the following autumn. Reflecting on this method, I consider I may have gathered a richer source of data had I implemented it earlier in the school year and over a longer period. However, the timing and other practical constraints of my data generation meant this was not feasible.

By the end of the 2011 school summer term, I had generated data by means of three diaries kept for one week and fourteen out of a total of sixteen interviews. I had also undertaken participant observation at one MECOS team meeting and one training event. In the autumn term, I conducted the final two interviews and a further five team meeting observations. Thus, by the end of June 2011, I had generated sufficient data to begin my analysis. The full analysis of my data is discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6. However, I continue this chapter by explaining the method of analysis I chose, the reasons for my approach and considerations pertaining to associated issues of reliability, validity and ethics.
3.7 Data analysis: methods and limitations

I do not propose to dwell on those analysis methods I chose not to use. However, a brief explanation is warranted at this point, since this rejection was an important part of the process that resulted in my ultimate choice.

3.7.1 Conversation analysis: consideration and rejection

Before beginning data generation, I considered conversation analysis could be useful for my project. This method would allow me to analyse actual cross-lingual communication in practice through naturally occurring talk, which I assumed I would be observing at the MECOS team meetings. This was also one reason why I chose to do my own transcriptions of my interviews with the MELIs. In these transcriptions, I noted all ‘erms’, pauses, mispronunciations and interviewees’ attempts to correct their pronunciations, as I considered that some of these things could be useful indicators of languaging in action. As such, they could potentially provide me with greater insight into the cross-lingual communication experience. However, as I explained in section 3.6.2, the reality of data generation in the field departed from my expectation, as I did not observe much naturally occurring cross-lingual communication in team meetings. It thus became apparent that conversation analysis would not be feasible for my project. Notwithstanding this setback, immediate reflections on my interview data made it apparent that participants had nevertheless talked a great deal about their cross-lingual communication experiences. Therefore, I needed to find a suitable alternative method to analyse these reported, rather than observed, experiences. I explain how I arrived at the alternative method of thematic content analysis in the next section.

3.7.2 Thematic content analysis

As detailed in chapter 2, my view of this field and my data was developed through the conceptual lenses of Bourdieu (1977a; 1991), Phipps (2007) and de Certeau (2011). However, whilst my initial reading of the literature directed my attention towards possible power considerations within this linguistically diverse team, my data were suggesting more subtle cross-lingual communication considerations, albeit using the
same concept. At this stage, I was indeed following Silverman’s (2013a) advice of allowing myself to be surprised by my data. Indeed, Silverman criticises researchers who are tempted to ‘manufacture’ their data, recommending that they ‘find it’ in the ‘field’ instead. As cited in section 1.6, Remenyi et al. (2003: 105) note "within a non-positivist paradigm, it is acceptable for the generation of a research topic or question to come from experience". I therefore considered it appropriate to apply a similar inductive approach to my data analysis in order to ‘listen’ to what my data were telling me about these participants’ cross-lingual communication experiences. For this reason, I chose the method of thematic content analysis to analyse my data, as I now explain.

Rivas (2012) explains that thematic content analysis is useful for understanding the lived experience of individuals with regard to a particular phenomenon, event or social interaction. It has some similarities with other qualitative analysis approaches, such as grounded theory and interpretive phenomenological analysis. However, there are also some key differences which determine its suitability for my research project. Thematic content analysis differs from a grounded theory approach inasmuch as it seeks to gain understanding by using, rather than building, theory. It also differs from interpretive phenomenological analysis inasmuch as it seeks to understand lived experiences rather than focus solely on what they feel like. Although I wished to take an inductive approach to analysing my data, my analysis was in no way theory-free, given my conceptual framework detailed in section 2.5.

Similarly, whilst I was interested in how participants felt about their cross-lingual communication experiences, this was to understand the extent to which such feelings and experiences relate to the cross-lingual communication event and outcome. The need to achieve this understanding was particularly suggested by concerns raised by Charles (2006) and Feely (2003), as cited in sections 1.2 and 1.3 respectively. Thus I was already prepared for analysing my data using the thematic content approach by being theoretically sensitised before entering the empirical site (Rivas, 2012). I began transcribing my interview data before I had completed all interviews. As explained in section 3.6.1, this enabled me to become immersed in my data at an early stage. An important by-product of the transcription process was that I became sensitised to initial themes emerging from my data, which I could ensure were covered by my questioning
in subsequent interviews. This process follows what Rivas (2012: 369) calls the “zigzag approach”, which I now explain.

This approach sees the researcher ‘zigzagging’ between generating and analysing data, rendering the process more iterative rather than step-wise. The early analysis that results through zigzagging informs subsequent data generation to ensure potential gaps in the data are filled. Zigzagging also provides an opportunity for exploring new or unexpected themes raised during data generation with participants yet to be interviewed. Indeed, my zigzagging between my preliminary analysis of early interviews enabled me to reflect on what I had learned from participants and to subsequently refine the interview questions in my interview guide (see Appendix 3). From my experience of applying this zigzag approach, I would argue that one of its problems is that it provides limited opportunity to discuss new and emerging themes with participants interviewed earlier in the data generation process. I found that some issues were raised in later interviews that I had no chance to follow up with earlier interviewees. Although all participants had agreed I could e-mail them with any follow-up questions, I considered this would not be a suitable means for discussing these questions in any depth. The limitations of e-mail would also potentially be compounded for NNSs, who may find it difficult to provide anything but short responses in writing. Nevertheless, my sensitivity to emerging themes informed my later, more formal, data analysis in providing the basis for how I initially coded my data, as explained in the following section.

3.7.3 Coding method and software

In beginning to code my data, I followed the advice of Rivas (ibid.) and began by coding the first few interviews using open codes. These open codes are essentially "labels for chunks of data that capture something of the literal essence of the data" (Rivas, ibid.: 370). Certain themes emerged as I transcribed my interviews. I therefore used these themes as headings or codes to which similar data could potentially be assigned. As with my data generation, these codes were informed by my reading of the aforementioned conceptual and management studies literature. However, I maintained my inductive approach by allowing my codes to be suggested by the data, rather than imposing predefined codes on the data. I did this following Elo and Kyngäs’s (2008)
recommendation for the use of inductive content analysis in research where there are few or no studies dealing with the phenomenon being researched. As explained throughout chapters 1 and 2, this was the case for the phenomenon I was researching.

At this initial stage, coding was entirely manual. Following Elo and Kyngäs (2008), I read through each transcript and handwrote notes or codes beside phrases, sentences or longer sections of text that represented new or previously identified themes. I also followed Rivas’s (2012) advice and tried to keep my codes fairly open at this stage, so as not to lose any subtle detail by coding data under broader headings. One example of the benefit this brought was in my subsequent analysis of the involvement of Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital in cross-lingual communication, albeit in a different way to how I had expected. Although I intended to analyse my data using the Bourdieusian concept of capital, I did not begin by trying to group data into codes merely representing each type of capital. For example, rather than coding data under a heading of, say ‘cultural capital’ or ‘economic capital’, I had codes such as ‘professional experience’, ‘educational background’, ‘acquisition of English’, ‘autonomy’ and others. These codes all represented the various forms of capital at work in the MECOS team and the various ways in which it could be acquired. Coding at this level of detail ultimately enabled me to see that the key capital at work was cultural capital in its various forms and that the interaction of these different forms of cultural capital appears to play a constructive part in cross-lingual communication for MECOS team members. Merely coding all the relevant data using Bourdieusian types of capital may not have yielded this realisation, which has subsequently become a key finding of this thesis, as explained in chapters 4 and 6. After some preliminary analysis, I needed to undertake a more detailed analysis, for which I used the computer software program NVivo (version 9) to code my interview transcripts and observation field notes. The benefits of using this program were as follows.

NVivo 9 enabled me to undertake a more detailed and systematic analysis of my data. I could assign data extracts to more than one code at a time and then, at any time, obtain full details of all extracts grouped under one code. Having conducted the interviews, transcribed them and then conducted a preliminary analysis of them, I was already well immersed in my data before importing them into NVivo 9. This afforded me a good recollection of general themes and particular stories resulting from each interview. In
this way, when I saw new themes or points emerging, I could use the program’s search function to quickly find specific references to the same themes or points made by other participants and code them accordingly, without having to wade through the hardcopy transcripts. As NVivo 9 also counts the number of references grouped within a code, I could identify the frequency of themes emerging in the data. I did not necessarily draw parallels between a high number of references within a code and their importance. However, the frequency at least alerted me to look closely at what such high numbers of references might be saying about the data.

Having coded my data under numerous broad headings or themes, NVivo 9 enabled me to have an overview of all the themes I had identified together with an appreciation of those that were important and potentially useful in answering my research questions. At this point, I followed Ryan and Bernard’s (2003) advice to group my broader themes together under more specific headings. To do this, I used NVivo 9’s colour coding facility to group my broader themes by colour, with each colour referring to a particular research question. This enabled me to structure the presentation of my data analysis in answering my research questions. In choosing the data excerpts to illustrate my analysis, I tried to use examples from as many different participants as possible. This was to ensure I gave all participants’ interviews a fair representation and did not restrict my analysis to the same few. The full analysis pertaining to my three research questions is presented in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Having explained how I generated and subsequently analysed my data, I have yet to fully explain the ethical considerations pertaining to my project. I have touched upon some of these considerations in earlier sections of this chapter. However, others form an integral part of my data generation and analysis. I therefore provide a comprehensive explanation of ethical considerations for my project in the next section.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Formal consideration of ethics is provided by my signed ethical review form, issued by the university, which is my undertaking to comply with the university’s ethical guidelines in advance of my data collection. However, ethical considerations continued
to arise throughout all stages of my empirical project, from gaining access to a sample of people I wished to interview and observe, through to writing up this thesis.

In section 3.4.3, I acknowledged there were ethical considerations pertaining to my choice of sampling method. I restricted my participant sample to members of the MECOS team only. This was to avoid any ethical issues in seeking to gain access to areas where the MECOS team’s work brought them into direct contact with children, parents, teachers and other members of the local community. Nevertheless, having been granted access to a potential pool of participants, I had to ensure that each person was willing to participate in my study. Furthermore, I had to ensure that participants knew what they were participating in. I therefore followed scholarly advice in obtaining informed consent from all potential participants, as detailed below.

There is some debate as to what informed consent actually means. Silverman (2013c: 97) cites Ryen’s definition that “informed consent… means that research subjects have the right to know that they are being researched, the right to be informed about the nature of the research and the right to withdraw at any time”. The researcher should therefore provide participants with a detailed, but non-technical, description of the nature and aims of the research project. To this end, I provided each participant with an information sheet (see Appendix 2) in duplicate, which I asked them to sign, retaining a copy for their own records. This information included a broad description of my research aims and also the key questions I was seeking to answer. However, in the light of my data analysis, I am keenly aware of the warning issued by Miller and Bell (2012) that final research findings may, to some extent, veer away from the initial research aims to which participants have consented. My overall aim of researching how cross-lingual communication is experienced and undertaken between members of the MECOS team did not change. However, the iterative process of data generation and data analysis, as explained in section 3.7.2, resulted in my refining the wording of my initial research questions. Nevertheless, these changes were more a sharpening of focus than a fundamental shift of research interest. Therefore, ethically speaking, the content of the signed consent document remained valid. Following recommendations made by Ali and Kelly (2012), my information sheet assured participants that they could withdraw from my project at any time. It also included a promise of total confidentiality. As recommended by Remenyi et al. (2003), I also stated that the information I generated
would be used for the purpose of academic research and writing, thereby explaining what would be done with the evidence generated once I had completed my research. I also undertook to anonymise participants and the organisation in my thesis. However, I subsequently realised that I could only preserve anonymity so far, as I explain in the following paragraph.

I proposed to anonymise all participants, their job titles and work locations by using pseudonyms. However, during my data analysis I became increasingly aware of the problem raised by Ali and Kelly (2012) of maintaining confidentiality where participants are small in number or easily identifiable. Pseudonyms would protect participants from being identified by people outside the team reading my thesis. However, the number of participants is so small and their native languages so specific that participants will inevitably be able to identify themselves and each other, if not by name then certainly by native language. Nevertheless, participants were satisfied with this degree of anonymity; therefore it does not pose any further ethical issue for my project. Maintaining confidentiality was later called into question again when I needed to outsource the transcription of five interviews. In order to avoid any ethical problems and as stated in section 3.6.2, I asked each of the five participants for their consent to this, which they provided by e-mail. The transcription company similarly undertook to maintain confidentiality of all data supplied to them. I subsequently listened to all five of these interviews whilst proofreading the transcriptions provided to verify transcription accuracy. Having noted the ethical considerations pertaining to data generation, it is also important to note that there are also ethical implications for data analysis. I explain these below.

From my epistemological perspective, data analysis forms part of the knowledge production process. The narrative produced from this analysis results from "decisions [made] about which lines of analysis to pursue and which to put to one side" (ibid.: 71). Where participants’ accounts differ, the researcher’s choice to pursue some lines of analysis in preference to others can have ethical implications, since the researcher is effectively giving prominence to some voices whilst silencing others. "Thus the production of knowledge itself has to be understood as an ethical endeavour" (ibid.). In undertaking my own data analysis, I was conscious of having a large body of data, of which I made selective use in answering my research questions. Many data, arguably
every bit as valuable as those used to answer my research questions, were ‘sidelined’ since they are less useful for my line of inquiry. Nevertheless, these data constitute participants’ experiences and feelings. I therefore noted Doucet and Mauthner (2012) and recognised my responsibility as a researcher to ‘know well’ and ‘know responsibly’. This meant I had to ensure my representations of participants in this thesis are fair and that my analysis of what they told me is faithful to what they intended me to understand. To achieve this, as stated in section 3.7.3, I took care in my analysis to ensure that the data I used to support my argument made full and balanced use of all participants’ contributions and did not favour some participants over others. After completing my analysis, I reported a summarised version of my findings to participants, for them to comment on the fairness and ‘accuracy’ of my representation of them. This latter action of seeking participant validation of my findings not only supported good ethical research practice; it also provided a means of ascertaining the extent to which my research could be considered as valid and reliable. The question of validity and reliability of qualitative research is discussed at length in academic literature. I now take up this discussion in more detail with regard to my project.

### 3.9 Conducting a valid and reliable research project

The reliability and validity of non-positivist research is arguably less straightforward to establish than that of positivist research. This is because reliability and validity cannot, and arguably should not, be ‘measured’ or quantified. Nevertheless, for any research to be considered as scientific, it has to be both reliable and valid. "Reliability refers to the stability of findings, whereas validity represents the truthfulness of findings (Altheide and Johnson, cited in Silverman, 2013c: 360, original emphasis). Silverman (ibid.) explains that reliability for case study research such as mine requires replicability, meaning that if another researcher replicated the same case study, they should produce the same findings and come to the same conclusions. However, I find this concept of replicability somewhat problematic. As I explained in section 3.2.2, in adopting my epistemological position of interpretivism, I consider myself to be a key research instrument. Therefore, I would argue that another researcher replicating my case study means a different research instrument would be involved. This in turn could result in nuanced differences in findings and conclusions. I argue this following Weber (1949),
as referenced in section 1.6, who argued that one individual social scientist will not
necessarily conclude about a topic in the same way as another. For example, as Kvale
and Brinkman (2009) argue, if the same interview guide is used by different
interviewers, different statements may emerge on the same themes as a result of
different interviewers having various levels of sensitivity towards and knowledge about
the interview topic.

In the light of this problem, I follow Silverman (2013c) and seek to satisfy reliability
criteria throughout this thesis by making my research process as transparent as possible,
documenting all stages in as much detail as possible. In section 3.2, I explained my
ontological and epistemological position. This forms the philosophical context within
which my study is set. In section 3.3, I described the empirical site and the research
questions to which I sought answers. Section 3.4 then explained my research design and
data sources. This should therefore ensure that any other researcher could follow the
same design with the same participants. In sections 3.5 and 3.6, I explained how I
generated my data; then, in section 3.7, I explained how I analysed them. Furthermore,
having noted Silverman’s (ibid.: 360) advice to pay attention to "theoretical
transparency", chapters 1 and 2 provide a full account of the theories and concepts
supporting my empirical project. In this way, I have attempted to explain the entire
research process in a way that is both detailed and transparent, thus demonstrating
replicability of my study. Having done my best to achieve reliability, I explain in the
following paragraph how I made similar efforts to ensure the validity of my research.

Establishing the validity of non-positivist research is just as hotly debated as the issue of
reliability. In positivist research projects, validity can be quantified or measured.
However, as I explained in section 3.2.1, non-positivist research, such as mine, is based
on the philosophy that reality is a social construction. Reality is not a separate entity
that exists ‘out there’ and so attempts to quantify or measure it are futile. Therefore, my
approach to ascertain validity required further consideration. Some scholars advocate
triangulation as a means of validating qualitative data. Indeed, the triangulation of
methods, as described by Spicer (2012) could be one means of validating my own
research data. For my project, this would involve taking data from my interviews and
cross-referencing these with observations made at team meetings, to establish the
degree of ‘truth’ of what participants were telling me compared with what I was seeing
in practice. I was certainly aware of making these comparisons during my data analysis. I also observed instances of what I had been told being put into practice in meetings. Nevertheless, in adopting a constructionist ontological position, I consider that using triangulation to establish validity for my project is somewhat problematic, for the following reasons.

As Spicer (2012) and Silverman (2013c) explain, triangulation assumes that any object being studied can be verified as being ‘more’ true and certain when it considered from more than one standpoint. As I explained in section 3.2.1, I do not consider reality to be a single independent form, but rather a construction achieved by social interaction. Therefore, whilst triangulation of my data may have provided validity of participant data at a superficial level, I was not misled into assuming that this meant that what participants had told me was ‘correct’. Again, following Silverman (ibid.), I did not assume that combining my data from the two different sources of interview and observation would give a more complete picture of what was happening. My presence at team meetings would have undoubtedly changed the social dynamics of those meetings, such that I cannot be sure that actions and behaviour in my absence would be the same. Therefore, at best, triangulation of my data served as a means of adding "rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth" (Denzin and Lincoln, cited in Silverman, 2013c: 371) to my investigation. A concept of validity more appropriate to my project is Richardson’s crystal metaphor, as explained by Denzin and Lincoln (2011). I explain this concept below.

Richardson (cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) explains that a crystal both reflects what is external and refracts that externality within itself. This refraction creates a multidirectional array of colours and patterns, such that what we see depends on the viewpoint we assume. Crystallisation as a concept of validity therefore acknowledges that there is no single truth or external reality. Reality is multifaceted and complex and our view and understanding of it can only ever be partial. This concept is consistent with my ontological position explained in section 3.2.1. Furthermore, it is also consistent with my earlier explanation of the problems surrounding reliability and replicability. My provision of as much transparency as possible regarding my research process and conceptual framework would enable another researcher to replicate my
study. However, their findings would inevitably be nuanced according to how they view the crystallised refraction of the phenomenon being researched.

Given the foregoing acknowledgement of there being no single truth, I recognise the limitations of participant validation for my project. Nevertheless, the good research practice argued by Reason and Rowan (cited in Silverman, 2013c: 372) means researchers should go back to their participants with tentative results and refine them in the light of their reactions. In upholding my agreement made at the initial meeting with Pauline, Michelle and Carol to provide the organisation with a report on my research, the focus of my report was on the tentative results of my preliminary data analysis. As we agreed, I would present this to all MECOS team members. This provided the opportunity for team members to give me their feedback, as well as to support good ethical research practice. As explained in section 3.4.2, Pauline and I had discussed the possibility of scheduling a separate focus group meeting involving all participants. Unfortunately, for practical reasons, this was not possible. Therefore, the participant validation was conducted as a MECOS team meeting agenda item, as I explain below.

I provided all participants with a typed copy of my report prior to the meeting, to give them time to read it and formulate any feedback. I prepared a summary version for presentation at the meeting, which most MECOS team members attended. During the interview process, some participants had asked me ‘off the record’ how I would be analysing my data. Therefore, when presenting my summary, I explained how I had analysed my data as well as what my analysis had found. Like the report, the summary also presented recommendations, as well as observations, as this was something the team had specifically requested. After presenting my summary, I invited comments and questions, which I duly noted, in order to make any adjustments that were felt necessary. All participants responded positively to my report and agreed that it was a fair representation of what they had told me or what I had observed. Furthermore, one person suggested the report could be used to promote the MECOS team model to other organisations as well as to reinforce the importance of the team to the CCC organisation. The only negative comment made related to the issue of headaches mentioned by one MELI in their interview with me, as this MELI had not reported any headaches to her line manager. Pauline (TL) explained that MELIs should report issues like headaches so that support could be provided, if necessary. Participants also
commented that, despite the academic nature of my study, my report was very readable. From this, I assumed there had been no significant comprehension difficulties for the NNSs. I subsequently minuted everything discussed and raised in my presentation and sent a copy of the minutes to the team, thus ensuring full transparency of communication right through to the conclusion of my engagement with them.

3.10 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have given a full account of the qualitative research methodology used for my project, the reasons for my choices and the associated benefits and limitations at all stages. In section 3.2, I explained the philosophical context within which I conducted my research. Then, in section 3.3, how I found the empirical site to which I eventually gained access. Section 3.4 described the qualitative research design for my project and explained the reasons for my choice. Then, having decided upon a single case study, section 3.5 explained how I planned to generate my data. In section 3.6, I explained how I actually generated my data, and particularly how this exercise differed from my plans presented in section 3.5. My explanation of my data analysis method in section 3.7 also included brief reference to a method I chose not to use and the reasons for my decision. Then, in section 3.8, I discussed the ethical considerations pertaining to my research and how I have demonstrated ethical compliance. Finally, in section 3.9, I explained the debatable nature of research validity and reliability and the steps I took to ensure both in my own research.

Throughout this chapter’s detailed account of my research methodology, I have also incorporated reflections that were significant in shaping how I conducted my project and refined my methods at each stage. In this way I have demonstrated the iterative nature of my research project and how reflection on the various literature and stages informed how I should proceed. As I now turn to answer each of my three research questions, I continue to weave in my reflections to similarly demonstrate the iterative nature of my data analysis. This analysis is the focus of the following three chapters.
CHAPTER 4  How, Where and with Whom is Cross-Lingual Communication Practised and Experienced in the Multilingual MECOS Team? How is Culture Involved?

4.1 Introduction

This is the first of three chapters that address each of my research questions in turn. Its two sections present the two key aspects of my data analysis that address this research question. In so doing, I discuss relevant concepts from the literature reviewed in chapter 2, explaining how my findings relate to these. In section 4.2, I conduct a detailed analysis of the empirical site to identify where and with whom cross-lingual communication is practised and experienced in the Multi Ethnic Community Support (MECOS) team. This analysis shows that, within their overarching organisational role, the Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediaries (MELIs) assume sub-roles according to where and with whom they work and hence communicate cross-lingually. Analysing cross-lingual exchanges in terms of these sub-roles thus enables me to explain how communicating parties practise and experience cross-lingual communication.

In section 4.3, I analyse how culture is socially constructed by MECOS team members and its involvement in their cross-lingual exchanges. I argued throughout chapter 2 that culture and language, though inextricably linked, should be decoupled. I undertake this decoupling by analysing participants’ cross-lingual communication experiences through the lens of culture as a dynamic social process undergoing continuous construction. This enables me to explain how particular aspects of culture are involved in cross-lingual communication between MECOS team members. I deepen my analysis by considering culture at the level of forms of cultural capital using a Bourdieusian analytical framework. In so doing, I explain how participants’ efforts to achieve effective cross-lingual communication are played out through the interaction of these forms of cultural capital in their communicative experiences. My application of Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital to deconstruct culture into smaller constituent components crucially provides me with an innovative means of demonstrating the distinction between and the interconnection of language and culture and how their interaction plays out in the
MECOS team’s cross-lingual encounters. Furthermore, it suggests that the outcome of any cross-lingual exchange may not just depend on reserves of linguistic capital. In section 4.4, I summarise my analysis and findings.

4.2 The importance of roles in cross-lingual communication

4.2.1 The MECOS team members

As a prelude to this analysis, I recall Table 2 in section 3.3.2 presenting the MECOS team. For ease of reference, I summarise this information here. There were a total of 16 participants in my study, albeit with some joining and others leaving during its course. The aforementioned table lists all team members, their organisational roles and native languages. At any one time, the MECOS team hierarchy comprised the Team Leader (TL), up to four Educational Advisers (EAs) and up to ten Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediaries (MELIs). One primary school headteacher was also involved as team sponsor. He was initially engaged in recruiting the MELIs and continues to support the team, albeit with little day-to-day involvement. The TL, EAs and headteacher are all native speakers of English (NSs). The MELIs are all non-native speakers of English (NNSs), with varying levels of proficiency right up to native-speaker fluency. English is the only language shared by all team members; therefore this is the lingua franca for team communication. Nevertheless, some team members share languages other than English. These are specified in the MECOS team members’ biographical details in Appendix 1.

Recalling Feely (2003), cross-lingual communication occurs whenever the language barrier is being traversed. Furthermore, following Kassis-Henderson (2005), communication via a lingua franca, as a solution implemented to overcome the language barrier, is indeed cross-lingual communication, even though this barrier is being ‘crossed’ somewhat invisibly under the cover of a shared language. Thus, whenever and wherever use of this shared language involves non-native speakers, cross-lingual communication can be deemed to be happening. The next section therefore considers where and with whom cross-lingual communication is undertaken.
4.2.2 Cross-lingual communication: where and with whom?

As outlined in section 3.2.2, there are essentially three locations where cross-lingual communication is undertaken by the MECOS team. The first is ‘head office’. This term refers to the team’s two training centres in Countytown A and Countytown B. Both these centres are used for holding monthly team meetings. The second location is ‘school’, these being mainly within the county of Countyshire. The third is less well defined, as cross-lingual communication can also be undertaken in a variety of locations in Countyshire, depending on the service being provided. I refer to this third location as ‘other’. I now identify when and with whom cross-lingual communication is undertaken at each of these locations in turn.

Head office is where the MECOS team holds its monthly meetings. English is necessarily employed as the *lingua franca*, as it is the only language everyone shares. Therefore, these meetings always involve cross-lingual communication. However, this is not just the case when NNSs are communicating with NSs. When MELIs work in smaller groups or pairs at head office, they are also likely to communicate cross-lingually, as few of them share any language other than English. Thus for example, the native Turkish and the native Lithuanian speaker would traverse the language barrier between them by communicating in English. The few MELIs who share languages other than English may choose to use these when no one else is present, as Akbar explains:

“Yeah, we always speak [Pashto] if there’s no one else. We just use it, because [we can] explain things better.”

They may even switch to another language on a ‘break’ amidst formal business with other colleagues, as Lukas explains:

“I mean it can be if you’re drinking coffee on the side and you want to say something. But… not very often.”

Nevertheless, the above examples still constitute cross-lingual communication, albeit via a language other than English. Whilst Akbar is a native speaker of Pashto, no-one else has Pashto as their mother tongue, therefore his colleague will be communicating with him as a NNS of Pashto. For Lukas and his colleague, whilst both have Russian in
common, it is neither party’s native language. These two examples also illustrate language as a social practice, as argued by Janssens and Steyaert (2014) and Tietze et al. (2003) and presented respectively in sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.4, with members of the MECOS team taking opportunities to mobilise their various linguistic resources to communicate cross-lingually. I explain how these opportunities for this mobilisation arise as this section progresses.

In situations where not everyone present shares a language other than English, team members will revert to English out of courtesy. Wiktoria reinforces this:

“[…] I have to think, you know, what to say, how to say in English. I just, can, can say something to Agata effortlessly in Polish. So, yeah with more people, becau- we, we, we speak English, even if they don’t talk to us at the moment, we just, just think it’s more polite to, to, to speak in the language that everyone else understands.”

Wiktoria’s statement illustrates how even colleagues who share the same native language can find themselves communicating cross-lingually with each other in group situations at head office. Cross-lingual communication continues for most team members when working with colleagues on other tasks at head office, such as preparation for work in schools. Preparation involving MELIs working with EAs will naturally require cross-lingual communication via the *lingua franca* of English. In contrast, preparation involving MELIs only may provide some with an opportunity to mobilise other linguistic resources by switching to another shared language. However, with the exception of Wiktoria and Agata who are the only members of the team to share a native language, all other MELIs will still be communicating cross-lingually, since at least one person will be using a language other than their mother tongue.

At this point it is pertinent to reflect on the above data extracts to consider the role assumed by MELIs in each case. The cross-lingual exchanges described are between fellow MELIs at the same level in the organisational hierarchy. MELIs appear to be acknowledging their hierarchical parity by assuming the sub-role of ‘colleague’. Thus, cross-lingual communication between MELIs at head office is colleague to colleague. I explain the significance of this and other sub-roles as this chapter progresses. For now, I
consider cross-lingual communication practices and experiences as the work location moves from head office to school.

School work consists of providing linguistic and cultural support to teachers and pupils and is largely classroom-based. Outside the classroom, MELIs can also be asked to interpret in meetings between staff and pupils’ parents. Classroom support tasks include undertaking language assessments with EAs for pupils arriving in school with little or no English, providing linguistic and cultural support to pupils and teachers in lessons and leading group or whole-class activities on culture and language-related topics.

Taking each of the aforementioned classroom tasks in turn, language assessments generally involve one pupil, one MELI who speaks the pupil’s native language and one EA who wants to assess their language development in English and their native language. Yasmin explains what this involves:

“So you just sit with the child and […] you try and speak to them in English, then you say words in Punjabi or Urdu, to see, you know, if they’re understanding the sought [word unclear] response. […] And if it is that, you know, erm, the adviser or the teacher wants to know how good their, Urdu or Punjabi, erm, is, then, erm, you’d start off in English and you’d try and speak to them as much as possible in their mother tongue really, to, to gauge where they’re at, where the development is.”

Here, Yasmin engages in cross-lingual communication via the *lingua franca* when speaking directly with the EA and with the child, whenever English is the language being spoken or interpreted. Despite her ‘formal’ organisational role as MELI, Yasmin appears to be taking on two other sub-roles in this example, these being pedagogical assistant to the EA and pedagogue\(^{20}\) to the pupil.

Similarly, when supporting teachers and pupils in lessons, MELIs engage in cross-lingual communication via the *lingua franca* when speaking directly with the teacher.

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\(^{20}\) Yasmin is not necessarily teaching the child anything here but is undertaking the pedagogical task of assessing the child’s native language ability.
and when supporting the child in understanding the teacher’s instructions. Rana, a Turkish MELI, explains:

“[…] if I don’t understand anything, I make sure that I’ve got it right to pass it to the child, so then I ask teacher.”

Seeking clarification from the teacher requires Rana to communicate cross-lingually. Then, in communicating the message to the child, she traverses the barrier between English and Turkish, either by communicating a simplified message in the *lingua franca* or interpreting into Turkish. Like Yasmin in the previous extract, Rana also appears to be adopting the sub-role of pedagogue to the pupil. However, whilst she generally plays the sub-role of pedagogical assistant to the teacher, she momentarily appears to adopt the sub-role of pupil (to the teacher) when she wants to check her understanding of the cross-lingual exchange. This observation is significant for how meaning is made in cross-lingual exchanges and is explored further in chapter 6. For now, it is important inasmuch as it reveals another role that is possible for MELIs to espouse in their cross-lingual encounters.

As explained earlier, MELIs sometimes lead group or whole-class activities to raise children’s awareness of different cultures and languages. English will necessarily be used in such situations to ensure all children are included in the communication. Thus cross-lingual communication is practised. Furthermore, as two MELIs sometimes work on such activities together, they also undertake cross-lingual communication in the *lingua franca* of English, or possibly in another shared language. MELIs who share languages other than English sometimes take the opportunity to mobilise these other shared linguistic resources when working together in classroom activities, even if the shared language is neither MELI’s native language. Eva explains:

“For example, we went to, usually we don’t speak here [i.e. head office], we speak English usually. When we are together, like me and her, then we speak Russian, but when you go to school, yeah, as well, we speak Russian most of the time.”

Me: “In the classroom, you mean?”
Eva: “Yeah, between each other, if we have to do something, but sometimes it’s easier to speak English, because she’s Czech, I’m Latvian, so her language not Russian first as well. [...]. Sometimes it’s [i.e. Russian] just, you know, easier, like some words…it’s just… I don’t know, I can’t even explain [...].”

Eva suggests her choice to speak either English or Russian with her colleague, Izabela, is according to whichever language comes more easily. The ease with which the choice is made could be due to both MELIs adopting the role of colleague, and thus parity of status, in this context. Thus, practising cross-lingual communication in schools affords MELIs opportunities to tacitly assume sub-roles of pedagogue, pedagogical assistant, pupil and colleague. Furthermore, there appears to be a connection between the sub-role adopted and the linguistic resources they are able to mobilise. I now explore what happens when the type of work changes to purely interpreting and moves from schools to other locations.

When working in locations other than schools, the MELI’s role is predominantly that of interpreter. This is not merely an adopted sub-role as MELIs are expressly required to provide an interpreting service. As an interpreter, the MELI becomes more of a conduit through which other parties communicate cross-lingually, rather than being the person communicating for their own ends. In this role, they will therefore use both English and the interlocutor’s native language according to whose utterance they are interpreting.

Agata provides one example of when she interpreted for the NHS:

“[…] Yes I can tell you about my, erm […] role as an interpreter, but totally different situation. So it wasn’t an official meeting at school, it was erm… antenatal session, led by English nurse, for Polish pu-, erm… for Polish… parents expecting children.”

In this role, the cross-lingual communication task is identical to that undertaken between parents and school staff, where the sub-role adopted is the same as the expressly stated organisational role of intermediary. This appropriation of sub-roles by MELIs according to where and with whom they are communicating is significant because it illustrates one way in which cross-lingual communication is practised and experienced, as I now explain.
In their "sociolinguistic study of verbal encounters in touristic situations", Cohen and Cooper (1986: 533) developed a typology of tourist roles as a framework for explaining how tourists and locals communicated cross-lingually in their study. They found that within their overarching ‘role’, tourists assumed different sub-roles according to the type of travel they were undertaking. For example, mass tourists travelling with a holiday company adopted a sub-role in which they expected locals to accommodate them linguistically. Such institutionalised mass tourists expected locals to speak the tourist’s "own language or a lingua franca in which the tourists are competent" (ibid.: 546). In contrast, independent tourists experienced in travelling alone adopted a sub-role in which they were more likely to make an effort to speak the local language, even with limited ability. These and other sub-roles espoused by tourists and locals in touristic situations shaped each party’s decisions and expectations regarding which language they should speak.

The foregoing concept of sub-roles is relevant to my analysis because the adoption of sub-roles by MELIs as they move between people and work locations parallels that of Cohen and Cooper’s tourists. In drawing this parallel, I argue that the way in which cross-lingual communication is practised and experienced by MELIs and others with whom they work is linked with the sub-role the parties assume within each cross-lingual encounter. In turn, the sub-role they take on appears to be linked to where and with whom cross-lingual communication is happening. This is summarised in Table 3 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head Office</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colleague</td>
<td>Colleague</td>
<td>Intermediary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td>Pupil</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogical Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Possible sub-roles that MELIs can assume

These sub-roles have further significance for addressing my second research question, as I explain in section 5.2. However, at this point, I continue by addressing the second aspect of the present research question; namely, how culture is involved in cross-lingual communication.
4.3 Culture’s involvement in cross-lingual communication

As explained in chapter 2, this thesis conceptualises culture as an interactional process of social construction rather than as static national typologies. Therefore, in analysing my data, I sought evidence of culture being enacted and constructed as well as evidence of how participants themselves viewed and referred to culture in their work. This enabled me to explore possible links between culture and how cross-lingual communication is practised and experienced in this team. The following analysis therefore draws upon the concepts of culture presented in section 2.4 in order to explain my findings.

4.3.1 National culture as a cross-lingual communication resource

Although the MECOS team consists of ten different nationalities, my data contain surprisingly few explicit references to national culture. Team members certainly recognise that there are cultural differences between them. Indeed, the MELIs were recruited because of these differences, so that they could use them to raise school teachers’ and children’s awareness of them. Tony, the primary school headteacher involved in setting up the project and recruitment, explains how the MELIs use their cultural background to introduce schoolchildren to unfamiliar cultures:

“It was really good to experience working with them [i.e. the MELIs] in that way and to see them developing their skills, drawing often upon their own culture and own experiences.”

National culture is arguably only implied here as Tony does not fully explain which aspect(s) of their own culture the MELIs draw upon. However, his observation is important for my analysis because it suggests that, rather than being passive receptacles of their respective national cultures, the MELIs are actively using culture as a resource to deal with the situations at hand. Ailon-Souday and Kunda’s (2003: 1073) study claims that "national identity constitutes a symbolic resource that is actively and creatively constructed by organizational members to serve social struggles which are triggered by globalization". Similarly, Tony’s observation appears to suggest that
MELIs are using the idea of their national culture as a symbolic resource to help them to deal with the social situation and cross-lingual encounter they are faced with.

The above extract is, of course, Tony’s observation of a MELI using culture as a resource. MELI Akbar provides a first-hand example of using culture in this way:

“As I said, like, the kite-making, the storytelling, cultural activities, tell them about our culture, our language, our way of life to the children, so the, the children can understand.”

Kites are a symbol of Afghan culture and kite-flying is a popular hobby. Therefore the kite reference may initially appear as little more than an illustration of an Afghan social activity, born of static national concepts of culture, such as those proposed by Hofstede (2003) and Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012). However, Akbar finds this example useful in providing pupils with a simple explanation of how one nation’s people can differ from another. By using the kite as a symbol of Afghan national identity, Akbar is using kite-making as a symbolic resource to facilitate his provision of the cultural support for which he is employed, as he communicates cross-lingually with the pupils.

When MECOS team members communicate cross-lingually, a more subtle suggestion of national culture is evidenced. In the following example, Samuel tells me how he feels about people code-switching in his presence at team meetings:

“I feel frustrated really, because… I… maybe is from culture. My mum, every time say don’t say something which people don’t understand. Because they can feel maybe you are insulting them.”

Samuel believes his feeling of frustration may arise from his own cultural background in Rwanda where this practice would be frowned upon. However, it is unclear as to whether the culture he refers to is based on national values, his family’s values or some other form of culture. Nevertheless, invoking culture in this way can be seen as a way in which Samuel draws upon his cultural background as a symbolic resource to explain the struggle he is facing in dealing with the code-switching. Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003: 1075) argue that "national identity does not merely imply the embodiment of a
cognitively constraining cultural outlook [...] but is in itself a flexible cultural creation into which people impute variable and fluctuating meanings”. In this example, Samuel appears to be actively re-creating his own culture, or national identity, by recalling his mother’s warning in this organisational setting. Furthermore, this enactment of his own culture appears to be linked to his feeling of frustration with the code-switching.

In some cases, cultural difference is deemed to be at the root of misunderstanding even though this may not necessarily be the case. But, it is still unclear what is meant by the word ‘culture’ here. For example, Pauline, the TL, suggests how apparent national cultural differences can result in a lack of understanding of how UK public services are organised and even what they are called:

“I know that, sometimes they didn’t know the name of Social Services but [...] we knew from what they were saying that that’s who they meant. So that [...] teased out for me sort of, you know, where difficulties might arise for them and that’s more to do with culture, rather than language.”

However, the cultural difference here appears to be more a lack of knowledge about UK institutions, rather than a lack of awareness of any national cultural type. It is thus the MELIs’ lack of previous social involvement with UK institutions that is at the root of their difficulties in understanding how things are done and by whom. Sarah, an EA, provides another example of how cultural differences may be the reason for a lack of understanding:

“So I’ll sometimes just turn and check [they understand]. And it’s not always language. It can sometimes be culture or a difference in education systems, so sometimes I’ll check and say, ‘Oh are you familiar with the…?’, you know, whatever.”

Sarah’s reference to culture is again ambiguous. On the one hand, she may be implying a national cultural difference. On the other hand, she may be suggesting that the lack of cultural awareness relates to everyday social situations within the context of education. Either way, culture is seen as being part of the cross-lingual communication problem. However, it is not tied to any static, national concept. Indeed, analysis of the extracts in this section illustrates how empirical realities are more complex than such simple static
typologies. Thus, even in beginning to analyse culture’s involvement in day-to-day interactions, static concepts of national culture already appear to be of little use.

The foregoing analysis suggests that the way national culture becomes involved in cross-lingual communication is through its dynamic reconstruction or enactment by communicating parties. However, as explained in section 2.4.1, culture does not always have to be conceptualised as a national phenomenon. Indeed, in section 2.4.2 I explained an alternative and more dynamic concept of spheres of culture presented by international business and management (IB&M) scholars Schneider et al. (2014). In the following section, I return to these spheres of culture to analyse how culture conceived in this way begins to help explain how cross-lingual communication is practised and experienced by MECOS team members. In so doing, I also note the limitations of this concept for my study.

4.3.2 Spheres of culture: links with cross-lingual exchanges

Schneider et al. (ibid.: 61) suggest that "the influence of culture on business practice can be explored in several spheres", thus arguing that culture has many more facets than just the national. Schneider et al. consider that conceptualising culture as interacting spheres is a more useful way of understanding culture’s involvement in business practice than focusing purely on national differences. Since one form of business, indeed organisational, practice is communication, I consider that applying this more multifaceted concept of culture will help me to identify how forms of culture other than the national are involved in this team’s cross-lingual communication activities. The following observation I made about the team during my interview with Tony, the headteacher, serves as a useful introduction to this section of my analysis:

Me: “[The MECOS team] is not just diverse in terms of language, nation, culture but also life experience, professional experience because I mean you have got an age range as well, some people have come from other jobs and some people have come more or less straight from school.”

Reflecting on this comment with reference to the aforementioned IB&M literature made me realise the potential relevance of these cultural spheres of influence to my analysis.
Whether an organisation is international or domestic, these spheres are potentially at
work whenever people of different nationalities, with different native languages and
professional experience are recruited.

Given the foregoing examples, it is pertinent to note that cross-lingual communication
problems do not occur exclusively between NSs and NNSs. Michelle explains how two
NNSs can encounter difficulties when communicating between themselves:

“[There was] myself, Akbar and Samuel. And that was quite interesting.
Because they were finding it quite difficult to understand each other as….
You know not… because their phrasing is different21. And Samuel speaks
quite slowly, but in fact his actual vocabulary is massive compared to
Akbar’s. Though he is sometimes incorrect but his actual comma[nd],
vocabulary is much wider I think than… and because of their completely
different personalities, characters, religion, you know background, they
come at things slightly different. And they actually had difficulty in
understanding what each other wanted.”

Once again, the cross-lingual communication difficulty is not all down to language.
Although Michelle does not explicitly mention culture, the factors of personality,
character, religion and background she feels are instrumental to the difficulty can be
viewed as components of Schneider et al.’s (2014) cultural spheres. This analysis
therefore suggests that it is not so much the spheres of culture themselves as the
spheres’ components that are involved in cross-lingual communication.

Whilst Schneider et al. posit that interaction between cultural spheres helps to better
anticipate how culture is involved with IB&M, they do not explore the interaction of
individual components of these spheres to analyse culture’s association with IB&M at
this level of face-to-face interaction. Conceptualising culture as spheres of influence
leads me towards a deeper understanding of culture’s involvement in cross-lingual
communication. However, my analysis of Michelle’s statement suggests that the

21 Michelle does not mean “not because their phrasing is different”. The "not" is the end of an incomplete
phrase; she actually means that their phrasing is different. I’ve tried to render this nuance by inserting …
after “not”.

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spheres have limitations in enabling me to fully understand how culture is involved in this particular cross-lingual exchange. Having become aware of this potential limitation, I continue my analysis by considering the spheres of organisational, professional and functional culture. In so doing, I also consider the extent to which this concept remains useful.

In presenting their organisational sphere, Schneider et al. state that components of any organisation’s culture can be said to include its founder, leader, administrative heritage and stage of development, amongst others. Through my data analysis and following Parker (2000), I argue that the organisational culture being constructed within the MECOS team is an ongoing process that occurs as part of team building and development. Therefore, I view Schneider et al.’s organisational culture components as a set of lived experiences in other professional settings which MECOS team members draw upon, reconstruct and/or reshape in their current organisational setting. As well as these components being significant for the creation of team culture, they are also significant to cross-lingual communication between team members. In answering my questions regarding cross-lingual communication experiences, Pauline, the team’s founder and leader, frequently refers to the team culture they have tried to create and perpetuate:

“We wanted it to be right from day one, but we were also conscious that we might not get it right, ’cause we’ve not done this before, that it’s a learning process. We’ve always said to them, you know, that we’re learning as we go along, we’re all in this together, we’re learning together.”

The MECOS team was a new addition to Countyshire County Council’s educational services in 2010. As such, it has an administrative heritage of education and is in the early stages of its development. Pauline’s statement illustrates how her own and her founding colleagues’ lived experiences in the heritage of education are being socially reconstructed in this team in order to perpetuate a similar culture. It also shows the importance that Pauline attached to the culture of this new team from the start. In this way, it further illustrates how she saw the MECOS team as a smaller grouping within the wider organisation. Pauline is thus suggesting the construction of a small culture
within the MECOS team, akin to that described by Holliday (1999) and explained in section 2.4.2.

In fact, the MECOS team’s culture was clearly being constructed even at the recruitment interviews, as Pauline explains:

“So when anyone came in, we greeted them, we invited them to sit down and we said, ‘if there is anything you don’t understand, please ask us to repeat it, or you know, we’ll think of a new way to rephrase it’. So, you know, we were setting the expectation that if they weren’t sure, ask and that that wouldn’t count against them at all, ’cause we weren’t sure what their English skills were like.”

In openly encouraging interviewees to seek clarification of anything they did not understand, the above statement provides one example of how the team culture being actively constructed is involved in cross-lingual communication. This practice was also encouraged once team members were recruited, as the following extract illustrates:

Me: “So have they always felt happy to ask, right from the start […]?”
Pauline: “I’d say so, yeah. Well, we’ve tried, this whole thing was about inclusion, so if we want them to enable children to be included, we’ve got to enable them [the MELIs] to be included, haven’t we? So that’s been our philosophy really.”

Pauline recognises that her team members cannot support others if they themselves are not supported. As such, she acknowledges the importance of the team’s culture to cross-lingual communication within the team and with other people to whom services are provided. She also believes that, ironically, this supportive culture of inclusion within the MECOS team is partly born from feelings of being excluded from the organisational hierarchy within which it resides. She explains:

“Right, our title gives you a clue, ‘minority’. Within the bigger organisation, we have always been on the outside really, shunted to one side and even though theoretically we’re part of the inclusion team, we’ve always had a laugh and we’ve said we’re the exclusion team there, we’ve
always felt outside, which is why we’re very supportive of one another in that team.”

The culture being created within the MECOS team thus contrasts starkly with Pauline’s perception of how the team is viewed within the wider organisation. As this is Pauline’s personal view, it is unclear as to the extent to which others share it. Nevertheless, she appears to be using her perception of the wider organisational culture as a symbolic resource for fostering internal team cohesion.

Considered collectively, the foregoing examples illustrate Parker’s (2000: 82) argument that "culture making is a process that occurs through organisation making”. This newly created team resides within Countyshire County Council’s education department. As such, the team culture being constructed is another form of organisational culture, which bears both similarities to and differences from the administrative heritage of the wider organisation within which it resides. Following Clifford (1997), I argue this team is ‘rooted’ within the culture of the wider organisation. However, in establishing and developing its own culture, the ‘route’ it is taking deviates somewhat from its original roots. Pauline’s statement at the end of the previous paragraph also suggests another way in which culture is being constructed within this team, in order to support cross-lingual communication, relationships and team cohesion. I explain this below.

Pauline’s statement suggests that the culture prevailing in this team recognises that the main thing team members have in common is that they are all different. Thus, the team is united by difference rather than divided by it. At this point, I recall Litvin (1997) from section 2.3.2. She notes that diversity management (DM) scholars ‘mark’ diversity in terms of "six primary dimensions of diversity: age, ethnicity, gender, physical attributes/abilities, race and sexual orientation” (ibid.: 199). Litvin also identifies eight secondary dimensions, none of which include language. Pauline’s statements do not make explicit references to any particular dimensions of diversity. However, my analysis of the data thus far in this chapter makes it clear that markers of team diversity include language, nationality, educational and professional qualifications. There may be others. With MECOS team members experiencing these differences, Pauline seems to suggest that a team culture is being constructed to support its members in experiencing these differences as positively as possible. Again, it is important to acknowledge that
Pauline’s description is a personal view. Nevertheless, this construction of team culture also seems to support Kassis-Henderson’s (2005) proposition, outlined in section 2.2.5, that linguistic diversity within organisations can be positively experienced.

As illustrated above, the TL and EAs conceive team members as having national cultural differences and use these as a resource in the construction of the MECOS team’s culture. However, equally importantly, the TL and EAs recognise the professional cultural differences that exist between the MELIs. They also recognise that these differences will have a bearing on their ability to fulfil the functions of their role. As the next part of my analysis will explain, these differences also have a bearing on their cross-lingual interactions.

In terms of professional culture, the MELIs come from a wide variety of educational and training backgrounds. Eva recounts her minimal professional experience and knowledge of the English language before arriving in Britain, having completed her compulsory education and subsequent catering course in Latvia:

“\textit{When I came to England, I couldn’t speak English at all, it was six years ago […]}. Yes, I finished high school there [Latvia] and also level 11, 12, we have 12, level 12, so I finished that and then […]. Two years I was studying about cooking, so in the end, I got certificate for that and for my life, I can use my certificate, if I am looking for a role. […] After that, I was just living in my country. I went to work, to that candle factory and that’s it.”

Thus, when Eva arrived in Britain, she had not learned English, either formally or informally. Furthermore, her further education qualification in catering and factory work experience were not directly relevant to her current role as a MELI. Kimberly’s professional, educational and English language experience stands in stark contrast to Eva’s:

“\textit{I’m originally from Singapore. […] My original first language, my mother tongue is Cantonese. Erm, and then, when I went to school, because schooling is all in English in Singapore, English was my first language. […] I trained here as a teacher. And then I taught off and on for about five years and then I came into this job.”}
Thus when Kimberly arrived in Britain, she already enjoyed native-like fluency in English. Furthermore, her teacher training and five years’ teaching experience are directly relevant to her current role as a MELI. Referring back to Schneider et al.’s (2014) professional sphere of culture, each MELI’s work experience and educational background resulted in their unique combination of professional cultural components prior to taking on their current role. The above examples illustrate how widely experiences vary within such a small team. Nevertheless, there are also similarities, even though each MELI has experienced a different combination of education, qualifications and training. Despite this wide variety of backgrounds, the MELIs now all find themselves in the same professional cultural sphere of education. Furthermore, they are now all in the same functional cultural sphere (i.e. their role as a MELI). However, in the light of my finding in section 4.2.2, it appears that, within their role as MELI, team members assume sub-roles according to where and with whom they communicate. Therefore, the question that needs to be addressed for my study is: how is culture involved in team members’ cross-lingual communication experiences as they move between different sub-roles in different organisational settings?

Schneider et al.’s (ibid.) concept of culture as interacting spheres is insufficient to answer the foregoing question as it takes no account of how the spheres’ components might be interacting with each other. Furthermore, the concept perhaps bears too much resemblance to culture being perceived as billiard balls: an analogy posited by Brannen (1996). Brannen’s (ibid.: 116) criticism is that cultures can sometimes be regarded as billiard balls, which either "collide and bounce off each other without changing one another’s shape, or, at best, they roll side by side, coexisting without influencing each other". Furthermore, and as I suggested in section 2.4.1, there are arguably more spheres of culture that those provided by Schneider et al,’s model. It may be more appropriate in this empirical setting to adopt a multiple cultures perspective, as advocated by Boyacigiller et al. (1996). They suggest that a multiplicity of cultures can be experienced in an organisational setting, with many types of cultural groupings existing and coexisting within it. Thus, Boyacigiller et al. (ibid.: 183) recognise that, in addition to organisation members developing "shared sets of assumptions within the organization setting, […] they can also bring with them the various sets of assumptions that they acquire outside of the organization".
Therefore, in analysing my data, I need to consider that multiple cultures may be involved in the cross-lingual interactions of members of this small organisational grouping. For this reason, it is appropriate for me to articulate culture in line with Holliday’s (1999) small culture. As explained in section 2.4.2, Holliday’s constructionist, interpretivist perspective of culture facilitates explanation of cohesive behaviour within small social groupings. It is thus ideally suited to my study of how MECOS team members practise and experience cross-lingual communication. Furthermore, it provides a lens through which to analyse my data by applying Kecskes’ (2012) similarly constructionist, interpretivist theory of intercultural pragmatics (ICP). I continue my analysis with reference to this theory in the next section.

### 4.3.3 Cross-lingual communication and intercultural pragmatics

My analysis in section 4.2 identified that MECOS team members’ cross-lingual exchanges involve the tacit assumption of sub-roles at the level of each cross-lingual interaction. From my data, I identified five sub-roles being adopted, these being pedagogue, pedagogical assistant, pupil, colleague and intermediary. I also posited that this appropriation of sub-roles appears to offer MELIs a way to mobilise their linguistic resources in their cross-lingual encounters. I now illustrate this by applying Kecskes’ (ibid.) ICP theory to my data.

As I explained in section 2.4.4, "intercultural pragmatics […] is concerned with how the language system is put to use in social encounters between human beings who have different first languages, communicate in a common language, and, usually, represent different cultures" (ibid.: 67). This focus on social encounters makes Kecskes’ ICP theory particularly suitable to my person-centred study of cross-lingual communication. For Kecskes, interculturality in communication is a form of culture that emerges within a social situation, as it is constructed by the actors within that social situation. Intercultures are thus created "in a communicative process in which cultural norms and models brought into the interaction from prior experience of interlocutors blend with features created ad hoc in the interaction" (ibid.: 69). The extract from Pauline presented in section 4.3.2 provides one example of how an interculture is being co-constructed.
within the MECOS team. I reproduce the relevant part of the extract here for ease of reference:

“This whole thing [i.e. the MECOS project] was about inclusion, so if we want them [i.e. the MELIs] to enable children to be included, we’ve got to enable them to be included, haven’t we? So that’s been our philosophy really.”

Kecskes (2012: 69) describes one form of interculture as "a unique set of rules for interaction" that is established on the insecurity that lingua franca speakers experience when communicating cross-lingually. Pauline appears to recognise that such insecurity may engender feelings of exclusion. Therefore, she fosters the creation of a team interculture to support inclusion and thus facilitate cross-lingual communication between team members. Team members in turn bring their prior experiences, from all aspects of life, to their cross-lingual interactions. In interacting with Pauline’s philosophy of inclusion, these experiences contribute to the co-construction of the team’s interculture.

The application of ICP theory to another data extract suggests another way in which the team’s culture, or interculture, is involved in cross-lingual communication. Kecskes states that intercultural communication does not always allow interlocutors to adopt their preferred ways of speaking. This is because "the development of ‘preferred ways’ requires time and conventionalization within a speech community" (ibid.: 72). At the time of my data generation, the speech community comprising MECOS team members had only been working together for a relatively short period of time, ranging from three to eighteen months. Therefore, they were arguably still developing their preferred ways of speaking. Michelle’s comment below illustrates this:

“Yes, it’s not the actual words. And then again, perhaps I have used words, erm… jargon. Educational jargon. [...] I gave them all, like a list [...] words to do with key stages and abbreviations they might come across. But… really, there’s so much, you could go on forever doing that.”

Having spent many years in education, Michelle’s preferred way of speaking appears to include the use of specialist educational language, which she calls jargon. However, she
recognises that not everyone in the MECOS speech community is familiar with this specialist language. Therefore, she cannot "rely on the advantageous use of formulaic and figurative elements of a common [i.e. educational] language" (Kecskes, 2012: 72). Nor can she simply provide an exhaustive lexicon for this preferred way of speaking. She therefore has to take a pragmatic approach to communication. She does this by "knowing what expressions to select [and] what is appropriate or inappropriate in different situations" (ibid.). She thus suggests that she uses ‘jargon’ carefully so as to avoid compromising the team’s interculture of inclusiveness as a result of unsuccessful cross-lingual communication. Kecskes (ibid.) states "in intercultural communication, […] group-inclusiveness is created on the spot by speakers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds". Michelle’s comment suggests how she might be contributing to creating group inclusiveness on the spot by avoiding heavy use of specialist educational language.

In another extract, EA Martin suggests his involvement in creating this group inclusiveness on the spot, to facilitate cross-lingual communication:

“So we were talking about that as part of the curriculum and the way that you might bring this into the understanding of eight-year-olds. Erm… and I think probably, as much because he [Samuel] hasn’t the experience of un-, of teaching eight-year-old children that talking to him about what we could do together, what was important, erm, about involving him in classroom work erm, was perhaps something that I needed, we needed to discuss quite a bit. […] Well, with Kimberly I started with what had already been done in terms of diagnosis of the young person and the referral that we had from the school. […] I’m not so sure, if I’d started with a parallel of that with Samuel, he would have picked up all of the significances or the nuances of such a scenario. […] I started with that because I knew Kimberly would be… in tune, with what I was telling her and that was reason for concern and therefore what we were trying to do was. With Samuel, I think I’d start with… we are going to work with a young person, but what I want to come out of this very much. Yeah, I think I’d start the other way round.”

Me: “So, tell me if this is an incorrect assumption on my part, but I’m assuming that your decision on how you would approach it with those two
different people is not essentially based on their, on their understanding of
the language, but it’s more to do with their background and experience that
they bring to the role?”

Martin: “I think that’s correct.”

As Kimberly is a fully trained teacher, Martin recognises that she is already familiar
with the educational environment and language in a way that Samuel is not. Martin
clearly changes the way he explains tasks on account of the MELIs’ linguistic ability.
However, he also makes these changes because he realises that he cannot speak in the
"preferred ways" of education to Samuel, as he can to Kimberly. He thus reproduces the
MECOS team’s interculture of inclusiveness by adapting the way he speaks to each
MELI on the spot because of their different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. I refer
to this extract again in section 4.3.5, to further explain the reasons behind Martin’s
different approaches with Samuel and Kimberly.

The foregoing analysis supports the argument made in section 4.3.2 that conceptualising
culture as small culture facilitates explanation of cohesive behaviour within small social
groups, such as the MECOS team. Furthermore, in analysing cross-lingual exchanges
using Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory, I argue that culture is involved in this team’s practice
and experience of cross-lingual communication at an even finer level of detail. To
explain how culture is operationalised at the level of individual cross-lingual exchanges
between MECOS team members, I now apply Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of
culture as capital, explained in sections 2.5.3 and 2.5.4.

4.3.4 Cultural capital: forms and value

As explained in section 2.5.3, Bourdieu (1977a; 1991) identifies various forms of
capital held by all individuals. The four main types are arguably economic, cultural,
social and symbolic (Mesthrie et al., 2009), with linguistic capital being a subcategory
of cultural capital (Grenfell, 2012a). Furthermore, Bourdieu explains that different
forms of capital assume different values according to the field in which they are used.
As I explained in section 2.5.3, Bourdieu uses the term ‘field’ to refer to "specific social
contexts or settings […] within which individuals act" (Thompson, 1991: 14). Thus,
recalling section 4.2.2, the various places and people with whom MELIs engage in
cross-lingual communication constitute specific social contexts within the organisation of Countyshire County Council. I consider these social contexts can be regarded as Bourdieusian fields.

Furthermore, for Bourdieu, "a field is always the site of struggles in which individuals seek to maintain or alter the distributions of the forms of capital specific to it" (Thompson, 1991: 14). In applying this definition to my findings in section 4.2.2, I argue that the MELIs assume their different sub-roles in order to create different fields in their communicative encounters. The ‘struggle’ in these situations is for the MELIs to achieve effective cross-lingual communication in order to fulfil their (organisational) role. Further analysis of my data reveals that the way in which this ‘struggle’ is played out can be explained by the interaction of different forms of cultural capital.

The importance of different forms of cultural capital to undertake the role of MELI is evident in the original job description. One essential form is to have achieved an ‘A’ level qualification or equivalent, although there is nothing to say this needs to include a language. Required cultural capital gained through professional experience includes translation and interpreting, working with children, parents and families and teaching. However, applicants need only have experience in one of these. Therefore, an applicant without any teaching or translation and interpreting experience may still be eligible. The linguistic capital required, this being regarded as a subcategory of cultural capital, specifies fluency in both English and the required language for communication with ethnic minority pupils. However, it does not specify that formal qualifications are required in these languages. Indeed, the main foreign language sought is the applicant’s mother tongue, which will clearly not be evidenced by any qualification. In addition to cultural capital, interpersonal skills, such as empathy, are considered to be important.

Linguistic capital, particularly the ethnic minority languages, was the most important form of capital at recruitment stage. Tony, the headteacher, was on the recruitment panel and explains:

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22 This argument is fully detailed in section 6.5.
23 Pauline provided me with a hard copy job description. However, in order to preserve anonymity, it is not included as an appendix to this thesis.
“Some of the other experiences that they had and some of them had worked, for example as teaching assistants, I think one had been a teacher in their own country before she had come to Britain and so we were able to explore some of the skills there that could be offered. But first and foremost we had a shopping list of languages that were actually being looked for, because as Pauline said at the time, there is no point recruiting somebody who is offering the language that we have never needed yet in Countyshire and are unlikely to need because we are not going to be able to offer the work.”

In fact, this linguistic capital was so important that, even after the closing date for applications, late applicants were still considered if they had the appropriate linguistic capital and/or other forms of cultural capital. Pauline, the team leader, was also on the recruitment panel and explains:

“Well, I had people contacting me after the closing date saying, you know, ‘I’ve heard about this job and I think I would be good for it’ and I’m thinking, normally, you wouldn’t kind of accept that. But because of the situation we’re in, where we want particular languages and particular skills, I said, ‘Well, I’ll talk to Personnel and then they’ll, they have to kind of open the form up again so that…’, ’cause it’s all done online.”

Pauline’s statement illustrates how the key forms of cultural capital were so important for this role that she was prepared to be flexible and request changes to organisational procedure to ensure they found the right candidate. This flexible approach continued to apply at interview stage, as Pauline told me:

“We can have a list of criteria but when you meet the person, you know who is the right […]”

Thus, although not an explicit criterion in the job description, Pauline is suggesting that a good fit to the role and the organisation was also important. However, as Tony’s earlier comment makes clear, the need for certain languages remained the overriding consideration.
In analysing the above extracts, one way of explaining how the recruitment process was played out is to refer to Bourdieu’s (1977b) concept of a linguistic marketplace and the interaction of forms of cultural capital within it. Bourdieu argues that all languages are not socially equal. This is because "a language is worth what those who speak it are worth" (ibid.: 652). Thus, a language not spoken by any ethnic minority pupils in Countyshire schools is worthless. Hence, only candidates offering languages spoken in Countyshire schools were interviewed. Furthermore, the value of these candidates to the organisation could also be argued as being assessed according to the same Bourdieusian logic. If a candidate was offering a language (or linguistic capital) that was deemed of value to Countyshire schools and hence the recruiting organisation, then the candidate was worth what their linguistic capital was worth.

However, from the foregoing extracts, the candidate’s worth also appears to be assessed according to personal qualities and previous professional experience. In considering this last attribute as a form of cultural capital, I would argue that the candidate’s worth was ascertained not just by the amount of appropriate linguistic capital they held but also by the amount of cultural capital acquired through professional experience. In this way, it appears that, whilst linguistic capital was the overriding requirement for the role of MELI, candidates were also selected according to how the other forms of cultural capital they possessed interacted with their reserves of linguistic capital. This argument finds support when analysing other data extracts, as follows.

As well as having skills in the necessary ethnic minority languages, candidates also needed to be able to communicate proficiently in English. Thus, reserves of linguistic capital in English were also very important. However, as EA Michelle explains, this did not necessarily mean that their English had to be ‘grammatically accurate’:

“And we knew that we weren’t expecting perfect English. But we wanted people… In a sense, we were more concerned about people who… Because the job they’re going to do, we wanted people that would appear… weren’t too bothered about the actual accuracy of what they were saying or anything in the grammatical… But if they could get their opinion, if they could get their point across and whether they were approachable and friend… . Because the people they were dealing with were going to need
somebody that could feel, that they could have confidence in. So it was actually more about the manner… than actual level of accuracy at that point.”

The priority given to the candidate’s interpersonal skills over their English grammatical accuracy further illustrates how candidates’ reserves of linguistic capital were not merely considered in terms of their intrinsic value. Instead, value was also ascribed to linguistic capital according to what the candidate speaking was worth in terms of the personal qualities they offered.

Candidates were required to provide evidence of an English qualification. However Carol, another EA, explains how the language proficiency required for the role was practically assessed at interview:

“And then we had the fourth part of the interview was where we looked at their translation skills, so we had some standard school letters that had been translated into different languages, whatever languages they said on their form that they were proficient in,”[…]

Me: “How did you decide that whether their proficiency was enough, say in English more than their home language?”

Carol: “I would say probably it was in, like when they had that panel interview you know you could understand from their responses to the questions, whether their understanding of English was good enough […] you could see how they communicated with the parents24 and […] how they empathised with them.”

Despite the requirement for and any certification of language proficiency, Carol’s statement again shows the importance of interpersonal skills, such as the ability to communicate and empathise with the parents. Thus from the foregoing analysis, I argue that despite linguistic capital being of paramount importance and despite how it is evidenced, it is valued in terms of the worth of the person speaking the language. In turn, worth is ascribed to a person according to other forms of cultural capital and personal qualities they possess.

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24 Some parents were invited to be on the interview panel.
Analysis of the above extracts indicates the significance of the interaction of the various forms of cultural capital in assessing whether or not an applicant was suitable for the role. Indeed, this interaction of forms of cultural capital continues to be important in enabling members of the MECOS team to undertake their roles. More importantly for this thesis is my discovery that this interaction is also significant in cross-lingual communication between team members, both with each other and in their wider professional encounters. In other words, linguistic capital is not the only form of cultural capital significant for cross-lingual communication, as I now explain.

4.3.5 Forms of cultural capital at work: within the MECOS team

Cross-lingual communication between NNSs and NSs in the MECOS team is always between the TL or an EA (i.e. the NS) and a MELI (i.e. the NNS). When doubt, confusion or misunderstanding occurs in these instances, the EAs recognise that this may not be due entirely to a lack of linguistic proficiency or vocabulary. Michelle’s example, first presented in section 4.3.3, is shown here in full to illustrate the present discussion:

“Yes, it’s not the actual words. And then again, perhaps I have used words, erm... jargon. Educational jargon. [...] I gave them all, like a list [...] words to do with key stages and abbreviations they might come across. But... really, there’s so much, you could go on forever doing that.”

Me: “And in receiving your instructions, have there ever been times when they’ve not understood what it is you want them to do?”

Michelle: “I think so. But then they’re not from teaching backgrounds. So, I don’t think that’s anything to do with the fact that they speak another language. It’s just, you know, you have different training. [...] I mean, once or twice I’ve felt a bit frustrated because they’ve not quite understood what specifically I wanted them to do. [...] And they’ve not quite understood why I’m doing it. But again it’s because of the, it’s not language, it is, you know, the lack of educational background.”

Michelle’s response illustrates how she considers that misunderstanding can arise from a lack of professional experience, as a form of cultural capital (acquired through
working in an educational environment) and not purely from a lack of linguistic capital. The educational jargon to which she refers could indeed be considered as linguistic capital. However, this is only likely to be acquired through professional activity, or at least training, in education.

In section 4.3.3, I presented a data extract where EA Martin told me how he might change his communication approach with different MELIs, not just according to their language proficiency but also according to their experience working in an educational environment. The salient part of the extract is reproduced here for ease of reference:

“Well, with Kimberly I started with what had already been done in terms of diagnosis of the young person and the referral that we had from the school. [...] I’m not so sure, if I’d started with a parallel of that with Samuel, he would have picked up all of the significances or the nuances of such a scenario. [...] With Samuel, I think I’d start with [...] Yeah, I think I’d start the other way round.”

Martin thus asserts that he adapts his approach to cross-lingual communication according to the MELI with whom he is talking. However, his adaptation is based on the levels of cultural capital in the form of professional experience as much as levels of linguistic capital held by the MELI. This suggests that he considers that cultural capital gained through professional experience is important alongside linguistic capital in facilitating understanding in cross-lingual encounters. This in turn illustrates how it is the interaction between, and not merely possession of, these two forms of cultural capital that shapes the cross-lingual communication experience.

Other observations by EAs similarly suggest that cross-lingual communication may be helped or hindered by an individual’s reserves of cultural capital that go beyond the purely linguistic. Pauline and Carol told me about an online training course called Athena that all MELIs had to complete, to learn about the roles of people who work with children. Using such a package naturally required linguistic capital in the form of English language knowledge. However, it also required other forms of cultural capital, such as IT literacy and a basic understanding of how UK social and education systems
operate. Carol explained the somewhat unexpected problems that arose as the MELIs worked through this course:

“What we found out was whereas it might be fourteen hours for someone whose first language is English, for someone whose first language isn’t English, it takes a lot longer because there is so much extra vocabulary that they are not aware of, as well as learning about all the different roles of people involved in working with children, it took some of them a lot longer to get through but then others did it quite quickly so it also showed their proficiency in English.”

Carol offers her expectation of 14 hours being the time ordinarily needed to complete the course. However, she acknowledges that such an expectation can only be fulfilled when a person has sufficient linguistic capital to cope with all the language contained in the course. Naturally, with each MELI having a different stock of linguistic capital, some will require longer than others to work through the same material. As a result, the length of time allowed for the MELIs to complete the course was not always enough. Furthermore, Carol recognises that learning about the various roles of people working with children will also take different people different amounts of time. As such, she suggests that other forms of cultural capital held by each MELI are also important in being able to understand the course and thus complete it within the allocated time.

Further reflection by Pauline on Athena is consistent with Carol’s observations:

“So that was why we were keen for them to do Athena, because we thought it gave them an idea of what we expect and what schools would be expecting from families, when schools would be contacting people saying, we’ve got a concern about this child, which might not be a concern where they’ve come from. […] But when someone got to 30 hours and hadn’t finished, I said, ‘Well, I think that’s it!’ [laughter] You know, within 30 hours, for something that’s supposed to take eight\(^{25}\) hours, you’ve reached the limit and so one person hasn’t actually quite completed it. […] Plus some of them were not what I’d call particularly computer literate […]].”

\(^{25}\) Pauline’s estimation of time required (8 hours) differs from Carol’s estimation of 14 hours.
Pauline begins by acknowledging that the MELIs would not necessarily know how education and social care operate in Britain, as these forms of cultural capital would not be easy to acquire without spending time here and being socialised within those fields. Furthermore, she acknowledges that, without the relevant stock of cultural capital, linguistic or otherwise, tasks involving cross-lingual activity can take longer to complete, if they are completed at all. Finally, Pauline notes that low levels of computer literacy are also a hindrance. Computer literacy can also be seen as a form of cultural capital which, in this situation, interacts with the linguistic capital needed to complete the course.

My analysis of the foregoing examples of cross-lingual exchanges experienced by and between members of the MECOS team finds that cross-lingual communication may be hindered or facilitated, not only according to the varying amounts of different forms of cultural capital held by each individual, but also according to the interaction of these forms of capital with each other. Thus, the outcome of any cross-lingual exchange may not depend solely on the interlocutors’ reserves of linguistic capital. Other aspects of culture, when viewed as capital, appear to be involved in cross-lingual communication. Analysis of further examples of cross-lingual communication experiences by MELIs in their wider professional encounters yields similar findings, as I explain in the following section.

4.3.6 Forms of cultural capital at work: outside the MECOS team

Akbar’s account of his classroom-based cross-lingual communication experiences as a MELI similarly suggests that linguistic and other forms of cultural capital, and importantly their interaction, are pivotal to his own understanding as well as his communication with others. Akbar told me how important it was for him to understand a mathematical concept being explained by the teacher, before he could explain it to the pupil he was supporting:

“Some of the times, the way they used to teach the lesson is different than I learn back home. Sometimes the methods they use, last week I was with child they were using a…a multiply system, how to use in the math. And I learned differently. But they [were] using a different new way. So I have to
know first myself, I have to understand myself first. Then I’ll [ask] the 
teacher, if something new, she or explain that to me first. So I understand 
first. Then I explain to the children. […] So it’s really important. I have to 
understand the situation, the rule, the language, then I’ll be able to explain 
that to others. If I don’t understand, I won’t be able to… to explain, or help 
someone else.”

Clearly, Akbar had acquired sufficient cultural capital in the form of school education in 
his home country of Afghanistan to enable him to understand the mathematical concept 
of multiplication. However, even having secured that aspect of cultural capital together 
with the linguistic capital to explain it, it would seem that Akbar’s understanding of 
multiplication constitutes a different form of cultural capital to what is required to help 
him explain the concept as presented by this teacher. He therefore has to re-acquire this 
aspect of cultural capital in a different form to perform the same task of multiplication, 
before he can then employ his own linguistic capital to explain the concept to the pupil. 
Thus, the success of Akbar’s cross-lingual communication experience with the teacher 
and the pupil depends initially on having the requisite reserves of cultural and linguistic 
capital and subsequently on their interaction.

My data suggest the same argument may also be posited regarding other professional 
activities outside the classroom. Indeed, analysis of the following two extracts suggests 
that the combination of appropriate reserves of cultural capital with linguistic capital 
can prove to be a rich resource for cross-lingual communication that linguistic capital 
alone would not provide. Pauline recalled some positive feedback she had received on 
an interpreting assignment undertaken by one MELI, Shilpa26:

“Well, there is a private special school in Countytown B, where Ruralshire 
have an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child placed and they rang up 
saying, ‘did we have an interpretation service?’ […] When she explained 
what she wanted, I said, ‘Well, we have staff who could probably help’. […] 
So, we got the details and Shilpa went and then we got this very positive

26 As previously explained, I did not interview Shilpa as she left the organisation as I was beginning data 
generation. For the same reason, I did not manage to establish her first language and other biographical 
details.
feedback about that, you know, she understood exactly and she was able to explain things better than the social worker […], you know, because we’ve done this work with them. Well, if you buy in an interpreter, what do they know about the situation? We’ve tried to sort of give them [the MELIs] training that gives them a basic insight into a lot of situations.”

In the four-way encounter between social worker, teacher, MELI and child, Shilpa’s chief role is that of interpreter. As such, she is the only person who has reserves of linguistic capital in both the child’s home language and English. The teacher and social worker each have reserves of cultural capital acquired from their respective professional positions. However, the child’s rudimentary command of English means their ability to converse with the child is limited as they lack the relevant linguistic capital. Shilpa does not share the same level of cultural capital acquired by the teacher and social worker in their respective professions. However, the work and training she has undertaken in her role are sufficient such that, when combined with her linguistic capital, she achieves cross-lingual communication success to satisfy the needs of all interlocutors. As a side issue, Pauline’s question about the value of using outside interpreters also warrants reflection. Whilst an outside interpreter would undoubtedly have a wealth of the relevant linguistic capital, they may not have such rich reserves of cultural capital pertaining to the fields of education and social work as Shilpa has managed to acquire in her role as a MELI. Therefore, although beyond the scope of this thesis, a question arises as to what level of cross-lingual communication success might have been achieved by an outside interpreter.

In my observation of a team meeting, another example arose of how reserves of cultural and linguistic capital and their interaction can be seen to contribute to a successful cross-lingual communication outcome:

Observation note: “Akbar did some interpreting for Urban City Council at a hospital meeting between doctors and parents whose child had been diagnosed with diabetes. […] The doctors were delighted that he [Akbar] knew so much about diabetes, as his son has the condition. This made the interpreting job easier for all parties as the doctors did not have to take time to explain the technicalities of the condition, as Akbar already
understood these very well. He was also familiar with the technical language which made it easier for him to interpret. The outcome was that the medical team want him to come back to do more work for them.”

Akbar obviously had the requisite linguistic capital to undertake this interpreting role. He is not a trained medical professional. Nevertheless, he has acquired some knowledge of diabetes through life experience as his son has this condition. This gave him a rudimentary form of training on the subject and thus a form of cultural capital. The interaction of Akbar’s knowledge of diabetes and the two languages required for the meeting essentially amounted to an interaction between the forms of cultural capital required to achieve cross-lingual communication success in this instance. Knowledge of the two languages alone may not have resulted in such a positive outcome.

From the foregoing analysis, I argue that the interaction of different types of cultural capital, including linguistic capital, appears to shape the cross-lingual communication experience. Furthermore, I argue that, whilst a *lingua franca* naturally facilitates cross-lingual communication, an individual’s stock of linguistic capital may not be all that is required. Reserves of linguistic capital may be enhanced or not according to the amount and types of other cultural capital the individual is able to bring to bear in each cross-lingual exchange. I therefore argue that culture does seem to be involved in MECOS team members’ cross-lingual communication experiences. However, it is only possible to pinpoint this involvement in individual cross-lingual exchanges when considering culture at the level of forms of Bourdieusian cultural capital.

### 4.4 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter has been to address the research question of how, where and with whom cross-lingual communication is practised and experienced in this team and how culture is involved. In section 4.2, I addressed the first part of this research question. I identified three locations in which cross-lingual communication is undertaken by members of the MECOS team between themselves and other non-team members. In so doing, I found that the way team members practise and experience cross-lingual communication appears to be linked to sub-roles they tacitly assume in
their encounters, as they move between people and places. Therefore, they are not merely practising and experiencing cross-lingual communication as MELIs and EAs, but rather as pedagogues, pedagogical assistants, colleagues, pupils, and intermediaries, depending on the situation. Moving between these sub-roles appears to enable the MELIs to mobilise their linguistic resources as befits each cross-lingual interaction (Cohen and Cooper, 1986; Janssens and Steyaert, 2014).

In section 4.3, I addressed the second part of this research question regarding culture’s involvement in cross-lingual communication. This in turn required an understanding of what culture is. Section 4.3.1 therefore explored the extent to which different concepts of culture presented in the literature I reviewed help to explain how cross-lingual communication is experienced in this team. Here, I argued that cultural concepts being played out at this empirical site are more complex than static concepts of national typologies. However, the idea of national culture was apparent in its use as a symbolic resource in cross-lingual exchanges. In particular, MELIs draw upon the idea of national culture to support them in their sub-roles of pedagogue and pedagogical assistant (Ailon-Souday and Kunda, 2003). Other NS MECOS team and project members draw upon the idea of national culture as a potential reason for MELIs misunderstanding or a need for clarification, although how they define culture is not always clear.

In section 4.3.2, I moved to consider how Schneider et al.’s (2014) concept of culture as interacting spheres might assist my analysis. In considering culture as a group of interacting spheres rather than merely a set of static national traits, I found that cross-lingual communication may not just rely on language. It may also rely upon the extent to which people have been socialised in different contexts. The sphere of organisational culture was a useful starting point for analysing how culture was being constructed in the MECOS team. Similarly, applying the sphere of professional culture to my analysis helped me to identify this particular type of cultural difference and similarity between MECOS team members. However, the overall model of interacting spheres of culture remained too broad and insufficiently fluid to analyse the MECOS team’s cross-lingual exchanges at the level of individual interactions.
As my investigation was at such a fine level of detail within a small organisational team, I considered culture was best conceptualised according to Holliday’s (1999) concept of small culture. This in turn supported my application of Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory, in section 4.3.3, in analysing cross-lingual exchanges at this level. This theory enabled me to explain how the small culture of the MECOS team was being reproduced and co-constructed through sub-roles adopted at the level of individual cross-lingual exchanges.

In the final three subsections of this chapter, I analysed how team members operationalise individual aspects of their cultural background within the small culture of the MECOS team and how this is significant for their cross-lingual exchanges. I did this by drawing upon Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of culture as capital existing in various forms, with linguistic capital being one such form. In deconstructing cultural capital, my analysis found that its various forms interact with each other, pinpointing culture’s involvement at the level of individual cross-lingual exchanges. Furthermore, in applying Bourdieu’s (1977b) concept of the linguistic marketplace, my analysis suggested that, even though linguistic capital was of paramount importance for recruiting the MELIs, this capital was ultimately ‘valued’ according to its interaction with other forms of cultural capital the MELIs possessed. My analysis also suggested that the interaction between linguistic and other forms of cultural capital was significant when MELIs were being guided by EAs in performing particular tasks. Furthermore, this interaction was also significant for the extent of success MELIs achieved in their assigned tasks. I now turn to analyse the second of my research questions in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5  How Are Languages Chosen and How are Languages and Languaging Experienced in this Team?

5.1 Introduction

In addressing my second research question, this chapter aims to explore its three elements and is subdivided accordingly. In section 5.2, I explore how members of the Multi Ethnic Community Support (MECOS) team choose the language for communication at work. Despite English being the team’s official working language, other languages are chosen as team members deem appropriate. The bases on which they make their choices are discussed in this section. Then, in section 5.3 I explore how team members experience these language choices, particularly the lingua franca of English, and why this is significant for them and the work they do. In section 5.4, I turn to explore team members’ experiences of their own and their colleagues’ languaging practices, as they operationalise the language choices previously discussed. In so doing, I analyse the significance of the MECOS team members’ practice of and exposure to languaging. Finally, in section 5.5, I summarise my analysis and findings.

5.2 Choosing languages

5.2.1 Phenomena associated with language choice

Communication in the workplace naturally takes place between two or more people who are working on particular tasks in particular situations, or contexts. As explained in section 2.4.5, Warren (2012) argues that context (which he calls ‘setting’) and interpersonal relationships determine the form of language chosen, as does communicative intention. My analysis in section 4.2.2 bears out the significance of sub-roles assumed by the Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediaries (MELIs) in different workplace contexts. Therefore, in this section I explore the significance of sub-roles, context and communicative intention in choosing the language for communication.
In my project, Warren’s (2012) setting can be broadly aligned with the locations, or contexts, of head office, school and other sites, as explained in section 4.2.2. Although the MECOS team’s lingua franca is English, this is not always the most appropriate language choice. Indeed, MELIs make repeated language choices throughout the working day, rather than once at the outset. This practice is consistent with Yanaprasart’s (2015) study of "Multilinguaculturing", referenced in section 2.4.5. She found that, for the multilingual individuals in her study, language choice is "more complex than just choosing one common working language" (ibid.: 121). In my study, language is also chosen according to the task at hand and the sub-role assumed by MELIs in relation to the other parties present.

Task can be aligned with Warren’s (2012) communicative intention. For MECOS team members, tasks, or communicative intentions, can be broadly grouped into three types. The first type is ‘providing/sharing information’ to ensure successful provision of MECOS services. This includes whole team meetings, whole team training sessions and one-to-one advisory meetings between Educational Advisers (EAs) and MELIs. The second type is ‘school support’. As explained in section 4.2.2, this takes the form of MELIs providing linguistic and cultural support to pupils, teachers and EAs in Countyshire schools. The third type is ‘linguistic mediation’, where MELIs act as linguistic intermediary between two or more people who do not share the same language. This can be in school and non-school contexts.

The language chosen arguably needs to be one that all people present can speak and understand. However, my data suggest that language is not merely chosen according to the people present in the communicative encounter, but also according to their interpersonal relationships. As I explained in section 4.2, in my study, Warren’s (ibid.) interpersonal relationships are played out through the sub-roles MELIs adopt in their cross-lingual encounters. Therefore, for the MECOS team, the phenomena influencing language choice are context, communicative intention and sub-role. Ultimately, it is not these three phenomena in isolation but their interaction that influences language choice. Furthermore, this choice may not purely be for one language or another; combinations of languages may also be chosen. I shall now illustrate how and why language choices are made within this team. The analysis presented in the following sub-sections provides a basis for my explanation in section 5.4 of the significance of these choices.
for languaging, and hence the cross-lingual communication experiences, of the people involved.

5.2.2 Choosing the lingua franca

In section 4.2.2 I discussed the sub-roles taken on by MELIs according to their various workplace contexts. Whatever the context, in all sub-roles, the *lingua franca* is always one possible language choice. When the context for MECOS team members is head office, there is evidence of only two of the five sub-roles being adopted. When MELIs and EAs attend head office meetings, most of the time they assume the sub-role of colleague, despite their positions in the organisational hierarchy. As the communicative intention is always ‘providing/sharing information’ and, since English is the *lingua franca* for this group of people, English is the language chosen. This was clear from my observation sessions without needing to ask why.

Nevertheless, MELIs sometimes choose other languages, either alongside or instead of the *lingua franca*. This is evident at head office, but more so in schools and other contexts. In the following sections, I explain these choices and the reasons for making them according to the interplay between the different contexts, communicative intentions and sub-roles assumed. This explanation is assisted by drawing a parallel between Cohen and Cooper’s (1986) study of tourists’ choice of language when moving between geographical locations and the choice of language by MELIs as they move between their work locations and sub-roles. It is further assisted by referring to the concept of language ideologies, proposed by Silverstein and described by Snow (2004: 121) as being "any set of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure and use".

5.2.3 Other language choices: head office

Where the communicative intention remains ‘providing/sharing information’ and the context remains ‘head office’, MELIs sharing the same native language occasionally

27 They sometimes assume the sub-role of pupil, as explained in section 6.2.1.
choose to move away briefly from the *lingua franca* to their native language. This phenomenon, known as code-switching and defined in section 2.2.2, is well documented in the IB&M literature, particularly as regards its associated problems. In organisations where a *lingua franca* is used for communication, non-native speakers (NNSs) of that *lingua franca* can experience problems such as inability to keep track of a conversation and mental fatigue (Feely, 2003; Vaara *et al*., 2005; Volk *et al*. 2014). For this reason, NNSs sharing the same native language may sometimes deliberately switch to that language to clarify meaning or simply for mental respite. Only two people in the MECOS team share the same native language, therefore my investigation of this scenario was limited. Nevertheless, the following bears out the above findings in IB&M research:

Me: “So, erm… you’ll sometimes speak Polish with your colleague.”
Agata: “Yes.”
Me: “Erm, what makes you decide to just, go into Polish, in the middle of an English meeting?”
Agata: “Erm, sometimes… some comments [laughs]. You know I like to share with her. Yes, mmm, mmm. And… and actually, erm, with, erm, with her it is easier to me to speak in Polish. Because that’s my, erm, home language, yes… so. And when we meet, outside, we definitely speak Polish.”

Agata’s comment suggests that she does not make a formal switch to Polish whenever she talks to her colleague Wiktoria. Instead, she uses discretion to make a quick informal switch in contexts where the language formally adopted is English. She does this because she finds Polish easier, thus illustrating the mental respite it affords her.

Referring back to the context of tourism, Jack and Phipps (2012: 548) explain Snow’s view as follows: "tourist encounters are sites in which language ideologies are produced and used to negotiate and articulate language choice". There are similarities between tourists and MELIs; the former move between geographical locations whilst the latter move between work locations, or contexts. Furthermore, MELIs have different encounters within these contexts, as tourists have different encounters in their geographical locations. Following Snow (2004), MELIs’ encounters can similarly be viewed as sites in which language ideologies are produced, with these being used to
choose language. Thus, the language ideology produced at head office renders the *lingua franca* the pragmatically useful and thus main language for communication. Head office also produces a language ideology that affords Agata opportunities, albeit limited, to switch code.

IB&M scholars suggest some reasons why Agata’s code-switching opportunities may be limited. For example, in group situations, an otherwise innocuous practice of code-switching to ensure understanding could be misinterpreted as conspiratorial or divisive, or serve as a form of resistance (Feely, 2003; Vaara *et al*., 2005). However, MECOS team members appear particularly aware of the negative aspects of code-switching and proceed carefully, to avoid appearing impolite, as Wiktoria explains:

**Me:** “So when you’re speaking with your colleagues, am I right in assuming that you normally speak in English?”

**Wiktoria:** “Erm, yes, but when there are only the two of us, or we talk only to each other, we always speak Polish [laughs]. [...] So, yeah with more people, becau- we, we, we speak English, even if they don’t talk to us at the moment, we just, just think it’s more polite to, to, to speak in the language that everyone else understands. But, erm, if we can, we choose Polish.”

Even though Wiktoria would prefer to speak to Agata in her native language, she continues to use the *lingua franca* of English, thus recognising the language ideology for the head office context. The set of beliefs prevailing at head office includes a need for politeness when other colleagues are present. As a result, Wiktoria limits code-switching out of courtesy for her non-Polish-speaking colleagues. However, outside this context, if she is alone with Agata, they switch to Polish. As we have seen then, this is not to say that code-switching never happens in formal group situations, but rather that, as colleagues, MELIs use their discretion to make the switch an informal one. This ensures others present are always considered and thus respects the head office language ideology. Exercising discretion regarding whether or not to switch code can also be understood in terms of the sub-role assumed at head office. Again there are parallels between MELIs’ sub-roles and Cohen and Cooper’s (1986) touristic situations, with both exhibiting asymmetries of power or status.
Cohen and Cooper argue that language choice between tourists and their interlocutors is associated with the status afforded to the various parties in their relationships with each other. They argue that the tourist’s choice of whether to speak in their own native language or that of the place they are visiting is connected to the power or status the tourist has in relation to that of their interlocutors in any given context. For the MELIs, their choice of whether to speak the *lingua franca* or their own language similarly appears to be related to the power or status they have in relation to that of their interlocutors in the workplace. Similarly, Noels *et al*. (2012: 54) see language "as a marker of group distinctiveness [whereby] people adjust their verbal and non-verbal styles […] to create the desired level of social distance between themselves and their interlocutors". This is consistent with Kecskes’ (2012) concept of pragmatic competence as explained in section 2.4.4. Therefore, following Kecskes, my analysis of language choice suggests that MELIs are also choosing language to create, or indeed maintain, the desired level of social distance (or proximity) to their interlocutors. Agata provides an example that illustrates this:

“Oh we always, if we talk too much in Polish, we always say sorry. Yes. And, erm… sometimes we explain what we are talking about, yes. Because I, we don’t want to any-, anybody to feel, erm, upset about it, you know.”

When speaking to Wiktoria, Agata is speaking to her as a colleague of equal status. However, by communicating in Polish, Agata is potentially creating an asymmetry of status between herself and her other MELI colleagues. Or to put it another way, she is risking creating too much social distance between herself and her MELI colleagues. Therefore, she avoids too much code-switching and may take time to explain what she has said in order to maintain social proximity to her colleagues and avoid creating any asymmetries of status.

Although Wiktoria and Agata share the same native language, there are other team members who share languages other than English. Whilst these may not be their native languages, they still offer opportunities for code-switching. However, this is usually done informally and outside of formal meetings. The following example illustrates when it might occur:
Me: “Going back to when you talk Russian to, it’s Izabela, isn’t it…?”
Eva: “Izabela, yeah.”
Me: “But you only ever talk to each other when you’re on your own, so not with the others around or anything like that, no?”
Eva: “Not really, because it’s making other people feel uncomfortable sometimes. For example, me, if somebody talks another language, I’m thinking, ‘oh, what are they talking about?’, you know” [laughs].

Eva only chooses to switch code from the lingua franca of English in one-to-one situations. This is out of consideration for her colleagues who would otherwise not understand what she was saying. Thus her action is another illustration of how language is chosen pragmatically to maintain social proximity with colleagues and the symmetry of status that is commensurate with the sub-role of colleague.

The above examples illustrate how some MELIs, as colleagues, take the opportunity to switch code in the head office context. There is another form of language choice evident in this context, this being code-mixing. As explained in section 2.2.2, this thesis distinguishes between code-mixing and code-switching, viewing the former as mixing elements of more than one language intrasententially and the latter as switching intersententially between languages in the same speech event. Neither IB&M nor organisation studies have addressed code-mixing in the workplace. Nevertheless, in my data, it emerges as a form of language choice that is used within the head office context.

Code-mixing is only possible between people who have languages in common. Therefore, there are limited opportunities for it at head office, since only two people share the same native language and only five other people share languages other than English. The following example refers to a conversation at a team meeting between two MELIs who share a language other than English, albeit not their native language:

Yasmin: “When we’re sitting in meetings, erm, you know, and we’re not supposed to do this but, you know, we’ll obviously be talking and then something might come up, a cultural thing or language, and we might have

28 She is referring to Akbar, who speaks some Urdu.
that conversation in English. And when we can’t really, you know, explain it, you might, you might say, use the odd word or sentence in Urdu to convey our message really. So you always, in my sort of situation, I always use the other language when I can’t explain it in the language that I’m speaking in. Or, like I said, for ease, I will use the lan- the word in the other language to explain myself, because it’s quicker.”

Yasmin suggests that, at head office where colleagues’ communicative intention is to share or provide information, code-mixing is employed to facilitate that intention and hence speed up the task. Code-mixing circumvents potential delays or problems in understanding arising as a result of not being able to think of the right word in the main language being spoken. I observed in a team meeting that code-mixing also works in reverse. That is to say, an English word is sometimes inserted into a conversation being held in another language (Polish, in the following example):

Observation note: “Chatting about the pub lunch led to the meeting ‘breaking up’ a little so Wiktoria and Agata took the opportunity for a quick chat in Polish. I don’t know what they were talking about, but I heard Wiktoria use the word ‘workshop’ in the middle of a Polish sentence.”

Although I could not ascertain the reason for this instance of code-mixing, Yasmin’s explanation would seem equally feasible here. As with code-switching, code-mixing is used at head office carefully and only informally. It is used somewhat sparingly to support communication via the formal channel of the lingua franca. The occasional use of code-mixing thus further illustrates how MELIs take care to choose language pragmatically in order to maintain the symmetry of their status as colleagues. In turn, it is this symmetry of status that affords them the opportunity to choose code-mixing when appropriate.

When the context changes from head office to school, all five sub-roles can be assumed. Furthermore, each of these sub-roles is significant for language choice. I explain this in the next section.
5.2.4 Other language choices: school and other sites

As I explained in section 4.2.2, the MELIs are engaged to perform a variety of tasks in schools. These tasks are largely to provide classroom support and mostly result in MELIs adopting the sub-roles of pedagogue (to pupils) and pedagogical assistant (to teachers and EAs). However, there are instances when they take on the other sub-roles of colleague, pupil and intermediary. As with the head office context, MELIs’ language choice in schools continues to hinge on the communicative intention and sub-roles assumed. Language choice thus remains consistent with Warren’s (2012) argument and my application of Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory, as I now explain.

Where the MELI is assisting the EA with a language assessment of an ethnic minority pupil, the task is to assess the pupil’s capability in both their native language and English. The EA assesses the pupil’s ability in English and the MELI assesses their native language ability. In this context, the MELI assumes the sub-role of pedagogical assistant to the EA. Following Warren (2012), the communicative intention is to provide the EA with information about the child’s language skills. The MELI is therefore bound to choose the *lingua franca* when communicating with the EA and the child’s native language when communicating with the pupil, since the task requires them to communicate exclusively with the child using their native language and then relay their assessment to the EA in English. The following two extracts from two MELIs illustrate this choice:

Wiktoria: “Well, when I’m with the child, I speak Polish, only Polish. Because, erm, they assess the English skills as well, but it’s Michelle who does it. And so Michelle or Carol, erm, or Martin, they just do the English bit, and I do the Polish.”

Me: “So when you are in this situation, what languages are you using?”
Agata: “Both.”
Me: “Oh both?”
Agata: “Yes, I need to because I did to speak, for example, Polish to, erm, the children who I interview and then I need to translate to my manager.”
Following Kecskes (2012), in the sub-role of pedagogical assistant both MELIs have a lower status than the EA as pedagogue. In maintaining this asymmetry of status, they must act as instructed by the EA. Therefore, they have no discretion about what language they choose for communication with either the EA or the pupil.

Greater freedom of language choice arises when there is a change of communicative intention and/or sub-role. Where the school engages the MELI to provide one-to-one linguistic and/or cultural support for an ethnic minority pupil, the MELI simultaneously adopts two sub-roles; pedagogue to the pupil and pedagogical assistant to the teacher. The communicative intention in both sub-roles is to provide school support. These situations afford the MELI greater discretion in language choice. The language of everyone else in the classroom is English, but this may not be the case between the MELI and the child whom they are supporting. The following examples show how code-switching is deliberately employed:

Akbar: “If I work with the children, new arrival, erm, most of the time I’m, I’m working is, erm, speaking, erm, Pashto or Farsi.”

Agata: “I’m trying to speak Polish to her. Erm… to…. Oh… yeah, to make sure she feel confident first, yes.”

Where a newly arrived pupil has little or no ability in English, the task is to ensure understanding and build confidence. To achieve this, Akbar and Agata use their professional judgement to switch code to the child’s language as they deem appropriate. Their social status in these scenarios is higher than that of the pupils and this asymmetry affords these MELIs greater discretion regarding language choice. With no colleagues present, there is no one with whom they must maintain social proximity or symmetry of status. Furthermore, considerations of politeness evident when sharing information at head office are of no consequence in schools where a MELI’s prime function is to support. In their sub-role as pedagogue here, these MELIs can choose the language they deem fit to support the pupil and maintain the social relationship that exists between them.
Where a child already has some English language ability, the MELI as pedagogue uses their discretion when deciding which language to choose. Yasmin gives an example of how context is instrumental in her choice of language with the same child:

“So you always speak in the language that they know in the surroundings that they are in. So say if that child was in the mosque, that same child, I would speak to him in Punjabi or Urdu. Because that’s the surrounding that he is in. And if he didn’t understand then I would revert to English. So if, if he’s in school, you would start in English.”

Although Yasmin’s example includes a non-workplace context, it is nevertheless significant as it illustrates how the interplay of the phenomena of context, communicative intention and sub-role is involved in her language choice. In the context of school, she affirms her role as pedagogue to the child by choosing English to develop the child’s English skills. In turn, her choice to maintain the social distance and the asymmetry of status between herself and the pupil affords her a greater degree of discretion in her choice of language. However, in the mosque, she no longer assumes the role of pedagogue and so chooses the language being used by everyone else in that context, thus maintaining symmetry of status with others present.

Occasionally, MELIs work together to conduct or facilitate whole-class activities, rather than just provide one-to-one support. In such cases, they continue to assume the sub-role of colleague with each other and pedagogue to the children. As English is the only language shared by most MELIs and people in the classroom, this lingua franca is usually chosen in these situations where, as colleagues, the MELIs’ communicative intention is school support. However, there is an exception to this with two MELIs who share Russian, as well as English, although neither are their native languages. In school, they may choose to switch to their shared language of Russian, as Eva explains in the following extract, some of which also appeared in section 4.2.2:

Me: “And what about, you know with your colleagues, your MELI colleagues here, do you speak English to them all the time?”
Eva: “Usually, there’s just only one person which, which I speak Russian, it’s Izabela. [...] Sometimes we speak Russian, sometimes English.”
Me: “Yeah, so when do you speak Russian to each other?”
Eva: “For example, we went to, usually we don’t speak here, we speak English usually. When we are together, like me and her, then we speak Russian, but when you go to school, yeah, as well, we speak Russian most of the time.” […]
Me: “Why do you decide to talk to each other in Russian then?”
Eva: “Sometimes it’s just, you know, easier, like some words…it’s just… I don’t know, I can’t even explain, it wasn’t like a decision, now we’re talking in Russian, not English.”

One reason for this choice appears to be that there are times when they find Russian easier to use than English. This code-switching, like the example of code-mixing at head office in section 5.2.3, seems to be used with discretion to facilitate the task of information sharing between two colleagues of equal status, where others present do not need to understand or be party to their conversation.

As well as code-switching, MELIs use code-mixing extensively in school. In teaching English as a foreign language, Celik (2003) has resorted to code-mixing when introducing new vocabulary. Furthermore, his study finds that using code-mixing is a successful method for teaching vocabulary. Although the MELIs’ role of providing language support differs from Celik’s role of teaching language, they share the same objective of progressing a child’s language development. Thus, MELIs also advocate the practice of code-mixing to promote a child’s understanding of and development in English in their early stages of encountering the language. Rana’s example illustrates this:

“Well, when I first started, obviously the child didn’t know any word of English and didn’t used to the atmosphere, so I then speak Turkish at the beginning. Then, soon as I got, she’s saying few words in English, ’cause she’s hearing from the others, then I started to use English beside of Turkish.[...] I was mixing more in the beginning. As I said, it was Turkish at the beginning and then it come up a little bit mixed, then it’s more going to English, ’cause she’s understanding more.”
In the above example, Rana is providing school support, assuming the sub-role of pedagogue to the child. Maintaining the asymmetry of status in this relationship affords her some discretion in choosing the language, or indeed mix of languages, for communication.

MELIs also use code-mixing to assess a child’s ability in English, as Yasmin explains:

“So say if he’s in the nursery and he’s playing with something, you’d say ‘Oh, that’s a nice car. What colour is it? Is it red?’ And he’ll say ‘yes’. And then you’ll say, and then if he doesn’t respond, you’ll say ‘oh’, you’ll say it in the other language then, to see if he’ll respond to it that way.”

Once again, Yasmin’s communicative intention is to support the pupil’s language development. In so doing, she assumes the sub-role of pedagogue. As with Rana, this affords Yasmin some discretion to choose a mix of languages with which to accomplish her task.

Returning to code-switching, this also occurs in schools when MELIs are required to speak to parents or interpret for parties who do not share the same level of fluency in English, if indeed they share English at all. In these instances, the MELI’s sub-role is that of intermediary. As such they bear a similarity to Cohen and Cooper’s (1986) language brokers. Language brokers are different from translators and interpreters who are "concerned exclusively with linguistic exactitude" (ibid.: 556). In contrast, language brokers’ primary function is "to reproduce the communication value of the source text" (ibid.) rather than reproduce it verbatim. They are social, as well as linguistic, mediators between communicating parties, ensuring that information is communicated and explained and not merely translated. Nevertheless, although language brokers are not, strictly speaking, interpreters, they may become interpreters by default. When assuming the sub-role of intermediary, the MELIs are required sometimes to interpret more or less verbatim. However, in other instances, they act more as a linguistic go-between, not necessarily translating what their interlocutors are saying word for word. Either way, the sub-role of intermediary affords MELIs no discretion in language choice, since they are required always to choose the respective language of each communicating party. Kimberly’s comment illustrates this:
“Erm, with, with the boy, when I’m teaching him, it will be English, but when I speak to the parents and, erm, tell them what I’m doing, I would always switch and tell them – ‘oh actually, I’m doing this’, or whatever I’m doing, in Mandarin. I’d explain to them.”

Me: “And why do you make that decision?”

Kimberly: “Erm, simply because they, they, they, their understanding of spoken English is not.. enough to.. understand what I.. want them to do. Erm, so I felt it’s better if I.. switch… yeah.”

In the sub-role of intermediary

Kimberly’s choice to switch code is driven by the need to maximise the parents’ understanding. Therefore, even though the parents may have some knowledge of English, Kimberly assumes this is insufficient and uses their native language.

MELIs may also be required to interpret between teacher and pupil during lessons or between pupil and EA during language assessments. Whatever the situation, the communicative intention here is always linguistic mediation and the sub-role assumed is always that of intermediary. As intermediaries, MELIs assume a status in the interaction that ranks beneath that of the pupil and the EA. They therefore switch between their native language and English as required by EA and pupil and without any discretion, as Izabela indicates:

Me: “So do you, what sort of time do you spend talking in English? How much time in Russian? How much time in Czech, would you say, in your job?”

Izabela: “Czech is the least used. […] But probably Russian is… most. […] If I’m in school, then… I would roughly say… between 50/70% English. The rest of it would be that [other] language. […] If it would be interpreting, then it would be half and half.”

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I assume Kimberly’s sub-role is intermediary here, since a MELI would not usually speak to parents without another member of educational staff being present. In such encounters, MELIs often act as interpreters.
The above example of code-switching for the purpose of linguistic mediation is also consistent across all other sites where MELIs are required to interpret. When asked to provide their services in locations other than schools, the task required of the MELIs is usually interpreting. MELIs assume the sub-role of intermediary and therefore language choice is driven by the task and sub-role and undertaken completely without discretion.

My analysis of language choice thus far suggests that language is chosen according to the interplay between context, communicative intention and sub-role, based on its usefulness in each interaction (Kecskes 2012; Snow 2004). Furthermore, the degree of discretion MELIs have in choosing language appears to be associated with their social status when adopting a particular sub-role in a particular context (Kecskes 2012; Warren 2012). Thus, discretion of language choice appears to be associated with the pragmatic competence of the communicating parties, as explained in section 2.4.4. When exercising any language options, team members report their choice as always being made with positive intentions. However, as I suggested in section 3.5.2, I have to consider that this positive picture may be one that my interview participants are interested in creating.

As well as code-switching and code-mixing, there is one other form of language choice that forms part of cross-lingual communication experiences in this team: non-verbal or body language. The following section explains the significance of choosing non-verbal language for members of this linguistically diverse team.

5.2.5 Other language choices: non-verbal language

MECOS team members unanimously consider the use of non-verbal language, particularly facial expression, to be essential in cross-lingual communication. This is supported by Ferraro and Briody (2013: 82) who cite Knapp in arguing that "next to speech, the face is the ‘primary source of giving information’". Facial expression has been instrumental in cross-lingual interactions right from the inception of the MECOS project. Even during the MELI recruitment phase, interviewers used facial expression to check candidates’ understanding. The following example illustrates this:
Me: “When you said you had to, with certain candidates, you had to rephrase because you had got an idea that maybe they hadn’t understood something, what flagged it up to you that they hadn’t understood?”

Tony: “What flagged it up to me, as much as anything, were the non-verbal signs of communication, the look on their faces ‘I am not quite sure what you mean’ and sometimes the silences as well before they answered and their hesitancy about giving a response as well.”

Following Ferraro and Briody’s (2013) reference to Knapp, Tony seems to be suggesting that he encountered moments where he was uncertain whether the language used in the cross-lingual interaction was achieving the communication objective. Therefore, in those moments, he used facial expression to check language efficacy.

NS EAs also use facial expression extensively to check the NNS MELIs’ understanding of instructions or advice. Michelle explains how she interprets facial expression as a request to repeat or clarify what she has said:

“I can see their faces and I can see them thinking ‘what the bloody hell is she on about now?’ And erm I, I’ll say that to them, ‘I’ll start again, shall I?’ ”

MELIs also use gesture to facilitate their languaging, in order to communicate their message as clearly as possible. I observed one example in a team meeting when Samuel was telling his colleagues about a lesson he gave on drumming:

Observation notes: “When talking about the fact that drums need to be dry, he said professional drummers use hairdryers before using the drums. He seemed to stumble over the word ‘hairdryers’ and did a physical action of drying his hair and then looked up questioningly.”

In reflecting on this observation note, I realise that I am referring to Samuel’s gesture and facial expression to draw conclusions about his languaging experience. My assumption illustrates how I also made use of non-verbal language in interpreting my observational data.
Facial expression is also used in the school context, for example, in meetings between school staff and a pupil’s parents, where the MELI is acting as interpreter. NS school staff look for non-verbal indicators of understanding from the NNS parents of a pupil. If these indicators suggest a lack of understanding, then the MELI takes this as their cue to repeat or clarify the message, as Samuel explains:

“Then the teacher will look at the reaction of the parents see they be happy or no happy. If they are no happy then we ask, erm, ‘did you, can you [say that] again?’, because [I] don’t see any reaction by the parents, then I say ‘you understand what I said?’ ”

There is also evidence in my data that non-verbal language is useful in assessing whether or not code-switching is happening for positive reasons of meaning-making rather than negative reasons of making derisory comments. EA Michelle explains how non-verbal language can serve to indicate the innocuous nature of code-switching when it happens within the MECOS team:

“I just didn’t find it threatening. Because you just know, because body language, most of the time, what they’re t-. You don’t know what they’re talking about, but you know it’s to do with what they should be talking about, or not, and therefore I just don’t find it [a] hassle.”

Conversely, Yasmin draws on an experience in the classroom to explain how she uses non-verbal language to distinguish innocent from less innocent talk in another language:

“I don’t speak Pashto and these boys spoke in Pashto, I always knew if they were talking about their work, or if they were saying silly things, or if they were talking about me. I always knew. And I’d say to them ‘I know what you’re talking about’ [laughs], you know.”

Me: “And how did it, how did you know? Was it just…”

Yasmin: “Exp, erm, body language. You can always tell.”

I did not ask Michelle or Yasmin what form this body language took. Therefore, I have insufficient data to further explore why they both concluded that the code-switching was innocuous. Nevertheless, these two examples suggest the omnipresence and importance of non-verbal language in this team’s cross-lingual exchanges.
However, one situation where non-verbal language is not available for reference is when speaking on the telephone. Rana and Wiktoria note how its absence renders this cross-lingual communication experience more challenging than speaking face-to-face:

Me: “Do you speak over the phone to anyone at all, like your advisers?”
Rana: “I do and I find it more difficult.”
Me: “Why is it more difficult, do you think?”
Rana: “I don’t know. Face-to-face, I think you can feel or you can make, guess what she’s on about maybe, or from the face or body language she use or they use, but on the phone, it’s difficult to see that, so you’ve only got voice to hear very carefully and if you miss, then you miss, you know […] It was really annoying at the beginning, but now, I came [got] over it as well. I feel a lot better, but I still would prefer speaking to face-to-face really.”

Wiktoria: “But what I found really, erm, difficult was, was, erm talking on the phone. Because [unintelligible word] answering phone. And I still feel a distance [laughs] when I hear phone calling [unintelligible word]. Because it’s, this is really difficult. Because the voice is a bit different on the phone. So I can’t hear clearly, is the first thing. The other, you don’t, you don’t see the person speaking to you so, and no gestures.”

For Wiktoria, the absence of non-verbal language is exacerbated by voices sounding different on the telephone. She appears to be suggesting that, when she is speaking with someone face-to-face, she uses the sound of their voice as a reference for understanding the cross-lingual interaction. However, on the telephone, the different sound of the voice makes interaction more difficult.

5.2.6 Summarising language choice

The foregoing analysis discusses language choice in the MECOS team with reference to the apposite literature I consulted. It confirms the claims of IB&M and ICC scholars that using a common organisational language, or lingua franca, is indeed a viable solution for communication between members of a multilingual workforce. However, it also illustrates that the lingua franca is not always the only, or even the most
appropriate language choice. Ferraro and Briody (2013) imply that language choice is a single decision made on arriving at work. However, my analysis is more consistent with Yanaprasart’s (2015) study, suggesting that, for the MELIs, it is a decision made repeatedly throughout the working day. Other forms of language, such as code-switching and code-mixing, are also frequently chosen, with all choices being made according to the three phenomena of context, communicative intention and sub-role, according to usefulness and interactants’ pragmatic competence in each situation (Kecskes, 2012; Snow, 2004; Warren, 2012). Furthermore, the degree of discretion in making these choices appears to be connected with the social status of communicating parties in a given context (Cohen and Cooper, 1986; Kecskes, 2012). In all cases, choices are reportedly made for positive reasons of facilitating cross-lingual communication and getting various jobs done. Nevertheless, participants acknowledge that these choices can have negative implications if people around them do not understand what they are saying.

Consistent with all the extracts analysed and discussed throughout section 5.2, there appears to be a common reason behind language choice in this team that follows the argument made by Yanaprasart (2015: 117): "language choice is not only a matter of practice, but also one of beliefs about what good language is and what is the right way to do things linguistically". MELIs mobilise their linguistic resources by choosing the *lingua franca*, or by code-switching or code-mixing, to maximise communicative efficacy according to the degree of discretion afforded to them by their assumed sub-roles. Thus my analysis illustrates how language choice in the MECOS team is made "not by distinguishing dichotomously between monolingual and multilingual policies, but rather on a continuum between more or less mono-multilingual behaviours" (*ibid.*: 119).

This approach to language choice further illustrates how the MECOS team is continually constructing its own culture, or interculture, as Kecskes (2012) calls it. As explained in section 4.3.3, interactants create group inclusiveness on the spot, thus (re)constructing the team’s culture. Nevertheless, team members recognise the potential for code-switching to have a negative impact on colleagues so they take care to keep it to a minimum when other colleagues, who do not share the language concerned, are present. Operating in conjunction with all these choices is the use of non-verbal
language, particularly facial expression, which is considered as essential in facilitating cross-lingual communication. Indeed, when this choice is not available, the practice of cross-lingual communication appears to be more difficult.

This analysis of language choice offers one explanation why, in contrast to many negative experiences of code-switching in multinational companies portrayed in the IB&M literature, members of this team largely report code-switching as a non-threatening activity (Vaara et al., 2005; Feely 2003). The next two sections explain how these language choices, and the practice of languaging, are experienced.

5.3 Experiencing languages

In analysing my data, it becomes clear that the different language choices presented above also result in different experiences of language. Furthermore, it appears that the single lingua franca of English is experienced in several different ways. These experiences also appear to be connected to the effectiveness of cross-lingual communication between MECOS team members and hence to the fulfilment of their roles. This section considers the language choices discussed in section 5.2 and explains how experiencing them is associated with the effectiveness of cross-lingual communication and thus with the people involved and the jobs they do.

5.3.1 Experiencing the lingua franca: language register

As explained in section 5.2.2, with English being the only language shared by all MECOS team members, the choice of lingua franca for team communication is English. In section 2.2.1, I explained how the issue of choosing a common organisational language is familiar to the handful of IB&M scholars who have researched language use in multinational corporations (MNCs). Nevertheless, this research is equally valuable when considering use of a shared language in domestic organisations, as in my project. A common corporate language is one of the main ‘mechanical’ solutions favoured by MNCs to reduce or eliminate the language barrier issue. However, the shared language itself brings new, sometimes tacit, types of barrier and distortion (Welch and Welch, 2008; Piekkari and Zander, 2005). Relatedly, Welch
et al. (2005) identify three ‘layers’ or registers of language, these being ‘everyday’, ‘company-speak’ and ‘technical/professional jargon’. Furthermore, they argue that, whilst these ‘layers’ are distinct, there is nevertheless a degree of interconnection and percolation between them. Here, I refer to these ‘layers’ as language registers; in other words, a language variety associated with particular contexts or a particular use (Cohen and Cooper, 1996; Holmes, 2012).

NNS MECOS team members refer implicitly to language registers when recounting how they experience English. They do not appear to experience this *lingua franca* as one standard form of language, but rather as a range of different registers encountered in different contexts of professional as well as personal life. Furthermore, their experiences appear to be associated with their cross-lingual communication undertakings. In analysing their experiences, I seek to identify and understand the significance of any tacit barriers concealed within the *lingua franca*. Collectively, participants suggest that English is akin to a hierarchy of language registers resembling, although not identical to, the layers identified by Welch et al. (2005). Sections 5.3.2 to 5.3.5 therefore analyse the experiences of these registers according to the hierarchy that emerged from my interview data.

### 5.3.2 Experiencing ‘learned’ English: the baseline level

For NNSs, the ‘baseline’ level of the hierarchy of language registers is the English they learned in their home country, via books, formal education or audio-visual broadcasts via the television or Internet. This form of English arguably exists, to some extent, outside of the countries in which it is spoken. This is also the form on which participants based their assessments of their English language ability before arriving in Britain. As such, this register could be seen as existing beneath or prior to Welch et al.’s (*ibid.*) baseline register of ‘everyday’ language. As my data analysis in this section shows, this ‘learned English’ register is experienced very differently from ‘actual’ English spoken in England by NSs. This bears out Cohen *et al.*’s (2015: 152) assertion that "English as a lingua franca is in fact a multilingual way of using English, impacted by the different language backgrounds of its users, and is therefore not based on the practices and representations of native speakers". Thus, participants who formerly may
have felt proficient or even fluent in English when acquiring it within their own language background felt a sudden reduced ability when practising this language in England with NSs. Wiktoria explains how the discrepancy between her ‘learned’ English and ‘English as spoken in England’ affected her feelings of confidence in her early days of working in Britain:

Wiktoria: “Erm, I learned English in Poland so I thought [laughs] that I’m ready. But, when I arrived here, I realise that really I... I, it was very difficult for me to understand first of all, as regards spoken language. Because I’ve always felt confident and I still feel confident as far as reading, and so on. […] And I found out that people speak a bit different language [laughs], that I learned. You know. The different dialects, erm... you know everyone has an accent, let’s say. Erm... people used to join words together, so [it] was just flow. It’s not separate words that I could understand. So I found it really really difficult. It took me a while to get used to it.”

The IB&M literature does not appear to recognise this register that precedes everyday language. Thus, it systematically fails to recognise that there could be any problems in using the *lingua franca* even in everyday linguistic encounters, let alone professional ones. Chen et al. (2006) note that people in global teams may be reluctant to speak in meetings conducted in a language in which they lack confidence. They suggest that good language training can usually resolve such issues. However, as Cohen et al. (2015: 153) suggest, learning language as a code without understanding how it is used in context does not guarantee effective communication. Therefore, language training is unlikely to have assisted Wiktoria in overcoming the difficulty she describes. Furthermore, Feely (2003) notes that language training is more of a long-term solution. Therefore, it would do little to provide a rapid solution to Wiktoria’s problem.

Another MELI, Akbar, explains how the environment or context in which English is practised and experienced makes a difference to his ability to communicate in and understand English, and even to making himself understood:

“I think it’s erm put me in a situation that it’s really important to be erm, erm in [an] environment, English-speaking environment. Because when I learn my own English, back home, the written English I had when I came to
this country, I knew some words, but, erm, when I was talking with, using it, erm… the people here could not understand, because I learned it back home, where was… no English environment.”

Agata, even felt robbed of her English language ability, simply by having to speak English in Britain:

Agata: “And… when I came here, my first thought was ‘I don’t speak English’!”
Me: “Really?”
Agata: “Definitely, yes. Maybe because my English, it was English from books. You know what I mean? And then here, I have to cooperate with people in the street and colleagues at work. So it was really difficult for me to speak spoken English, you know what I mean?”

The above three examples suggest that languages acquired outside the countries where they are habitually spoken can be devalued simply by putting those languages to use where they are spoken. As a result, the MELIs’ initial cross-lingual communication experiences using English were not necessarily as straightforward as they may have envisaged. Wiktoria’s response suggests that a period of acclimatisation is needed to bring previously acquired language skills up to the level of how the language is spoken and used every day in its own environment. But what is this new level, perceived as higher by participants? How is it defined? Team members suggest their own form of measure, as explained in the following section.

5.3.3 Experiencing ‘plain’ English: the level of everyday life

Having acclimatised to the new linguisitc environment, participants describe the new everyday level of language in various ways. MELI Eva calls it ‘common English’:

Eva: “Sit and think, think again, [laughs], because there’s academic language, yeah and there is just language and my language is just language, you know.”
Me: “Do you find then, ’cause you say your English is just English…”
Eva: “Just English, common English, just, yeah.”
Akbar calls it ‘basic English’, as distinct from a more formal register:

“Generally we don’t speak very formal language. Just using the basic English.”

Lukas describes it as ‘plain English’ and also acknowledges the need to acclimatise to speaking English in the new environment:

“Well in the first few months it was hard. But, [to] have to change languages like that. But I think that the experience becomes easier, but it’s still hard. I can feel my brain’s struggling at some point. But, erm, it depends. It depends obviously what kind of English people speaking. If they speak plain and easy, then obviously for me it’s a lot easier to interpret.”

Whilst these participants cannot agree on a technical term, they agree that this ‘plain’ English, as spoken in Britain, is a higher level than they had hitherto been accustomed to using. Thus the ‘everyday’ register proposed by Welch et al. (2005) is set above the baseline described by my participants. In making their transition from one level of the lingua franca to the next, these MELIs experienced initial difficulties in cross-lingual communication in their new linguistic environment. Once comfortably acclimatised to the new ‘plain’ English, everyday cross-lingual communication feels easier and self-assessments of fluency are more positive. However, these assessments are made in full recognition of even higher levels of English to which participants still aspire. As the following section shows, such higher levels are often acknowledged as being found in professional contexts, in other words, the workplace.

5.3.4 Experiencing ‘technical’ English: the level of professional life

In the above example, Eva called everyday English ‘common English’; she finds this much easier to deal with than higher levels in the workplace, as the following extract suggests:

Me: “And you find that’s easier to deal with, do you?”
Eva: “Of course, of course because to say clever language, you know, there’s clever language in English, you know and that is quite hard. When
you get letters from somebody, you know, like I’m getting sometimes letters from my office, there’s words, clever written letter, you know, which one is not my language, you know. I understand what this means, but it’s completely different words again, you know, it’s clever language. [Laughter]. It’s academic. […]”

Me: “Does it make you feel less comfortable, that kind of thing?”
Eva: “Of course, yes and when you have to reply, you think, ‘oh my God, how do I reply to you now with the same clever words?’ you know, ‘my God.’ It’s quite, it’s not easy.”

Although Eva is referring to the written word here, this is still very much part of her cross-lingual communication experience. Here, the language register, described as ‘clever’ and then subsequently ‘academic’, may not pose serious problems of understanding, but there arises a problem of how to respond. MELI Rana suggests that professional contexts have their own words, which can present challenges in cross-lingual communication:

Rana: “Every job has got its own words, I think, you know, like doctors use medical terms and here we use, I don’t know, when I read the e-mails or hear some words like [unintelligible word], I didn’t know before but, you know, this job brought some words as well which I didn’t know before, yeah, so…”
Me: “So are they words like educational words or…?”
Rana: “Educational, definitely, yeah, not like everyday use words, no, so it was educational, so I find it challenging, the word.”

Eva and Rana are both describing another level of language register that they consider to be higher than that of everyday language. This is in line with the technical/professional register proposed by Welch et al. (2005). NSs are equally aware of this higher level register and its associated issues. In the following example, I recall an extract previously analysed in section 4.3.5, where EA Michelle recognises the different language register used in their workplace. Furthermore, she acknowledges that the complexity of this language register almost renders it a language within a language. As such, she recognises the potential cross-lingual communication difficulties that could arise:
Michelle: “And then again, perhaps I have used words, erm… jargon. Educational jargon. I might assume… I started to go through a list, there’s so much of it. I gave them all, like a list they could have a look at and what words to do with key stages and abbreviations they might come across. But… really, there’s so much, you could go on forever doing that.”
Me: “So how would they come to, how have they come to learn that educational language, if you like? Just through getting acquainted with it?”
Michelle: “Yeah. Backed by using it, I think. And by working in schools and and absorbing it.”

Rather than favouring Chen et al.’s (2006) suggestion of language training, Michelle considers that acclimatisation to the professional context is a better solution. In other words, the higher level is best achieved by acquiring reserves of cultural capital through being socialised within a professional environment.

Other participants call this higher level of English ‘technical’ language. Once again, this acknowledges that there are different registers of English, other than the everyday conversational register, which require some specialist knowledge of the technical context in order to understand the terminology used within it. MELI Izabela recalls her difficulty when encountering technical language in an unfamiliar context:

“You know, sometimes, erm, well, I said I was translating science words, Czech, erm, from English into Czech and, erm, I didn’t know about three words, because it was techni, well sort of technical science and physics. You know, it was technical.”

Of course, lack of familiarity with the technical context may pose a similar problem to NSs encountering such language. However, familiarity with the context would considerably reduce this difficulty for NSs, whereas the same is not necessarily true for NNSs, as Agata suggests:

“Because, erm, you know math, maths, erm. It is… it is said that maths in every language is the same, but that’s the… numbers. But not, erm, you know, for example language, erm, a bit or more, bigger, biggest, erm, or
colours. That’s langu-, erm maths language as well. But, erm, so you have
to say it in language what the children say, yeah.”

Although Agata has knowledge of the technical context of mathematics, this was
acquired in her native language of Polish. Her response suggests that she sees the
language of mathematics as being separate from everyday language, such that she does
not assume it is possible to translate terms such as “more, bigger, biggest” simply into
everyday language. It is almost as if she understands these words differently when
encountered in the technical context of mathematics as opposed to everyday talk. As a
result, there arises a difficulty in cross-lingual communication. This difficulty is clearly
not because Agata has no understanding of mathematics, but rather that her
understanding was acquired in her native language. Therefore familiarity with the
context does not necessarily reduce the difficulty for this NNS encountering technical
language in the *lingua franca* of the workplace; the language itself also has to be
familiar.

The above examples suggest an even greater complexity in language registers than that
depicted by the aforementioned IB&M scholars. For my participants, successful cross-
lingual communication at work not only depends on knowledge of technical language. It
also requires familiarity with the technical or professional context in which the
communication is happening. Furthermore, my analysis suggests that it is insufficient
for these participants to be familiar with the technical or professional context in their
native language; they also need to re-familiarise themselves with these contexts through
the *lingua franca* used in the workplace. This is further evidence to support Cohen *et
al.*’s (2015) claim, noted in section 5.3.2, that language learned as a code is of limited
communicative use without an understanding of context. It also further illustrates
findings discussed in section 4.3.6 inasmuch as reserves of linguistic capital are not
always sufficient for successful cross-lingual communication; they need to be used in
conjunction with other relevant forms of cultural capital.

The above experiences of the *lingua franca* as a hierarchy of different registers suggest
a shared language is not necessarily a simple bridge with which these participants can
traverse the language barrier and thus overcome all cross-lingual communication
problems. Furthermore, in the MECOS team, the *lingua franca* is not necessarily the
only form of language used. Therefore, in the next section I explore how other language choices identified in section 5.2 are experienced within this team.

5.3.5 Experiencing code-switching and code-mixing

As indicated in the MELIs’ biographical details in Appendix 1 and as previously discussed, only a few MECOS team members share languages other than English; therefore code-switching opportunities are limited. The IB&M literature sees code-switching as a tool used primarily by NNSs of the *lingua franca* to confirm their understanding. People thus switch codes for positive reasons of clarification or for respite from language fatigue. However, as stated in section 5.2.3, code-switching may be perceived negatively by colleagues who do not understand the alternative code. In the MECOS team, the reasons for code-switching are reportedly positive, as are the resulting experiences of the code-switchers. Wiktoria’s comment below illustrates this:

> “It’s much easier. It’s really easier. I feel really kind of relieved [laughs]. You know, after, you know have, after I have to think, you know, what to say, how to say in English. I just can, can say something to Agata effortlessly in Polish.”

Code-switching into one’s native language thus relieves the strain of languaging in the *lingua franca*. However, different feelings arise when a person is required to switch code at the unexpected request of a third party, as I observed in a team meeting:

**Observation note:** “Lukas is half Lithuanian and half Russian. He speaks to his mother in Lithuanian and to his grandmother in Russian. Therefore he does an amount of language switching at home. He says sometimes it can get confusing if he gets a work call at home, since that could make him have to speak in English – i.e. a third language.”

In the above example, there are potentially two reasons why the incoming telephone call causes Lukas confusion. Firstly, it introduces a requirement to switch into a third language (English) when he is already switching between Lithuanian and Russian. Secondly, the call is unexpected, allowing no time to prepare to switch code, or even to
know who is calling or what they are calling about. Wiktoria also experiences the last difficulty with incoming telephone calls:

Wiktoria: “So, this is something that, at the moment, I feel difficult as well. It’s better when I’m calling somebody. I know what I am to say and I know what answer I can more or less expect.”[…]

Me: “So when you’re… going back to you say when Michelle and Carol sometimes have to phone you, so when they phone you, do you feel okay about that or do you feel that that’s more difficult than if you were phoning them?”

Wiktoria: “Yes I think, I think this, it’s more difficult, because as I said, it’s something unexpected.”

The above examples suggest that the code-switcher’s experiences can be more positive when they are initiating the switch than when they are required to switch without warning. Thus, code-switching is not always deliberate but can be a response to a third party’s demand. I have not encountered any discussion of these reasons for code-switching in the IB&M or organisation studies literature. Another reason for code-switching which is not explored in the literature is that occasionally it happens inadvertently. Thus, the code-switcher does not immediately realise s/he has switched code. Samuel explains how he feels when this happens:

“It’s like erm if I say ‘okay I’m going to tell you story’, erm and then I start telling a story. If you’ve not written a story and we say ‘one day we went to do this this this, and then after that we did that, erm, erm and then when you coming back home we j’ai vu une voiture, cette voiture était rouge’, you know. You carry on in French, but don’t realise that you are speaking in French, starting in English. And then after that you can’t even realise that you are speaking another language. Because you are fluence [fluent] in both languages. […] And sometime when they tell you something like that you feel sometime embarrassed, you know erm when you end up in another language, you know that people you’re talking to, they don’t speak that language.”
Samuel’s inadvertent switch takes him by surprise, causing embarrassment when he realises what has happened. Code-switchers’ experiences can thus be a mixed bag of positive and negative feelings, although the above examples suggest the intention behind code-switching is usually positive. However, to analyse how code-switching is experienced within this team, I must also consider the experiences of the people present when code-switching is happening. I therefore now turn to consider other people’s reactions.

As the experiences of code-switchers can be positive and negative, so too can the experiences of people in the presence of code-switchers. The team culture that is being constructed, as discussed in section 4.3.2, appears to underpin the largely positive acceptance of code-switching, as Pauline explains:

“I just think great that, you know and I know that they respect, so they wouldn’t be, you know, Agata and Wiktoria won’t be saying, ‘look at that horrible outfit she’s got’, do you know what I mean? I know that they wouldn’t, that they respect one another […] and for instance, Samuel might actually say to them, you know, ‘Oy, what are you talking about?’ I’ve heard him sort of say things like that, so they respect that. We’ve created a culture where I know that there wouldn’t be back-biting.”

Pauline suggests that team members understand that the intentions behind code-switching are usually positive. Her perspective also suggests there is a well-developed openness in the team that enables people to ask the code-switchers to explain what they are talking about. As a result, other people’s experiences of code-switchers are also reported as largely positive. They do not seemingly regard code-switching as threatening or divisive and present more positive examples than those cited in the literature. Indeed, the comment from EA Michelle presented in section 5.2.5, reproduced below, explains how it arouses her linguistic curiosity rather than suspicion:

“I’m so used to it with them, it really doesn’t make, in fact I’m just interested. […] You don’t know what they’re talking about, but you know it’s to do with what they should be talking about, or not, and therefore I just don’t find it [a] hassle.”
Furthermore, some team members, like Izabela, find it fascinating, even enjoyable:

Izabela: “I think I find it really, sort of cute and pleasant, they can enjoy it. Because Polish sounds to me like a childish talk [laughs].”
Me: “Does it? Why’s that?”
Izabela: “I enjoy because it makes me laugh! [laughs hard]. From the language point of view. […] Polish, to my ear, it’s like [makes a sound like shooeyjhooy].”
Me: “Oh yes.”
Izabela: “You know like, erm,… not smooth, it’s like…”
Me: “Softer?”
Izabela: “Softer maybe.”

Nevertheless, even with such a positive attitude reportedly prevailing in the team, there are times when people still feel slightly uncomfortable in the presence of code-switching. Samuel voices this feeling of unease, which resonates with the negative portrayal of code-switching by IB&M scholars. However, he suggests it is not a major problem in this team:

“I don’t like it, to be honest. And, erm sometime, I don’t react, to be honest, because of erm, erm… You work in a team, but you need to understand what’s going on in team, you know. It’s not very big problem, but erm, sometime if you gonna speak, and each other speak the language, you not be happy, because you want to, share everything you are talking about in a team.”

My data provide little evidence of explicit experiences of other colleagues’ code-mixing in this team’s various workplaces. The only example is Yasmin’s non-workplace anecdote about when she visits her family in Pakistan:

“When we go to Pakistan, people laugh at us, because we’ll say, erm, something like, you know how you have like a colander? Erm, you can’t

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At the time of the interview, I did not get the impression from Izabela that this reference to childish talk was a pejorative comment, but rather that she thought Polish sounded cute. On reflection, I realise my impression was based on my attention to her non-verbal language: her tone of voice and smiling face.
think of the word ‘colander’ in English, you’d say ‘can you pass me the poona?’ Poona is colander in, erm, in Urdu or Punjabi. […] Like my uncle, he’ll laugh and say ‘can’t you think of the word for that in English?’ [laughs]”

The laughter Yasmin describes suggests people see this as funny and do not see code-mixing as negative. At worst, it is an opportunity to tease the code-mixer, after which the incident is soon forgotten. Back at work, code-mixing is also consciously used as an integral part of the language support provided by MELIs in the classroom. Therefore, one reason for the lack of any reaction to it could be because it is expected and thus accepted. However, when code-mixing happens accidentally, it again provokes laughter. Rana’s example below illustrates how the reaction in the classroom environment is one of laughter turning to curiosity:

“Obviously, the children, they’re just laughing and saying, ‘what’?! You know and I say, ‘oh sorry, that was Turkish’. Then they ask what it was, you know, what it means.”

In my own observations of team meetings, I noted more than one instance of code-mixing. My reaction towards it on one occasion is contained in the following note:

Observation note: “I noticed that Wiktoria said the English word ‘refugee’ in the middle of an otherwise Polish sentence. (I wonder if she used the word refugee because she doesn’t know the Polish word for it or because it is part of the terminology she uses within the organisation and her role, such that the term refugee is understood in context with no need to put it into Polish?)”

As with the example of ‘workshop’ in section 5.2.3, I wondered what reason(s) drove the use of this English word in a Polish sentence, as my immediate reflection in brackets illustrates.

The foregoing analysis shows that code-switching is reported to be a largely positive experience for MECOS team members, whether they are in the presence of code-switchers, or whether they are switching codes. This positive perspective on code-
switching warrants further attention in the literature. Not least, it is a valuable illustration of Kassis-Henderson’s (2005) argument that effective management of language diversity positively contributes towards team and relationship building. Furthermore, although the language policy within the team is to communicate using the *lingua franca*, team members do not appear to be constrained by any "monolingual mindset" (Clyne, cited in Yanaprasart, 2015: 117). This flexibility thus enables team members to mobilise their linguistic resources as they deem appropriate to communicate as effectively as possible. Although there are occasionally negative experiences in this team, participants appear to view these as fairly minor. As a result, these do not seem to have a materially negative impact on team dynamics or on the jobs team members are required to do.

Thus far, I have analysed how MECOS team members experience the *lingua franca* and other forms of language. In section 5.4, I analyse their experiences of putting the *lingua franca* into practice via languaging and thus how the practice of languaging is experienced and how this is significant for team members and the job they do.

### 5.4 Experiencing languaging

Given the person-centred focus of this thesis, it is important to develop the foregoing analysis by exploring how putting languages into practice, namely languaging, is experienced in this team. I argue in this section that MECOS team members’ language skills are not the only important consideration for successful cross-lingual communication at work; their languaging experiences are important too. Phipps (2007) situates her exploration of languaging within the context of tourism. In so doing, she warns that

"framing such research in functional terms, looking only at the efficacy of language pedagogy […] and failing to analyse the social and intercultural dimensions of language and tourism experience, as it is encountered through everyday life, will not get us very far in terms of understanding the human importance of learning to engage with others, in different contexts and in different languages" *(ibid.: 2)*.
Her argument resonates with that posited by Janssens and Steyaert (2014: 623), cited in section 2.2.1, for "the possibility of conceiving language as a social practice rather than a discrete entity". In researching a workplace, I am seeking to understand human engagement via cross-lingual communication in one of Phipps’ (2007: 2) "different contexts". Therefore, the next sub-section explores the feelings evoked through languaging. Since the people in this team undertaking languaging are the ten MELIs, my analysis is confined to their interviews.

5.4.1 Feelings evoked through languaging

Phipps (2007) notes that languages are for maintaining and communicating relationships. Thus, practising languaging is to engage actively in relationship development. In section 4.2.2, my analysis found that MECOS team members maintain and develop their relationships according to the sub-roles they assume in their encounters. In the classroom, MELIs adopt the sub-role of pedagogue to the child and maintain this relationship by maintaining their asymmetry of status with the child (Cohen and Cooper, 1986; Kecskes, 2012). The following two extracts illustrate what languaging feels like for Wiktoria and Samuel in classroom situations:

Wiktoria: “I like interacting with children, because it’s, it’s not that stressful, I would say. Because children, they, they’re different and they, they make you feel comfortable and so on. [...] But, it’s a bit scary because, as I said, you know for me, school is this kind of environment that language is important.”

Samuel: “If a child ask you a question and you can’t understand that question and you should understand the question of the child, then you feel embarrassed. Do you understand? You feel embarrassed because you can’t understand it, the child’s question. Erm .... and erm… you may feel erm…feel erm low self-confident.”

Wiktoria feels comfortable working with children. However, in the sub-role of pedagogue, she experiences fear and Samuel experiences embarrassment and low self-confidence. These negative feelings appear to arise when these MELIs think about the
importance of language for children and hence their responsibility in this sub-role. Wiktoria subsequently talks about languaging with her colleagues at head office, saying:

“I think it’s easier from this point of view. I don’t have to be a model for anyone.”

This comment suggests that, in the sub-role of colleague, Wiktoria does not have to be a language role model whereas, in the sub-role of pedagogue, she must set a good linguistic example. This may also explain the negative feelings Samuel describes. Such feelings suggest these MELIs may experience languaging as more challenging in this particular sub-role as they strive to maintain the asymmetry of status between themselves and the child, in order to maintain and communicate the pedagogue-pupil relationship.

Lukas feels languaging is easier if it is amongst people he knows well and who subject him to less scrutiny, as he explains below:

“Erm, when I’m with someone I know [unclear wording], my advisers [EAs] obviously they would be [unintelligible word] I know, easier for me. Erm, obviously depends on the child. If the child’s not aggressive, or, you know, it’s easier for me to interpret. If he is without mum, it’s probably easier. If the mum sits there and, looking at me all the time, it might be a bit difficult, more awkward, I would say.”

Me: “Sorry, going back to the situations where you said you find it easier. Erm, does that tend to be more with the people that you know better then?”

Lukas: “Yeah. When it’s a better atmosphere in the room, for example. When I know people and I feel comfortable around them.”

Following Phipps (2007), Lukas suggests it is a greater challenge for him to establish a relationship than maintain one. Thus, languaging feels easier with people he already knows. The last two extracts from Wiktoria and Lukas thus illustrate that languaging in the same *lingua franca* can feel easier or more difficult according to their assumed sub-role and workplace context, rather than their linguistic proficiency.
The above discussion illustrates how MELIs use language and languaging in moving between people and situations. Furthermore, languaging also requires them to move between different languages, usually their own native language and the *lingua franca*; although in this team other languages may be involved. This movement is more evident when interpreting, since the task requires the MELI to constantly move back and forth between the *lingua franca* and their native language. Phipps (2007) notes that such movement can be a messy business that feels onerous for the people involved. Some participants feel the weight of this movement more than others. The following examples illustrate two contrasting experiences:

**Wiktoria:** “I don’t think that, I have a problem with switching. It’s nothing that causes me problem.”

**Me:** “How does it feel to be doing that movement from English into Swahili in your brain? Do you know what I mean?”

**Samuel:** “In my brain?”

**Me:** “Yeah, what’s going through your mind? How does it feel to be going between…”

**Samuel:** “It’s not easy. It’s very difficult, you know, to have the balance and try to pick and keeping your own language.”

Samuel also remarks that this movement between languages can sometimes result in languaging feeling like a bit of a “mix-up”:

**Samuel:** “So, was not very easy because some time you mix up… erm, and erm words. You think that you [unintelligible] English but is not English. Do you see what I mean?”

**Me:** “Yeah. What, so you’ll say a word and you’ll think it’s English, but it’s French?”

**Samuel:** “Yeah. [...] You don’t, you don’t end up in that language, other language because you got difficulty in English. It’s something that something that coming straightforward; I don’t know what’s happened. You understand what I mean? It’s not because when I say I’m speaking in English, and then I get somewhere I got a problem I say ‘No I can now carry on in French’. It’s something happened instinctivement.”
In the above example, the movement, or code-mixing, is unintentional and, as with the example in section 5.3.5, Samuel states this happens almost subconsciously or instinctively. Arguably, a third party may regard such a slip as resulting from any number of factors, including a lack of language expertise. However, this unintentional movement is not necessarily because of any shortcomings in language ability. It is merely an unwanted output from the complex job of languaging; part of the mess to which Phipps (2007) refers.

In contrast to these overt examples of movement between languages, languaging can often involve a movement within the individual that is invisible to others. As explained in section 2.5.1, Phipps (ibid.) argues that languages are embodied, inalienable goods. In other words, any language skill is part of the person and cannot be detached from them. Such movement between embodied languages is similarly embodied and thus largely invisible to others. This embodied movement can be explained more clearly with reference to de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space being a practised place, discussed in section 2.5.6. As de Certeau likens reading to an act of inhabiting the stable place of a text, so this thesis likens languaging to inhabiting a text, and thus a place. However, rather than the place being a book or text, in my study it is the foreign language being languaged by the languager. The movement between languages is effectively a movement between linguistic places. The results of this movement are audible to all communicating parties. However, the efforts and experiences involved in making the movement are largely embodied and therefore may be invisible to others.

The non-verbal indications of confusion and uncertainty explained in section 5.2.5 could be argued to render languaging visible. However, when languagers are not confused, the effort involved in moving between linguistic places may not be as visible, despite those languaging being aware of it. This can be the case especially when language skills are less well developed, although the context and language register can also give rise to this awareness. Lukas’ comment in section 5.3.3, reproduced below, explains how he feels when moving between languages:

“Well in the first few months it was hard. But, [to] have to change languages like that. But I think that the experience becomes easier, but it’s still hard. I can feel my brain’s struggling at some point. But, erm, it
depends. It depends obviously what kind of English people speaking. If they speak plain and easy, then obviously for me it’s a lot easier to interpret. And obviously it depends on other circumstances. If it’s a pressured situation, then it’s hard. Because, you know, I need to do it quickly and I need to think … quickly.”

Lukas subsequently explains how it feels when he is speaking the *lingua franca*:

Me: “So when you’re talking in English, what language are you thinking in?”
Lukas: “I don’t, I think it’s English. I don’t really think. That’s, that’s the funniest thing. But I think when I only moved into England, in England, erm, I needed to think what I say. I needed to think in Lithuanian and then translate into English. And now it just comes naturally. I don’t need to translate into English.”

Lukas’s response suggests that a person languaging may be more aware of the embodied movement between languages when their language skills are less well developed. This in turn makes languaging feel more onerous. As their skills improve, the awareness of movement decreases to the point where they feel they are actually thinking in the *lingua franca*, rather than moving in and out of it. This in turn makes languaging feel easier.

Volk et al.’s (2014) study of the cognitive neuroscience of foreign language processing provides one explanation for Lukas’s feelings. Speaking one’s native language largely relies on automatic mental processes, which are "largely unconscious and accordingly fast and effortless" (*ibid.*: 866). On the other hand, speaking a foreign language relies on a more or less controlled process, which is "conscious, effortful and slow" (*ibid.*). The increased cognitive processing required thus increases the load on a person’s working memory. Furthermore, the lower the degree of proficiency, the greater the load on the working memory. This suggests that Lukas found moving between languages hard to

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31 Volk et al. (2014: 866) use the term ‘working memory’ to describe "a brain system of limited capacity that temporarily maintains information necessary for complex, cognitive activities such as thinking, reasoning and decision-making in a conscious, active, and quickly retrievable state".
begin with because of the load being placed on his working memory. As his proficiency in the *lingua franca* improved, so it felt easier because of the reduced load.

Notwithstanding the task of languaging eventually feeling easier, undertaking it still requires time and skill. As skills increase, the time required may reduce. Nevertheless, it remains a task in its own right. Since languaging in the workplace is usually undertaken for the purpose of completing another task, the person languaging is always required to multitask. Multitasking for anyone can be wearing, due to increased levels of cognitive processing (Volk *et al.*, 2014). Therefore there is a risk that people languaging at work are subjected to these burdensome feelings more than their non-languaging colleagues. Lukas and Agata particularly recognise this burden of multitasking and feeling tired when languaging:

Me: “You said that you found it, when you’re talking in English, you find it easier to talk in smaller groups, but in larger groups more difficult. Why is that?”

Lukas: “I think that’s once again multitasking. And remembering what people say. I think that the biggest problem for me is remembering.”

In this instance, the number of people present affects the extent to which Lukas feels the effort of multitasking. He needs to remember, as well as merely listen to, what is said. Thus the apparently single task of communications with a group of people can be seen to involve a second task of remembering and a third task of languaging. Agata also acknowledges feelings of tiredness. Furthermore, she explains how the effort of working in a foreign language reduces her ability to multitask:

Me: “How does it feel to have to be working in a language all day that is not your language? You know, like when you’re working in English?”

Agata: “It is, it is horrible. After the whole day I’m having a big headache! Yes. Erm, because, erm… for example, if I were to be on a meeting and… the meeting is in Polish… erm, I can listen, I can think about something else, I can do some writing. And, erm… when someone is talking in Polish, even if it is that, you know, half a sentence, I know what he or she is talking about. But if it is, English, I need to be focused, all the time. And it is really tiring [tiring] for me.”
The above extracts illustrate the argument posited by Volk et al. (2014) that working in a foreign language can limit one’s capacity to multitask. As explained above, the process for speaking one’s native language is automatic, whereas the process for speaking a foreign language is controlled to a greater or lesser extent. As controlled processes rely on working memory and working memory resources are limited, "the more controlled processes are running simultaneously, the fewer working memory resources are available for other cognitive tasks" (ibid.: 866). This explains why Agata feels able to perform other cognitive tasks, such as writing and thinking about other things, when she is using the automatic process for communicating in her native language of Polish. Conversely, she feels less able to perform other cognitive tasks when she is using a controlled process for languaging in English.

The above analysis shows that languaging is indeed a complex and often messy task. Furthermore, with some of this complexity being embodied, it is partly invisible to onlookers. There is a danger of non-languagers failing to understand the additional effort involved when people are languaging at work. Indeed, in my observation of team meetings, I reflected that:

Observation note: “I did not really observe much languaging rising to the surface. I felt that this indicates how languaging is very much an invisible activity in practice, until such time as errors occur in spoken language, or until misinterpretations or misunderstandings arise, or clarification is sought. In other words, when languaging is ‘successful’ no one is aware of the feelings, difficulties or other emotions felt by the person doing the languaging. Only when ‘errors’ occur does the challenge of languaging make itself apparent.”

Given the feelings described above and the level of multitasking involved, it is unsurprising to find that stress can result from languaging at work. Akbar explains how face-to-face interpreting can result in feeling under pressure:

“It put me in a situation that, erm, it’s not something right I [unintelligible word]. So it put me under pressure, so I have to… struggle to find the right word, the right… I know, scenario to explain that to the person.”
Just missing an utterance of a single word in his native language makes Akbar’s task of languaging, and hence interpreting, feel like a struggle. However, the struggle is not necessarily felt by anyone other than him. Notwithstanding this pressure, a struggle may not mean a negative outcome; as he goes on to explain:

Me: “And do you, erm, how do you feel when you’ve managed to communicate something and it’s been successful. How does that make you feel?”

Akbar: “Well, it’s been erm feel better already, it make me feel better and so… I…I.. feel that I’ve, I’ve done the right job, I’ve done my job right.”

Thus, feelings of success and satisfaction ensue when the struggle to communicate has a positive outcome. However, whilst a positive outcome is the desired result, it may only serve to further conceal from others the languaging effort needed to achieve it.

Sometimes pressure is felt because of the context in which a MELI is languaging, rather than because of specific language issues, as Wiktoria explains:

“People who are not, you know, not, not from work, I think the difference is that, erm, they know that, you know, I’m not English and I don’t expect me to be, you know, the highest level and here I think it’s just, it’s not that, maybe there is no real pressure, it’s my imagination. Because people are really… polite, they’re really, you know, tolerant and they’ve never, you know, erm, there’s no pressure on their side. But I think, I feel you know, on this post and so on, you need to be a kind of professional so I think it makes it… more difficult, because your expectations are higher.”

Wiktoria feels that people’s expectations about her languaging differ according to the social context, with expectations being higher in a professional context. That said, she acknowledges that, in the MECOS team, the pressure of expectation she feels is more likely to be self-generated. Her feeling may arise from the need to maintain the pedagogue-pupil relationship by assuming the sub-role of pedagogue, as discussed earlier in this section, since she does not report feeling any direct pressure when adopting the sub-role of colleague.
Another negative feeling evoked by languaging is frustration. Not only can the movement necessitated by languaging result in a ‘mix-up’; it can also result in not being able to find the right word in the right language at the right time. Kimberly even sounds frustrated as she tells me about how it can feel when she has to language with her limited skills in Japanese:

Me: “So how did it feel to be limited, in terms of what you could communicate?”
Me: “Can you describe your emotions?”
Kimberly [sounding frustrated] “I want to say! I want to say this! How do I say it? How do I say it?”

Whilst frustration does not necessarily have a negative cross-lingual communication outcome, it could be construed as another form of pressure, resulting in additional effort being required when languaging in order to achieve the desired outcome. Furthermore, as with feelings of stress and pressure, the languaging effort resulting from this frustration may remain invisible to onlookers.

My analysis thus far suggests that feelings evoked when languaging are negative rather than positive. However, this does not mean that the languaging outcome is negative. Nor does it mean that these negative aspects of languaging are disregarded within this team. Indeed, other chapters in this thesis demonstrate why the overall experience of languaging within this team is reportedly positive, despite any negative feelings it evokes. Furthermore, it does not mean there are no positive feelings evoked by languaging. I conclude this section by attending to the level of confidence evoked by languaging, as this can vary.

My data suggest there is a link between fluctuating confidence levels and participants’ languaging experiences. Feeling confident can improve languaging attempts whilst a lack of confidence can hinder them. Confidence can also fluctuate from one day to another. For this reason, confidence cannot always be directly correlated to language ability, since this ability is not lost or gained overnight. Many participants talked about feelings of confidence and gave examples of experiencing it as lacking or present.
Moreover, they reported on the effect this feeling has on their languaging ability. Izabela told me of an exercise where she had addressed a whole class in Russian to enable teachers and children to experience how it feels not being able to understand what someone is saying. I then asked her if she had experienced similar feelings herself:

“Yeah. [...] if you are in situation where, you know, people like talking on the side, behind your back, it’s terrible. [...] But, erm, if you don’t know what they are talking [about], and especially if you get the feeling they are talking about you in any way. You know, it doesn’t need to be they were talking derogatory about you. It was just like... even if people say something nice, like ‘Oh you are getting much better’, but they don’t really say things to your face, [...] and they don’t really get the message to you, even its positive, it’s taken negatively. You know, it, it knocks your confidence down. [...] you lose the confidence to speak, to carry on.”

Izabela’s final sentence suggests that, regardless of effort or linguistic ability, the negative feeling of losing confidence alone is enough to hinder further communication in that language. Lukas feels a lack of confidence relates to his ability to language:

“Obviously, when I lose confidence, if I lose confidence, that’s it. I can’t speak English, I can’t speak any language.”

Furthermore, as Lukas reported earlier, he finds languaging easier with people he knows. His statement below also suggests that his confidence levels can depend on his degree of familiarity with his interlocutors:

“Again, if I’m with unfamiliar people, I don’t know, my confidence will be lower than the people.”

This suggests that sub-roles may also be significant for confidence levels and hence for how languaging is experienced. Rana notes feeling more confident when assuming the sub-role of colleague with her fellow MELIs, who are also familiar with the task of languaging:

“I find more confidence because I think they’re the same, if I do mistakes, they’re doing mistakes as well, so it’s our second language, you know. So I
feel that they can understand me more than native English speakers, we do mistakes and things, you know, I feel more confident when I talk to them.”

Rana’s parity of social status with her interlocutors thus appears to be associated with her confidence when languaging.

Notwithstanding the above, linguistic ability does still appear to be associated with confidence levels. Wiktoria’s following response illustrates that confidence can be gained from a person’s sense of their own progression in a language:

“Because it’s, it’s past three years now. I feel more confident. Erm, I know that I improved, but I still, I’m not that fluent. I still lack vocabulary. I still have to think about grammar, it’s not natural.”

Having been in Britain for three years, two of them as a MELI, Wiktoria recognises that her English ability has improved. This acknowledgement of her own progression generates confidence, which seem to override any negative feelings of a lack of confidence that could arise from her (self-described) inadequate command of the language itself:

“I’m not sure if, if my language skills improved as such… Probably they have, but I think it’s, it’s still a matter of confidence. Earlier I, I was scared of how, what if I, erm, can’t understand, what if I wouldn’t know how to say it, what if I couldn’t think of the word I want, you know, I need. I know I still lack words, but I try to describe it [laughs]. Erm, so I think I’ve just learned a few techniques to help me to… get on really. […] I still get nervous if, if, you know, I don’t know exactly what, what, what, what I should say. I mean, I know what I want to say but I don’t know how to say it. But it, it, it’s not that panicking that it was, erm, three years ago. So I think, what improved most, is this confidence.”

The above suggests Wiktoria feels her confidence has improved more than her actual language skills. Furthermore, she strongly suggests the importance of feeling confident when languaging. Naturally, this does not mean linguistic expertise is unimportant. However, it does suggest that positive feelings of confidence arising from languaging
are significant as these feelings can feed back into future languaging tasks, making them feel easier and potentially making Wiktoria more effective in her job.

The foregoing analysis suggests languaging can generate both negative and positive feelings, which in turn feed into future languaging practices. Thus, whilst linguistic ability is clearly material to languaging, feelings about languaging appear to be significant too. My analysis of how languaging is experienced has thus far been confined to the experiences that result from undertaking languaging. However, this only views languaging from the perspective of the people ‘doing’ it. Following Feely (2003), I consider it is equally important to shift the perspective towards considering how languaging is experienced by people who are ‘receiving’ it. Naturally, this includes all members of the team as both EAs and MELIs are ‘recipients’ of their colleagues’ languaging practices. Further analysis of my data suggests there are two ways in which MECOS team members on the receiving end of languaging experience and thus respond to it: acknowledgement and action. The following two sub-sections take each of these responses in turn to understand their association with the effectiveness of cross-lingual communication for this team.

5.4.2 Acknowledging languaging

One of the ways in which almost all MECOS team members acknowledge languaging is through references to people’s accents, this being one of the challenges of receiving languaging. I explain this challenge with reference to de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space as a practised place, since understanding accents requires communicating parties to move into new linguistic spaces created within the *lingua franca* by languaging. The matter of accent was raised when I first met with the management team to discuss my project. In particular, Pauline, the TL, noted the need for a period, albeit indeterminate, of acclimatisation to these new linguistic spaces. She explained the need to ‘tune in’ to different people’s accents, as their accent, emphasis and intonation may be different from how an English person would expect to hear an English word or sentence uttered. In my interview with Pauline, she explained how the challenge of accent is compounded when experiencing languaging over the telephone:
“It can be difficult. I’ve found now I’ve kind of tuned into accents, but Samuel in particular, I found very difficult to understand him and he talks quite rapidly and I was thinking, you know, ‘hmm, I’m not sure I’ve got that’, but it’s almost insulting to say, ‘could you repeat it please?’, so I would say, ‘I’m not quite sure I’ve got all that, shall I tell you what I think you’ve’ […]?”

I shall return to this extract in section 5.4.4 to consider how Pauline experiences this instance of languaging through action. However, for the moment, it illustrates how one NS acknowledges languaging through accent. Furthermore, as with the examples in section 5.2.5, it illustrates how experiencing accents can feel more challenging in the absence of any non-verbal communication signals.

Given Pauline’s experience, it is important to realise that it is not just NSs who are challenged by accents; NNSs are similarly challenged. Following de Certeau (2011), I would argue that this is because all communicating parties need to move into each other’s linguistic spaces. Wiktoria and Agata are both Polish and Wiktoria suggests this may help them to ‘tune in’ to each other’s accent, when speaking English, more quickly:

“When people speak with, erm, you know different accents as well. Of course I don’t have, erm, any problems with understanding Agata who speaks [English] with Polish accent, because it’s fine. But for example, Akbar, when he speaks with his Farsi accent, sometimes I find it difficult to understand as well.”

Not only does this illustrate the challenge of accents for NNSs, it also shows how when speaking with Agata who shares Wiktoria’s native language, the accent poses less of a challenge. Following de Certeau (ibid.), I would argue that the linguistic space created by Agata’s Polish accent is one Wiktoria shares. Although team members accept the need to acclimatise to each other’s accents, EA Michelle comments on how such allowances may not be afforded in other areas of professional life:

“I think that erm… unfortunately, to be taken seriously professionally, you need to be able, your spoken language needs to be of a certain standard.
And I think sometimes if people hear slightly broken English, immediately they, erm... their perceptions of... what that person can do are... are tarnished. I think they think then, they’re not going to be able to do the job. And I think, so it’s... important as possible to get these people to speak... the best quality of English that they can.”

Whilst Michelle’s comment refers to spoken language more generally, accent is nevertheless involved. Thus it may adversely affect how other third parties experience a NNS’s spoken English and result in hasty, negative conclusions being drawn. This observation resonates with warnings in the IB&M literature that low levels of language competence can rob people of their professional competence whilst high levels may confer more power upon individuals than is warranted by their organisational status or expertise (Feely, 2003; Vaara et al., 2005; Welch et al., 2005). Michelle’s comment illustrates how people in the MECOS team acknowledge this potential problem. I discuss the resulting action taken in section 5.4.3.

As well as through accent, team members also positively acknowledge languaging through improvement. Pauline notes the linguistic progress made by the MELIs since taking up their positions:

“I think their English skills have improved really astronomically since they’ve been working with us and their vocabulary has developed quite a lot. I know that I hear them using much more complex sentences than they did. Now, whether that’s confidence, whether they were capable of it to begin with but didn’t, or whether they have actually progressed, I can’t say.”

Pauline’s uncertainty as to whether progress has come as a result of linguistic improvement or confidence links to the discussion of confidence in section 5.4.1. It therefore shows how she acknowledges that confidence could be materially affecting languaging practice.

The foregoing examples illustrate how MECOS team members experience languaging through acknowledging it. I shall now explain how team members demonstrate that they are experiencing languaging through their actions in response to it. Furthermore, I shall
elucidate how the action taken upon experiencing other people languaging potentially has the capacity to render the experience positive or negative for team members and how this is significant for the team.

5.4.3 Acting upon languaging

I began the previous section with an interview extract to illustrate how Pauline experiences a MELI languaging through acknowledgement. That same extract also indicates how Pauline’s acknowledgement of a potentially difficult experience of languaging is followed by her taking action to attempt to turn any potential negative experience into a positive one. Here is some of the extract again:

“[…] Samuel in particular, I found very difficult to understand him and he talks quite rapidly and I was thinking, you know, ‘hmm, I’m not sure I’ve got that’, but it’s almost insulting to say, ‘could you repeat it please?’, so I would say, ‘I’m not quite sure I’ve got all that, shall I tell you what I think you’ve’ […]?”

As discussed earlier, Pauline acknowledges that the difficulty of understanding an accent can be compounded when a person is languaging over the telephone. Thus she acknowledges one potentially negative experience of languaging. However, she goes on to say that she feels it may be insulting to ask the person languaging to repeat what they have said, thus demonstrating an intention to ameliorate any negativity. Pauline then describes how she acts upon this episode of languaging, by verifying with the person languaging what she thinks they are trying to say. She thus uses what I will henceforth refer to as ‘supportive verification’. By this, I refer to a form of checking understanding of what a MELI is trying to say that seeks to support rather than undermine their languaging efforts. Thus her action upon this languaging episode suggests efforts to turn a potentially negative experience into a positive one for both parties.

At a team meeting, I observed a particularly effective instance of supportive verification, as detailed in the following extract from my field notes:
Observation note: “Discussion moved on to whether at the MELIs could produce a resource that would help young children learn the alphabet by associating a letter with a particular word and an illustration of that word. Wiktoria showed the group an alphabet book she had found which had one page per letter and a big colourful picture on each letter/page. She wondered if they could produce something similar. The MELIs thought it was a good idea. Akbar asked ‘Do we need to picturise in it?’ Michelle replied ‘Yes, you put pictures in it’."

EAs call this particular type of supportive verification ‘modelling’. They use this pedagogical technique to assist children with their language development, and also see it as a constructive means of correcting MELIs’ linguistic errors made when languaging. Thus, in parallel with Phipps (2007), languaging for the MELIs at work also involves their own language learning. The foregoing extracts suggest that the EAs see the MELIs’ language education as part of their responsibility and take steps to support it sensitively. I discuss modelling further in section 6.3.3. The supportive verification action that Michelle takes in the above instance is particularly effective since she appears to be attempting to ensure her own understanding, clarify meaning for the rest of the team and also inform Akbar of the correct way of communicating his intention by ‘modelling’ the phrase. Her action suggests an intention to turn a potentially negative source of confusion and embarrassment into a positive languaging experience which benefits everyone. It is difficult to know how prevalent this supportive verification practice is in multilingual organisations, since there is little coverage of this in the literature. However, in providing advice on intercultural communication at work, Guirdham (2011) notes the importance of showing empathy as a means of demonstrating a willingness to understand and be understood. Actions that demonstrate empathy include paraphrasing, as is happening in this example.

So, although linguistic errors are part of languaging, they do not necessarily result in misunderstanding. Indeed, another way in which MECOS team members act upon languaging is to ‘make good’ in their own understanding any grammatical or linguistic errors or omissions made by the person languaging. I asked Izabela how she managed to understand something her NNS MELI colleague was saying when, according to her, they were not saying it properly. She explained:
“It’s a lot of grammar mistakes, like ‘he go’ which obviously, it’s wrong. But you get the… you know, you like would add the ‘s’ at the end [laughs], sort of thing. But it can be in words, yeah. Erm… … I wouldn’t know the example, but it’s erm… … I can’t remember. It’s probably not… yeah, it’s grammar from the point of whole sentence maybe. Or maybe wrong past tense or past participle, you know, different things ‘yesterday I will go’ you know [laughs] things like that. Which I know, because I’ve gone through it, I can understand what he goes through [laughs]. And, erm, I sort of, I make the bit that shouldn’t be there and add the thing that should be there.”

I analyse the above extract further in section 6.3.4 as regards Izabela’s attempt to make meaning. In addressing the current research question, my analysis here refers to Izabela’s action upon Akbar’s languaging. Izabela is, albeit invisibly to others, actively making mental adjustments to what Akbar is saying in order to understand what he is trying to communicate. In this way, she ensures her own understanding, empathises with the languaging efforts being made and avoids causing Akbar any embarrassment. Izabela’s action suggests an intention to render the languaging experience positive for both parties. On reflection, I realised that I was taking similar action during my interviews with the MELIs, to render the interview experience as relaxed and non-threatening as possible.

Supportive verification and mental adjustments require time and tolerance to be afforded to the person languaging. Yasmin notes how experiencing her colleagues’ languaging efforts has improved her tolerance and listening skills:

“Sometimes I think what, what’s, I think, I’m a very impatient person, you know, if anybody can’t speak English, I think ‘oh crikey’, you know they can’t speak English, even though my own parents can’t. Erm… but it’s learn, it’s taught me to be a lot more tolerant. And it’s taught me to listen carefully.”

Similarly, Tony, a headteacher and founder member of the MECOS project, expresses the importance of listening carefully to support a positive languaging experience and outcome:
“I still listen very carefully to what they have to say because I think that one of the worse things that happens is that people, when they have somebody who they are speaking to who doesn’t have English as a first language, they don’t perhaps listen very carefully and then they give a response to what they think the person has said, rather than what they have said.”

These two examples demonstrate how people receiving another person’s languaging efforts practise tolerance by careful listening. They also serve to further illustrate how Guirdham’s (2011) recommendation for empathy through listening potentially facilitates the cross-lingual communication experience for everyone involved. All these examples demonstrate how team members receiving someone else’s languaging take some form of action upon it. In this way, they appear to view languaging as something of a collaborative experience. Team members do not merely passively accept others’ languaging efforts. Instead, they act upon them, thereby intending to enhance everyone’s languaging experience and facilitate a positive outcome for each cross-lingual exchange.

5.5 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to answer the question of how languages are chosen and how language and languaging are experienced by MECOS team members. In section 5.2, I explained how language is chosen within this team according to context, communicative intention and sub-role. Language choice is a decision that is made repeatedly according to the interplay of these three phenomena, as they change throughout the day. Furthermore, these phenomena also afford varying degrees of discretion to MELIs in making their language choice. They do not always use one language but use code-switching and code-mixing if deemed appropriate for the task at hand. Language choice thus appears to be a mobilisation of language resources according to what team members believe is "the right way to do things linguistically" (Yanaprasart, 2015: 117). Furthermore, these choices are reportedly experienced as largely positive, thus contrasting with the negative portrayal of code-switching in the IB&M literature. However, I acknowledge that my data are limited to reported experiences and that participants may be presenting these in a positive light.
Nevertheless, one of my contributions to organisation studies literature is to present a different and positive perspective on code-switching. Furthermore, I also raise awareness of the reasons for and practice of code-mixing, which do not appear to be discussed in the extant literature.

In section 5.3, I analysed participants’ experiences of language, particularly the MECOS team’s shared language of English. This analysis finds that, far from being simply a single language for communication, the *lingua franca* is experienced as a set of sub-languages, or registers. Thus, knowledge of the *lingua franca* cannot simply be considered in terms of grammar and vocabulary, or even degrees of fluency. For cross-lingual communication in this shared language to be successful, communicating parties need to have knowledge of the context in which these different registers are used. Thus, a shared language is more than a panacea with which to achieve cross-lingual communication within an organisation. This perspective on the *lingua franca* needs to be further explored in IB&M and organisation studies. Likewise, international and domestic organisations need to be aware of this complexity.

Finally in section 5.4, I analysed participants’ experiences of the practice of languaging. This included analysis of their experiences of languaging themselves, as well as how they receive others’ languaging attempts. My analysis suggests that the practice of languaging may be negatively experienced. Linguistic errors and physical tiredness are two indicators of how onerous it can feel. Furthermore, much of the effort of languaging may be invisible, as may the feelings of the person languaging. My analysis suggests these feelings are significant when languaging. Indeed, participants even suggest that successful languaging is built on positive feelings such as confidence as much as on linguistic ability. In analysing how people receive languaging, it appears that MECOS team members take a collaborative approach to languaging. Not only do they acknowledge the difficulties faced by their colleagues when languaging, they act upon this acknowledgement with an apparent intention to make the languaging outcome as positive as possible for all communicating parties. Furthermore, cross-lingual communication success requires communicating parties to move in and out of each other’s linguistic spaces. The more they are willing and able to do this, the greater the potential for a positive languaging outcome.
In the next chapter, I address my third and final research question by using the findings of this and the previous chapter to explore how MECOS team members make meaning when communicating cross-lingually and the significance of this for the organisation employing them.
CHAPTER 6 How is Meaning Made via Cross-Lingual Communication in this Team?

6.1 Introduction

My analysis in chapters 4 and 5 found that the practice and experience of cross-lingual communication and languaging within the Multi Ethnic Community Support (MECOS) team appears to be connected to sub-roles adopted by team members, the construction of what Holliday (1999) calls ‘small’ culture and the interplay of various types of Bourdieusian cultural capital. This chapter aims to extend these findings and consider their significance in how team members make meaning with their interlocutors and the extent to which this enables them to fulfil their organisational roles. Importantly, given the advice of Janssens and Steyaert (2014) presented in section 2.2.1, it also aims to shed light on the extent to which team members are able to speak with their ‘own voice’.

Section 6.2 explores the significance of sub-roles, both in the meaning-making process and in the choice of meaning-making method, for MECOS team members’ communications within and beyond the team. As I explained in section 2.4.4, this thesis follows Tietze et al. (2003) in defining meaning-making as a dynamic, social and negotiated process, making sense of language in relation to context. In this and subsequent sections, I use Kecskes’ (2012) intercultural pragmatics (ICP) theory to explore how the social process of meaning-making works in this team’s cross-lingual interactions.

Sections 6.3 and 6.4 respectively consider the specific meaning-making methods I identified team members using to understand others and make themselves understood in particular situations. Both these sections explore the significance of formal organisational and tacitly assumed sub-roles and the pragmatic use of language in the meaning-making methods chosen. Furthermore, analysing the pragmatic use of language in the context of this team’s cross-lingual exchanges enables me to
demonstrate how Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital plays out through linguistic utterances and practical approaches to meaning-making in this workplace.

Finally, section 6.5 presents a fine-grained analysis of the workings of Bourdieusian capital to explore how the cross-lingual communication experience, and potentially meaning-making, might be facilitated or frustrated in different work contexts. The analysis in section 6.5 does not fall neatly within the scope of the present research question. However, it is included here as it yields an unexpected but significant finding that requires the understanding of the significance of sub-roles and interaction of forms of cultural capital developed in this and the previous two chapters.

### 6.2 The significance of sub-roles

In section 5.4.1, following Phipps (2007) I argued that, when languaging, people engage actively in relationship development. My analysis explained that one phenomenon involved in the MECOS team members’ languaging experiences is the sub-role they adopt in their interpersonal relationships. Interpersonal relationships, and thus sub-roles, therefore appear to be a foundation for, as well as an objective of, languaging. Meaning-making would also appear to be an inextricable part of the languaging process, since the prime objective of languaging is arguably to achieve mutual understanding. My analysis in this chapter therefore begins by considering how sub-roles are involved in meaning-making between MECOS team members when languaging.

#### 6.2.1 Sub-roles and meaning-making in the MECOS team

My interview schedule did not include any questions regarding interpersonal relationships and their significance in cross-lingual exchanges. Nevertheless, my analysis found explicit references to relationships, suggesting they are significant for meaning-making when communicating cross-lingually. The following comments made by Educational Adviser (EA) Michelle introduce the significance of interpersonal relationships in facilitating meaning-making:
“But I think hopefully now there’s less of a problem, because they’re all prepared to say ‘whoa, […] what are you going on about?’ I think at first it was a bigger problem. But I think now, all of them will say… you know…. Or make it obvious that they’re not quite with what was, what’s happening.”

Me: “You said that they actually, they now interrupt you and say ‘oh, hang on a minute I’ve not understood that’.”

Michelle: “Yeah, yeah.”

Me: “But they’ve not always done that?”

Michelle: “No, not to start with. […] I wish you’d been there at the beginning to see it, ’cause it was really quite hard. […] It’ll be interesting, because we’re interviewing another… two, on Friday, tomorrow…erm… and we’ll be starting again with them [these new MELIs] in a sense. It’ll be quite hard for us to, to go back to that… You know, because now, with most of them you’ve got, we’ve got such a, well hopefully got a good relationship and we do understand where we’re coming from.”

Michelle’s comments indicate that MECOS team members have fewer problems understanding each other now than earlier in the project. Team members now seek clarification when they do not understand, which they may have felt less inclined to do earlier in the team’s development. Michelle notes the good relationship between existing team members and contrasts this with two new recruits, with whom new interpersonal relationships will need to be developed. Her comparison suggests she feels well developed interpersonal relationships facilitate meaning-making, as people feel less inhibited about seeking clarification. Michelle’s suggestion can be explained with reference to ICP theory and the assumption of sub-roles, as follows.

As I explained in section 2.4.4, Kecskes (2012: 68) states that "the ability to comprehend and produce a communicative act is referred to as pragmatic competence". Amongst other things, "this concept usually includes awareness of social distance [and] speakers’ social status" (ibid.). For MECOS team members, I equate this social status to the status they acquire through their assumed sub-role. Furthermore, Williams (2008: 54) points out that this social "status can be interactionally achieved". My analysis in section 4.2.2 suggests this is the case for MECOS team members who take on sub-roles
through cross-lingual interaction. Although the Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediaries’ (MELIs) organisational status is lower than the EAs’, each acquires different social statuses through interaction. Adopting the sub-role of colleague affords MELIs the same social status as the EAs. This minimises, if not eradicates, any social distance between them. On the other hand, assuming the sub-role of pupil affords MELIs a lower organisational, and hence social, status. This enables them to perceive the EA as pedagogue and thus someone from whom they can seek clarification. Furthermore, the adoption of these sub-roles of pedagogue and pupil creates a language education opportunity for the MELIs when languaging. It therefore illustrates how their languaging experience in this workplace parallels Phipps’ (2007) experience in a tourism context, as I argued in section 2.1. The status afforded by these sub-roles is temporary, according to how the speakers choose to collaborate in their cross-lingual interactions.

Established MELIs have become aware of the social statuses and distances afforded to them by assuming the sub-roles of colleague or pupil. This affords them the pragmatic competence of being able to comprehend, or make meaning from, a communicative act. The reason Michelle thinks meaning-making could be more difficult with the new recruits can also be explained with further reference to ICP theory. Kecskes (2012: 67) explains that "intercultural pragmatics represents a sociocognitive perspective in which individual prior experience and actual situational experience are equally important in meaning construction and comprehension". A newly arrived MELI is arguably immediately aware of their organisational role. However, as they have no prior or situational experience in this role, they may not be aware of the sub-roles of colleague and pupil that they can tacitly assume. Therefore, they may not initially be aware that they can change the social distance between themselves and the EAs, which may compromise their pragmatic competence and hence meaning-making ability. Michelle indicates her awareness of this potential difficulty, although recognises this is likely to be only a short-term problem, which will ease as the new recruits gain situational experience within their organisational role.

Michelle recognises that, given the aforementioned difficulty, newly recruited MELIs may find meaning-making more challenging:
“But hopefully now, I mean the whole thing really has been, now, to make them feel comfortable enough to be able to do that, and that has taken a while. You can’t do that straight away, can you?”

Michelle’s EA colleagues and MELIs also talk about MELIs ‘feeling comfortable’ with interlocutors, suggesting that such a feeling facilitates meaning-making, as well as languaging. If MELIs feel comfortable with other people present, they feel supported and more inclined to use meaning-making methods such as seeking clarification of something they may not have understood. For example, EA Sarah recognises the importance of MELIs feeling comfortable and sees it as part of her organisational role to develop that feeling:

“Erm, but [it] is really checking that they understand what I’m talking about. And people won’t always say that they don’t understand, so [it] is really trying to make sure they do understand and that they feel comfortable saying that they don’t… understand…”

Sarah’s recognition of her responsibility to support MELIs in the meaning-making process can be further explained with reference to ICP theory and the sub-roles she assumes as an EA in her relationship with the MELIs. By assuming the sub-role of either colleague or pedagogue when interacting with the MELIs, Sarah changes her social status and thus the social distance between herself and her interlocutor. As a colleague, Sarah equalises her social status with that of the MELI, thus reducing the social distance between them. As a pedagogue, Sarah raises her social status above the level of the MELI, thus perceiving them as her pupil. Both statuses afford her the pragmatic competence of being able to offer support to the MELI to assist the meaning-making process.

6.2.2 Sub-roles and meaning-making beyond the MECOS team

The MELIs’ cross-lingual communication with people other than MECOS team members brings another perspective to the significance of sub-roles in meaning-making. Where MELIs engage in cross-lingual communication with school staff, the latter are more senior in organisational status. In classroom situations, the MELI tacitly assumes
the sub-role of pedagogical assistant and the teacher assumes the sub-role of pedagogue. However, in school situations outside the classroom, sub-roles are less clear. The MELIs ‘feeling comfortable’ with meaning-making, as explained in section 6.2.1, is also more of a concern in these situations, as Sarah suggests:

“But in the middle of a meeting with, perhaps, a headteacher, or a senior member from the school, they might not feel comfortable, you know, saying that they don’t actually know what a certain thing is.”

Sarah does not suggest why MELIs may feel less comfortable seeking clarification here. However, following Kecskes (2012) and the aforementioned assumption of sub-roles, I would argue that one reason may be because, outside the classroom, MELIs may not have a clear idea of the sub-role they and their interlocutors should assume. This lack of clarity arguably means that MELIs are less able to establish their own social status and that of their interlocutors in the communicative exchange. They are also uncertain of the social distance between them. As a result, their pragmatic competence, in terms of their ability to comprehend, may be compromised. Thus, the good interpersonal relationships that Michelle and Sarah suggest facilitate meaning-making appear to depend on a clear and shared understanding of sub-roles that can be assumed in those situations.

MELIs also refer to the significance of interpersonal relationships as they strive to make meaning in cross-lingual communication. The following extract indicates that, like EAs Michelle and Sarah, MELI Eva clearly considers the interpersonal relationship she has with her interlocutor to be instrumental in meaning-making:

Me: “Yeah and how do you work towards understanding what somebody’s saying to you, so if you, you know, if somebody’s said something to you, you think, ‘ooh, not quite sure about that’… ?”
Eva: “Excuse me, pardon, what did you mean, sorry?”
Me: “Yeah, so you ask them?”
Eva: “Most of the time, but sometimes I just keep quiet and work out from conversation following, you know. […] But not to strangers because they’ll make me feel stupid, people who I quite, not who I know, I will ask, ‘what do you mean please?’, but stranger, I will follow…”
Me: “Oh, I see.”
Eva: “Following conversation, you know.”
Me: “Yeah, so it really depends on your relationship with that person?”
Eva: “Of course, because sometimes you feel shy when you don’t know something, you know. People look at you like you’re stupid. There is people who are like that […]”

Eva clearly feels more able to seek clarification from people with whom she is familiar. This further illustrates how a clear idea of sub-role facilitates the pragmatic competence of being able to comprehend. The familiarity that comes from well-established interpersonal relationships makes it easier for Eva to identify a sub-role she can assume in the communicative exchange. This sub-role affords her the social status and distance in her relationship with her interlocutor that enables her to seek clarification and thus facilitate meaning-making.

Where interpersonal relationships are less well established, notably with “strangers”, Eva may be unclear as to what sub-role she should assume. In this case, she is uncertain of her social status with regard to her interlocutor and the social distance between them. This in turn makes her uncertain of how best to approach meaning-making. Her ability to comprehend, and thus her pragmatic competence, is limited to following the conversation in an attempt to make meaning from context. I discuss the significance of context and its use in meaning-making in more detail in section 6.3.3. For now, I turn to consider interpersonal relationships that MELIs encounter with children in school and the significance of sub-roles in their meaning-making attempts.

With children, MELIs do not necessarily feel able to make meaning by seeking clarification. Rana and Wiktoria explain this in the two extracts below: Wiktoria particularly refers to relationships being built with children when starting work as a MELI:

Me: “Yeah, but I suppose in that situation then, you couldn’t say to the child, what does chasing mean, so…”
Rana: “No, ’cause you know, I don’t feel right to ask them anyway, ’cause they think you’re perfect, you’re an adult, you know everything.”
Wiktoria: “At the very beginning it was scary, because I thought ‘oh God, the children would ask me about something and I wouldn’t understand’. And it’s harder, you know, to ask, you can’t say to the child ‘could you rephrase it please?’”

Neither MELI feels able to seek clarification of meaning from the pupil, regardless of how well developed their interpersonal relationship may be. In maintaining the pedagogue-pupil relationship, they appear to suggest that seeking clarification may compromise this relationship. Again, this can be explained with reference to sub-roles and ICP theory as presented by Kecskes (2012) and Williams (2008). It can also be compared with Phipps’ (2007) experience of languaging to understand why this relationship does not constitute a language education opportunity for MELIs. In assuming the sub-role of pedagogue, the MELIs create, or arguably maintain, a degree of social distance between themselves and the child by assuming a social status that is higher than the child’s. This amounts to a role reversal as compared to the sub-roles assumed when MELIs are communicating with EAs. The MELIs’ awareness of their higher social status and distance appears to compromise their pragmatic competence, rendering them unable to seek clarification to make meaning. Furthermore, as pedagogue to the pupil, the MELI is providing rather than receiving the education here. Therefore maintaining the pedagogue-pupil relationship means relinquishing any language education opportunity and the method of seeking clarification. Other less overt methods must be chosen. I explain these in section 6.3.1.

The foregoing analysis suggests that interpersonal relationships, which are both created and maintained through languaging, also contribute to the way meaning is made when languaging. These relationships appear to hinge on the sub-roles assumed as communicating parties interact, which in turn enable social statuses and social distance to be created and/or maintained. Communicating parties’ shared understanding of these statuses and distances affords them varying degrees of pragmatic competence, according to the extent to which they are able to employ different methods of meaning-making. Thus far, my analysis suggests that, when the MELIs’ status is lower than that of their interlocutors, meaning-making opportunities are enhanced. Conversely, when their status is higher, meaning-making opportunities are more limited. Furthermore, the
pedagogue-pupil relationship provides a language education opportunity when the MELI adopts the role of pupil, but not when adopting the role of pedagogue.

Further analysis reveals a number of meaning-making methods used by MECOS team members. These can be grouped under two headings: firstly, methods used to understand others and, secondly, methods used to make themselves understood. The following two sections will take each of these groups in turn to explore the meaning-making methods used by MECOS team members and the relationship between the choice of method and the sub-roles and social statuses of the people involved.

6.3 Meaning-making methods: understanding others

During interviews, participants referred to several methods they use to understand others in the moment of cross-lingual interaction. However, when analysing my data, two methods emerged as being used most. I begin by discussing the methods used least, again referring to ICP theory to offer one explanation as to why these methods may be experienced as less effective. I then focus on the two methods used most and explore why these may be preferred.

6.3.1 Methods used least

Some MELIs mentioned that they use reference material, such as dictionaries and Internet searches, to help them understand what someone has said to them. In the playground situation described in the previous section, Rana told me the method she used when she did not understand what a child meant by ‘chasing’:

“Children, yes, since I started doing my job, I learnt a few words from them which I’d never heard before, ’cause they were playing outside, you know, playtime, and I was obviously sitting in the garden. They were coming to me and saying, ‘oh Miss, look, he’s chasing me’. I didn’t know what chasing means, [laughs], yes, then I said, ‘OK, I’ll talk to you’, but then I went home and you know, look at the dictionary and was, ‘oh, that’s what she means!’”
As Rana explained in section 6.2.2, she does not feel comfortable asking children for clarification. The above example illustrates how, in this situation, Rana resorts to using reference material. However, she was only able to do this retrospectively. When experiencing a lack of understanding at the moment of face-to-face interaction she was unable to find a suitable meaning-making solution. As a result, she felt her response to the child may not have been effective in that situation.

Rana’s colleague Kimberly also explained how she uses dictionaries and other reference material to help her communication with a Japanese child, given her limited Japanese:

“And then, I’ve got my reference books with all the, you know, the arrangement of verbs and all that. So it’s a very tedious process.”

Kimberly’s cross-lingual communication problem in this example is arguably more acute than Rana’s, due to her limited Japanese skills. Kimberly suggests a problem of sentence construction, which is clearly not something the child could help her with. Like Rana, she resorts to reference material, but acknowledges it is a tedious and presumably lengthy process. Thus it does not appear to be a satisfactory method to use regularly in face-to-face interactions. Such limited means of meaning-making in such circumstances may mean that Kimberly, like Rana, also finds her cross-lingual communication attempts to be at best compromised, at worst ineffective. ICP theory provides one explanation as to why Rana and Kimberly find resorting to reference material unsatisfactory in their face-to-face encounters, as I now discuss.

Kecskes (2012) argues that the concept of coherence should not be considered as text-orientated. Instead, "we should perceive it as an interactively negotiated process that is dependent on the context and interlocutors. […] It is not the text that coheres but people who cohere when ascribing meaning to utterances. Understanding takes place when the speaker’s and hearer’s contributions cohere." (ibid.: 76). In other words, it is not the words uttered that cohere with one another but the people who are uttering them, receiving them and making meaning between them. In short, coherence is a collaborative process. This is particularly pertinent when considering utterances in cross-lingual exchanges, and arguably especially those of young children, since language proficiency issues may mean that their utterances are not always properly
formed. Rana and Kimberly find they are unable to cohere with their pupils because their assumed sub-role does not afford them the opportunity to interactively negotiate meaning with them. In resorting to reference material, they are taking a text-orientated approach to ascribe meaning to these children’s utterances. However, since it is people rather than texts that cohere, Rana and Kimberly find taking a text-based approach to meaning-making is, perhaps unsurprisingly, unsatisfactory. Thus, their sub-role appears to limit their meaning-making ability, which in turn compromises the effectiveness with which they can fulfil their organisational role in the foregoing situations.

Wiktoria mentioned that one method she has used with children in the classroom is asking them to speak slowly:

"Or sometimes we just try to, to, you know laugh at it a bit. So I’m just start telling them that, and you know, you just need to speak v-e-r-y s-l-o-w-l-y and c-l-e-a-r-l-y to me, because I just learned a bit of English. I can’t speak, I don’t, I can speak but I don’t understand everything."

This is an example of Wiktoria turning a cross-lingual communication problem into something of a joke at her own expense. This approach at least enables her to interactively negotiate meaning with her interlocutors when she feels unable to seek clarification. However, this may not be a feasible method to employ regularly, as Wiktoria implies by her levity when using it. Furthermore, face-to-face cross-lingual communication happens quickly. Therefore, repeated attempts to slow the process could arguably bring about other communication problems. The three foregoing examples suggest that assuming the sub-role of pedagogue appears to limit the meaning-making options available for MELIs.

Another method available to Wiktoria and Agata is checking understanding with each other by means of their shared native language of Polish. They are the only members of the MECOS team who have this option. However it is not necessarily a method that they can use in schools, unless they are working together. Wiktoria explains she sometimes uses this method for team meetings:

"I talk with Agata a lot, because we meet after work, and so on. So sometimes we, we discuss what, what was being said at the [MECOS team]
meeting, for example. Sometimes it turns out that we have different understandings."

In continuing to assume the sub-role of colleague with each other, Wiktoria and Agata equalise their social status and minimise the social distance between them. This enables them to attempt to make meaning retrospectively through the process of interactive negotiation after the meeting. This method reveals that potential misunderstandings may have occurred and offers a means of resolving them. However, it is unclear how effective this method is, given Wiktoria’s subsequent remark:

"We just try to, you know, erm…. recollect all what, what was said and just come to a sort of agreement. Erm, but… [it] even happens when in Polish, you know when somebody, you know… you don’t always agree what was said, even [if] it was in, you know, Polish environment and the talk was, was, was in Polish. I think it happens. But I know that, that, erm, sometimes she’s [i.e. Agata] not sure about something…mmm, as well. But as I said it, it, there are minor things, [if] it’s something important, we’d rather ask."

Wiktoria acknowledges that misunderstandings can happen even in a Polish-speaking environment. Therefore, it is difficult to know whether the misunderstandings experienced in the English-speaking environment arise purely from cross-lingual communication challenges or whether other phenomena are involved. More important for this thesis is that this meaning-making method is not available to most MECOS team members, nor is it one that Agata and Wiktoria can rely on. Indeed, whilst this and the previous meaning-making methods are all visible within my data, MELIs’ references to them are scarce. The above analysis suggests this may be because they find use of these methods limited for meaning-making when languaging face-to-face.

Wiktoria’s closing words in her comment above indicate that seeking clarification is a method MECOS team members much prefer to use in their cross-lingual encounters. From my data, this emerges as one of the two main methods used by MELIs to ensure they understand what is being said to them in their day-to-day work. The following section explains the usefulness of this method and its potential connection with sub-roles and team culture as discussed in chapter 4 and languaging experiences as discussed in chapter 5.
6.3.2 Methods used most I: seeking clarification

All MELIs unanimously expressed their willingness, indeed preference, to seek clarification from their interlocutors of anything they do not understand. This is unsurprising given my explanation in section 6.3.1 of coherence being an interactively negotiated process. The following extract indicates how comfortable Rana feels in asking her fellow MELIs for clarification:

“We ask anything, if we didn’t understand anything. And as I said before, it’s a lot easier to ask my colleagues here than to someone [else] in English, you know. ’Cause as I said, they can, I think, understand me better, ’cause they’re [in] the same situation, so I feel more confident while I ask them.”

This instance sees Rana assuming the sub-role of colleague with the other MELIs. As explained in section 4.2.2, she also adopts the sub-role of colleague with the EAs, despite their senior organisational status. Thus, there appears to be a connection between the sub-role Rana takes on with other team members and her willingness to seek clarification as a meaning-making method. Rana also suggests that her confidence in feeling able to seek clarification may be partly due to her MELI colleagues empathising with a situation that they could experience themselves. In sections 5.3 and 5.4, I noted that various feelings are evoked when experiencing language and languaging. The above extract seems to suggest that feelings thus evoked are also significant in the meaning-making process, particularly as regards the method chosen.

In the above example, Rana’s feeling of confidence coupled with her parity of social status with her fellow MELIs enables her to ask them for explanations without hesitation. Similarly, MELIs feel comfortable in asking the EAs for clarification. Furthermore, they appreciate the importance of doing so to ensure they do their job properly, as Eva suggests:

Me: “And what about your line managers, you know, the advisers, do you ask them things as well? Are you happy to ask, you know, if you don’t understand something that they’ve told you to do?”
Eva: [...] “Yes, of course, ’cause it’s got to be done right, you know. If you do mistake in that kind of job, you can get sacked.”

As explained in section 4.2.2, despite their assigned organisational roles, MELIs assume the sub-role of either colleague or pupil when communicating with EAs. With social status thus established and social distance minimised, Eva appears to feel as comfortable seeking clarification from her line managers as from her fellow MELIs. Nevertheless, her level of comfort may also be attributable to the team culture that has been constructed, as I now explain.

In section 4.3.2, I explained how team leader Pauline was keen to promote feelings of equality and inclusion within the MECOS team. Her statement recalling this aim is reproduced below:

“We wanted it to be right from day one, but we were also conscious that we might not get it right, ’cause we’ve not done this before, that it’s a learning process. We’ve always said to them, you know, that we’re learning as we go along, we’re all in this together, we’re learning together.”

Pauline’s idea that all MECOS team members are on the same learning curve signals how a culture of equality is reportedly being constructed within the team. Despite the social distance between team members imposed by organisational roles, placing everyone on the same learning curve provides another way of minimising social distance between team members. Following Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003), team members then use this idea of cultural equality as a symbolic resource, to construct the sub-roles of colleague, which they then assume, thereby equalising everyone’s social status. In this way, MELIs continuously use culture as a symbolic resource in languaging and meaning-making processes.

In classroom situations, MELIs feel similarly comfortable in seeking clarification from teachers although, as Sarah suggested in section 6.2.1, such comfort may not be felt in meetings with school staff outside the classroom. Like Eva, Izabela understands the

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32 I did not get the impression that Eva feared losing her job, but rather that she understood her organisational responsibilities and that, as with any job, this can be jeopardised if she fails to fulfil them.
importance of seeking clarification to fulfil her job requirements and appears comfortable doing so in classroom situations. Indeed, she states below that she is willing to risk feeling uncomfortable rather than compromise fulfilment of her responsibilities:

“Sometimes teachers are a little bit, like you know, off with you [laughs]. So it doesn’t help really. Because then I look stupid [laughs]. I don’t mind, you know if, if the person is sincere and understand[s] that I am asking for the benefit of all of us, then I’m happy to look stupid [laughs].” [her emphasis]

Izabela’s willingness to seek clarification here appears to rest on her ability to assume the sub-role of pupil in the classroom alongside that of pedagogical assistant. The cultural context of the classroom enables her to do this, as it is a place where the culture of learning is continuously constructed. Again, following Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003), Izabela appears to use the classroom as a symbolic cultural resource to assume the sub-role of pupil. Nevertheless, her comment that teachers can sometimes be "off with you" suggests that some teachers may not share her understanding of the pupil sub-role she is tacitly assuming within her formal organisational role. If understanding of the sub-role is not shared, making meaning by seeking clarification may prove more difficult. As I was unable to observe classroom situations, I have no data to explore the extent of this in day-to-day work. However, this single example cannot be ignored as it could potentially be significant for meaning-making in classroom situations.

Seeking clarification as a meaning-making method seems to be considered carefully in each context and is not used indiscriminately. In the following extract, Akbar explains some of the factors he takes into account before seeking clarification:

Me: “And […] are there ever any times, you know if the teacher’s trying to explain something to you, erm, are there ever times when you don’t understand what the teacher’s saying?”

Akbar: “Well some of, some, some, sometimes it, erm, when the teacher’s speaking and I can’t, erm, ask in that time because it might be disturbing her, or disturbing others. I just wait for a…… a time, a suitable time to ask her.”
Me: “If it was a situation here, with your advisers, erm MELI colleagues, would you, would there be occasions when you’d have to wait then to ask them later, or would you always ask them at the time?”

Akbar: “Yeah, if it is the right time, obviously I will ask, I have to be remind[ed of] others as well, that not have to be, you know taking the whole time for myself. There’s others have to speak or have to explain things. So I, if it’s the right time I see everybody’s… happy, then I ask.”

Like his colleagues, Akbar is comfortable in seeking clarification from teachers in classroom situations. However, in doing this, he tries to minimise disruption to the classroom activity. When seeking clarification in team meetings, he exercises similar consideration towards his colleagues, seeking to minimise disrupting proceedings as well as allow his colleagues to seek clarification too. Both extracts suggest Akbar understands that seeking clarification could be construed as interrupting the speaker. ICP theory and sociolinguistics provide a possible explanation for Akbar’s reluctance to interrupt, as I now explain.

Williams (2008: 46) states that "interruptions have […] often been suggested as a marker of speaker dominance [although] not all interruptions are necessarily dominating". Tannen (1993: 189) also explains that interruption is often assumed to be "a hostile act, […] an intrusion, […] an attempt to dominate". When thus considered, it is possible that interruptions may be perceived as negative. However, interruptions may also be considered as "more collaborative or supportive" (Williams, 2008: 47). Indeed, "certain types of simultaneous speech demonstrate active participation and solidarity rather than dominance" (ibid.). In both of the above extracts, Akbar’s reluctance to interrupt suggests he acknowledges its potentially negative aspects. His consideration for the teacher and his colleagues suggests that he avoids dominating proceedings in the classroom or meeting. Indeed, he appears to be suggesting the intention behind his interruptions is for the collaborative and thus positive purpose of meaning-making.

Notwithstanding foregoing considerations of courtesy, if MELIs have not understood something, they will also consider the potential importance of the message before seeking clarification. Izabela explains some of the considerations involved in her decision-making process:
Me: “If, if you’re in a situation where, let’s say, a colleague says something and you don’t understand what they’re saying […] what would you do in that situation? Would you just let it go? Or would you ask a question of that person?”

Izabela: “I suppose it depends. You know, how important it is. If it’s an instruction I’m supposed to do, then I need to know. So I would kindly ask if you can explain it maybe… somehow differently, or, you know, say it again or… Sometimes I wouldn’t… I wouldn’t like to make an issue from it if I can see it’s not as much important and also it would maybe knock their confidence down. So it depends, you know, what’s the situation, how important it is and how… yeah. If I don’t totally understand, or if I don’t understand just little bits, but I can sort of make it up and you know, work it out like that.”

Izabela suggests the importance of the message is key to her decision to seek clarification. If it is an instruction she must fulfil, then she is more likely to ask for an explanation. However, if she deems the message to be less important or if she can work out the meaning sufficiently from the gist of what is being said, she may choose not to seek clarification. Her colleague Lukas uses a similar method:

Me: “And in those team meetings, or situations where you’re with your MELI colleagues, erm, if there is something that you’re… not understanding, either because you don’t understand what they’re trying to say or you can’t work it out in your mind, are you, are you able to ask in that situation? […]”

Lukas: “[I] probably would. Again, once again, if I feel that is important and I think it’s not important, I wouldn’t, I wouldn’t disturb the meeting.”

Reflecting on these data begs questions: how does someone ascertain the importance of a message if they have not fully understood it? Similarly, if they have only partially understood the message, how do they know whether the part they have not understood is important? Also if, as Izabela says, the person works the meaning out for themselves, how do they know they have arrived at the interlocutor’s intended meaning? Further research would be required to explore these questions. However, there is clearly an
implication that there is potential for misunderstandings to occur in day-to-day work of which others may be unaware and which may be significant for how these employees fulfil their responsibilities.

As I explained in section 4.2.2, whilst much of the work undertaken by MELIs is within education, indeed within the classroom environment, some work is undertaken elsewhere. Akbar gives one example as follows:

“I [have] been to NHS conference, [to] which all the chief executives was invited. So I have to go as member of community. So they speaking very highly English [laughs] and they were all well-educated, well-paid people, very high level, you know. Chief executives, they were when they were talking about, erm, they use, I dunno, health words, physical words…erm, medical words…. I could not understand all of them but I could, I get the idea from it, what they are talking about.”

Me: “Yeah. Are you able, in that situation, are you able to ask people, to explain things to you?”

Akbar: “Ermmm. It’s depend on what, erm, what role I’m playing in there. It’s very important that I, you know, if I’m there as interpreter, then it’s really important for me to know every word. Because I will be, I will be interpreting for someone who will really need to know that. If I don’t myself, then I’ll be doing my job wrong. […] So, in that point, I might be, it will be very important for me to… then I have to take note of each, each word I don’t know…to find out what that word means. Then I have to explain that to the person I’m interpreting for.”

Given my foregoing analysis of the assumption of sub-roles by MECOS team members, Akbar explicitly recognises that his role is instrumental to his decision as to whether to seek clarification on something he does not understand. Although he does not explain why, the assumption of sub-roles provides one explanation. Akbar implies that, when simply attending a conference, he may choose not to seek clarification for anything he does not understand, preferring to make meaning as best he can from the context.
However, in the role of interpreter, he recognises that his understanding will affect the
person (or people) for whom he is interpreting. Therefore in this case, he is more likely to actively seek clarification to ensure he fulfils his responsibilities.

When viewing the above extract in terms of sub-roles, it unclear what Akbar’s sub-role is when attending a conference alone. The role assigned to him by the conference organisers is that of attendee. However, as there do not appear to be any relationships that he needs to maintain through languaging, there is no indication of what, if any, other sub-role Akbar could assume in that situation. In Akbar’s role of attendee, he would arguably be expected to have sufficient reserves of linguistic capital to make meaning from the context, as presentations are typically not particularly interactive. This could explain Akbar’s reluctance to seek clarification, or indeed use any method of meaning-making other than context, which I discuss in section 6.3.3. However, if Akbar is attending a conference in the role of interpreter, he has at least one relationship that he must communicate and maintain through languaging. Maintaining this relationship requires the assumption of the sub-role of intermediary, as explained in section 4.2.2. He therefore has to find a suitable meaning-making method in this situation and suggests this may involve note-taking. However, this is not a method in itself. Unfortunately, Akbar’s chosen method is not apparent from his statement, as he does not explain how he ascertains meaning once he has noted down what he does not understand.

The foregoing analysis indicates how, why and when MELIs use seeking clarification as a meaning-making method in their day-to-day work. Whilst they feel this method may be more reliable than others, MELIs are still careful to use it only when they feel it is appropriate and necessary. Thus, use of this method is based on an individual’s own assessment of their understanding. The person using the method therefore needs to accurately assess how well they have understood their interlocutor’s intended meaning. Furthermore, my analysis suggests the sub-roles assumed together with team culture are also involved in choosing whether or not to use this particular method. Therefore, interlocutors arguably need to be aware that they cannot assume that an absence of clarification questions means understanding has been achieved. I shall return to explore how this awareness is being actively demonstrated within the MECOS team in section 6.4.3. In the following section, I consider modelling as the second of the three main meaning-making methods used by MECOS team members.
6.3.3 Methods used most II: modelling

My data generation was organised such that I interviewed many of the MELIs before the EAs. Modelling was not mentioned until my first interview with EA Michelle, nor did I understand what the term meant. Michelle explains it as follows:

“But I do find it difficult sometimes. [...] And I find myself modelling back the speaking correctly, you know, like you would with a child. And… I did say to someone, ‘look, I’ll do it, I’m sorry, this is, the teacher coming out and if you find it annoying just tell me to… shut up.’ ”

Me: “When you say modelling back...”
Michelle: “Well, if they don’t speak correctly, I tend to say it again [...] in the correct way. So, and, erm, I caught myself doing it and I said ‘oh…it’s, I can’t help it. It’s, you know, the automatic….’ and most of them are absolutely fine with it. You know, they want to know how to say things correctly.” [Michelle’s emphasis]

As I explained in section 5.4.3, modelling is a pedagogical technique used to support children’s language learning. As a meaning-making method used in this example, it serves the dual purpose of supporting a MELI’s English language development and confirming Michelle’s own understanding of what the MELI was trying to say. In an extract, first cited in section 5.4.2, Michelle explains why she uses modelling:

“Plus also I think that erm… unfortunately, to be taken seriously professionally, you need to be able, your spoken language needs to be of a certain standard [...] so it’s… important as possible to get these people to speak… the best quality of English that they can.”

She suggests she recognises the value of linguistic capital in professional life and thus takes every opportunity to assist MELIs with increasing their reserves. It is therefore intended as a constructive form of correction. Following my argument in section 6.2.1 and drawing upon Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory, the sub-roles assumed within the interpersonal relationships between Michelle, as EA, and the MELIs may further explain why Michelle chooses this modelling method. As the MELIs’ line manager and an experienced teacher, she appears to draw parallels between the relationships of line
manager-member of staff and pedagogue-pupil. As such, there is a parallel here to how the MELIs assume the sub-role of pedagogue to pupils in the classroom. In the line manager-member of staff relationship, Michelle sees it as her duty to assist the MELIs’ professional development by helping them to increase their linguistic capital reserves. However, in the first extract she explicitly states she invokes the sub-role of pedagogue to provide constructive assistance that does not undermine confidence. Thus, Michelle implies that interpersonal relationships and hence sub-roles play a part in choosing modelling as a meaning-making method.

Michelle’s colleague Sarah sheds further light on when and why she uses this method:

Me: “If you’re in a situation where they [the MELIs] say something and perhaps they said it, a bit of a strange way of saying it. You know what they mean, but they’ve not quite said it in the right way. How do you, sort of, experience that and how do you handle that?”

Sarah: “I might, it depends on the situation, but I might say ‘oh, do you mean…?’ and then kind of model it for them. But […] I wouldn’t correct their English, because that’s not particularly helpful. But you can model it for them, I mean if you think it’s appropriate. So that they can pick it up in that way.”[Sarah’s emphasis]

In this example, Sarah appears to understand what the MELI is trying to say. Therefore she does not necessarily use modelling to ensure her own understanding. However, like Michelle, she also appears to draw a parallel between the same two relationships. In the supervisor-member of staff relationship, Sarah also considers herself responsible for assisting the MELIs’ professional development by enhancing their linguistic capital reserves. Therefore, to fulfil her responsibility, she adopts the sub-role of pedagogue to pupil in order to teach the MELI how the phrase should be said. As explained in section 6.2.2, MELIs avoid the direct approach to meaning-making by seeking clarification when assuming their sub-role as pedagogue to pupil. Likewise, when Sarah takes on the same sub-role, like Michelle, she actively avoids a more direct approach to meaning-making by simply correcting any mistakes, which she considers unhelpful. Although Sarah does not explicitly state why, fellow EA Carol sheds further light on this in the following extract:
“[…] If they show that they haven’t understood the meaning, you just automatically model the correct [one] and that’s what you do with children at school, you model. You don’t say ‘oh that is wrong’ because you don’t want to give any negative connotations to it, you know, and sort of make them withdraw, because they’re frightened to say anything in case what the next thing they say is wrong as well.”

Carol is clearly suggesting that modelling offers a way of correcting someone without embarrassing them or undermining confidence. As discussed in section 5.4.1, there appears to be some connection between confidence levels and the languaging experience. Bearing this connection in mind, Carol appears to see modelling as a useful method in fostering a positive languaging experience. However, Sarah notes there are situations when modelling may not be appropriate:

“I think perhaps if it’s just a one-to-one […]. Because if you do it in front of other people, it, you know, it could be a bit embarrassing or it’s just not necessary to do it. […] If you just have a conversation, I probably wouldn’t bother modelling it. But perhaps if it’s something to do with something that they might have to write as part of a report, then I would be more inclined to model it for them. Just to help them, kind of, get the right phrase when they do write the report.”

Here, Sarah appears to suggest there are cases when modelling may prove embarrassing for MELIs. Thus she uses her judgment to avoid undermining their confidence. However, like her colleagues, she still uses modelling where it appears to be constructive in enhancing a MELI’s reserves of linguistic capital.

The examples above suggest modelling serves a dual purpose in meaning-making. Firstly, it serves as a subtle means of EAs seeking clarification to ensure they understand what a MELI has said. Secondly, it provides a constructive means of correcting a MELI’s English, thereby seeking to enhance their reserves of linguistic capital. In fulfilling both these purposes, EAs appear to be operationalising their pragmatic competence by assuming two types of sub-role in the interpersonal relationships between themselves and the MELIs. In their organisational role of line
manager or supervisor to the MELIs, they assume the sub-role of colleague to make themselves approachable. When it comes to supporting MELIs in increasing their linguistic and professional capital they assume the sub-role of pedagogue. However, in this sub-role they seek to minimise the social distance between themselves and the MELIs by presenting themselves as "more capable peers" (Williams, 2008: 60).

Although Sarah says she avoids modelling when there are other people present, I observed an example, at a team meeting, of how modelling can nevertheless be employed constructively when others are present. I reproduce the following extract from my observation notes, which I first presented in section 5.4.3:

“Discussion moved on to whether at the MELIs could produce a resource that would help young children learn the alphabet by associating a letter with a particular word and an illustration of that word. Wiktoria showed the group an alphabet book she had found which had one page per letter and a big colourful picture on each letter/page. She wondered if they could produce something similar. The MELIs thought it was a good idea. Akbar asked ‘Do we need to picturise in it?’ Michelle replied ‘Yes you put pictures in it’.”

This is an example of Michelle modelling what Akbar is trying to say. Furthermore it demonstrates how modelling serves a three-way rather than dual purpose here. Firstly, Michelle is seeking clarification to ensure she understands Akbar’s question as to whether the resource should contain pictures. Secondly, she phrases her answer to model a more appropriate way for Akbar to say what he means. Thirdly, she ensures the rest of the team understands what Akbar means. As Akbar has invented the word ‘picturise’, it cannot be assumed that everyone else understands it. Thus, modelling appears to be one meaning-making method, used principally by EAs, that has the potential to assist with understanding MELIs’ cross-lingual communication attempts, as well as making these attempts understandable for others. I now turn to the third meaning-making method of using context to explore how it is used and the reasons for its appeal.
6.3.4 Methods used most III: context

My analysis of using context refers again to the analysis of interpersonal relationships in section 6.3.2, which drew upon culture. An extract from my interview with MELI Kimberly provides a useful opening to this discussion. Kimberly appears to share the view that interpersonal relationships are significant for meaning-making, explaining how meaning-making might actually break down when relationships are less well developed:

“You just reach a time where you, you know that, you just know that you can’t get further, beyond that level of conversation with that person. ’Cause a) you don’t have the vocabulary to say it and, erm, erm b) you don’t know enough of that person. Also, you know, it depends on how well you know the person.”

In this general comment about her cross-lingual experiences, Kimberly explicitly acknowledges that vocabulary limitations affect meaning-making. As she did not specify an interlocutor, her role and sub-role are unclear. Nevertheless, she clearly considers the interpersonal relationship she has with her interlocutor as significant for meaning-making. Given the absence of roles, it is difficult to explain Kimberly’s difficulty in meaning-making with reference to ICP theory. However, further reference to culture still appears useful, as I now explain.

In his discussion of context and meaning, Hall (1989: 90) argues that "the code, the context, and the meaning can only be seen as different aspects of the single event." He is therefore suggesting that a single communicative event must be considered in terms of its code (the language), context and meaning. This is consistent with Tietze et al.’s (2003) argument, presented in section 2.4.4, that meaning is inextricably linked with context. Kimberly’s statement acknowledges the importance of all three of these aspects. Firstly, her specific reference to a lack of vocabulary which frustrates the communicative event recognises a lack of sufficient code. Secondly, her acknowledgement that the inability to make meaning halts the communicative event confirms Hall’s assertion that meaning is part of the event. Thirdly, her reference to having insufficient knowledge about her interlocutor recognises the lack of and need for
context. Below, I explain why Kimberly’s particular problem of context arises with reference to Hall’s concept of high-context and low-context cultures and communication, introduced in section 2.4.1. I then analyse other participants’ extracts to explore how context is used to make meaning by applying the Bourdieusian concept of cultural capital.

According to Hall (1989.: 39), "cultures in which people are deeply involved with each other" can be considered as high-context cultures. Similarly, communication "where most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized within the person […], while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message" (ibid.: 91), can be considered as high-context communication. In contrast, highly individualised cultures "in which there is relatively little involvement with people" (ibid.: 39) can be considered as low-context cultures. Similarly, communication where "the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code" (ibid.: 91) can be considered as low-context communication. Although Hall uses high-context and low-context communication to encapsulate national cultural differences, I argue his theory can be applied equally to explain Kimberly’s cross-lingual communication problem, as follows.

Kimberly states she encounters meaning-making difficulties with people whom she does not know well; in other words, people with whom she is not deeply involved. In such situations, she appears to experience low-context communication and hence is heavily reliant upon the information vested in the explicit code. However, her lack of vocabulary means she has insufficient means of decoding the message and her limited involvement with the person means she cannot draw upon any other information that may be internalised, or to put it another way, contextualised, within that person. Thus, context appears to be significant by its absence in this meaning-making attempt, bringing the communicative event to a halt.

Inferring meaning from context can be useful when it is not possible or appropriate to seek clarification of linguistic code. However, as MELI Wiktoria explains, there are drawbacks:
“Because I’ve always felt confident and I still feel confident as far as reading, and so on. […] You can check, you know, anything you don’t understand, you can figure the meaning out from the context. But in speaking it’s gone faster. You need to do it, you know, at this very moment.”

Wiktoria suggests that meaning-making needs to be virtually instantaneous when speaking face-to-face. She implies reading affords some time to infer meaning from context, but this time is much reduced in face-to-face cross-lingual communication. Wiktoria does not clarify how she ascertains meaning from context when speaking. However, her colleague Lukas explains how he might do this. Here, I use Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital to explain how Lukas might be making meaning from context:

Me: “So, when you’re in a situation, let’s take the parents’ evening first of all, erm where you’re amongst people in an environment that you’re not familiar with and probably people that you’re not familiar with. Have you ever had an experience where somebody’s said something in English to you and you thought ‘how do I say that in Lithuanian, or Russian?’ or ‘what does that person mean?’?”

Lukas: “Yeah, it does happen, it does happen quite often. ’Cause obviously, most of the people I work with, highly skilled professionals and they use the [unintelligible word] language. Most of it I don’t know, I do know, but some of it I don’t, obviously. And sometimes you can’t just ask them to say easy way, in plain English, so you have to think what the context was, and kind of make stuff along. But… it is difficult. That’s one of the pressured situations.” [his emphasis]

Lukas suggests that he has sufficient linguistic capital reserves to understand ‘plain’ English. However his comment regarding the levels of language used by ‘highly skilled professionals’ implies that these reserves are not always sufficient for him to understand everything. He uses his existing reserves of ‘plain English’ linguistic capital to understand what he can. However, for the language that he does not understand, he infers meaning from the context by using the cultural capital acquired through his previous and current professional experience and training. As Phipps (2007) notes, a
person can only put language to use through languaging if they have sufficient reserves of linguistic capital. Following this assertion, I would further argue that a person can only put context to use to make meaning whilst languaging if they have sufficient reserves of the types of cultural capital appropriate to that context. I now explain this with further reference to my data, ICP theory and further consideration of Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of cultural capital.

The following extract, some of which was first cited in section 5.4.3, illustrates how Izabela experiences the meaning-making process with Akbar whilst they are both languaging:

Izabela: “So, for example, the, erm, Pashto speaker, I could remember when he… he tried to express something and erm, I understood exactly what he meant but it wasn’t properly [laughs].”
Me: “So […] can you remember what was not ‘properly’ about it? You know, what was wrong? Was it choice of words or was it something else?”
Izabela: “It’s a lot of grammar mistakes, like ‘he go’ which obviously, it’s wrong. But you get the… you know, you like would add the ‘s’ at the end [laughs]. […] But it can be in words, yeah. Erm […] it’s grammar from the point of whole sentence maybe. Or maybe wrong past tense or past participle, you know, different things ‘yesterday I will go’ you know [laughs], things like that. Which I know, because I’ve gone through it, I can understand what he goes through [laughs]. And, erm, I sort of, I make the bit that shouldn’t be there and add the thing that should be there.”
Me: “So you can recognise that perhaps somebody is not saying something quite right?”
Izabela: “Yes.”
Me: “But you can work it out?”
Izabela: “That’s right.”
Me: “And probably because of your own experiences as well.”
Izabela: “Mmm. I would say so yeah. Because I think, you know, […] many words which can mean very, sort of, the same thing, but you would never use it in that particular situation.”
The above extract illustrates how the meaning-making process in this example appears to rely on forms of cultural capital other than the linguistic. In identifying the ways in which she considered Akbar was not expressing himself in English ‘properly’, Izabela initially remarks upon errors of grammar and vocabulary. According to Kecskes (2012: 76), such errors are to be expected since "utterances in intercultural communication are often not quite properly formed because of language proficiency issues". How Izabela overcomes these issues can be explained with reference to the Bourdieusian concept of capital, as follows.

Grammar and vocabulary are constituents of any language and thus form part of the linguistic capital that is acquired when learning a language. Therefore, to make meaning, Izabela uses her own reserves of linguistic capital to make up for what Akbar lacks. However, she continues by saying that words are not necessarily used in the same way or do not necessarily mean the same thing in different situations or contexts. In concurring with my suggestion that her own experience of situations also forms part of the meaning-making process, Izabela appears to be suggesting that she also uses another form of context to make meaning. Whilst she does not state specific experiences, it is reasonable to assume that some of these will have been acquired by means of educational qualifications and professional experience, which are both forms of cultural capital other than linguistic. This suggests the meaning-making process in Izabela’s cross-lingual communication experience relies upon forms of cultural capital in addition to the linguistic capital held by the communicating parties. Furthermore, it appears to be the interaction between, and not merely the existence of, these different forms of linguistic and cultural capital that assists the meaning-making process.

Izabela makes a more explicit statement about the limitations of meaning-making from words alone as follows:

“But sometimes, you see, it can be a term, even in a dictionary not very well explained, because it can have 10 millions, erm, meanings.”

Her comment illustrates Grenfell’s (2012c) argument that the neutrality of dictionary definitions belies the multitude of nuanced senses words take on as meaning is constructed in situ. It follows that, if words and phrases have different meanings in situ,
then a mere stock of these, in the form of linguistic capital, may still be insufficient to infer a meaning that is appropriate to the communication event. This is the point at which context, and thus cultural capital other than linguistic, becomes significant for inferring the likely meaning of what is being communicated when a person is operationalising their linguistic capital.

My foregoing argument is further supported by the example given by TL Pauline of an interpreting assignment undertaken by MELI Shilpa33, first discussed in section 4.3.6. The following abridged version of the full extract contains the key points for the current discussion:

“Shilpa went and then we got this very positive feedback about that, you know, she understood exactly and she was able to explain things better than the social worker [...]. Shilpa understood it better than the, you know, because we’ve done this work with them. [...] We’ve tried to sort of give them [the MELIs] training that gives them a basic insight into a lot of situations.”

I explained in section 4.3.6 how the combination and interaction of linguistic and cultural capital held by Shilpa results in such a successful cross-lingual communication outcome. Therefore, this example illustrates culture’s involvement in cross-lingual communication. In addressing the current research question, I explain in more detail how Shilpa’s cultural capital gives her an understanding of the context she needed to draw upon, to make meaning in this cross-lingual event. I explain this below with further reference to Hall’s (1989) high-context and low-context cultures and communication.

As discussed earlier in this section, Hall (ibid.: 91) considers that a communication or message "in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person" to be high-context communication. In these instances, the coded, transmitted part of the message contains little information and therefore the context is heavily relied upon for meaning-making. Thus, in high-context

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33 As explained in section 4.3.6, Shilpa left the organisation as I was beginning my data generation. Therefore I was unable to interview her.
communication situations, if the coded, transmitted (i.e. spoken) part of the message contains little information, then it could be argued that even with a high degree of proficiency in the language being spoken, communication difficulties may still arise. It would therefore seem to follow that if people have participated to some extent in the same cultural contexts, high-context communication is more likely to be facilitated. The training provided to MECOS team members and information from colleagues both assist MELIs’ assimilation, not only into the context of education, but also to some extent into associated contexts such as social work. Therefore, whilst Shilpa may have had little or no professional experience in teaching and/or social work, her MELI training would have acquainted her with the cultural context of education and to a lesser extent that of social work. Thus, in this as with any interpreting situation, she would have combined her reserves of linguistic and other forms of cultural capital to make meaning within a situation of high-context communication.

In this section, I described the meaning-making methods used by MECOS team members to understand others. In so doing, I explained why certain methods are preferred and how they work. In the following section, I conduct a similar analysis of methods used by team members to make themselves understood.

6.4 Meaning-making methods: making oneself understood

My analysis suggests there are two methods that team members employ to ensure the best possible understanding by their colleagues. The first method appears to be guarding against misunderstanding. Techniques used in this regard include simplifying the language used, making efforts to be clear and pre-empting potential misunderstanding. The second method appears to be checking for understanding. Techniques used here include observing non-verbal language and asking interlocutors directly if they have understood. In cases of possible misunderstanding, the message is clarified by repeating, rephrasing or explaining what has been said. I now analyse these two methods in turn to explore how and why they are used.
6.4.1 Guarding against misunderstanding

One way in which MECOS team members guard against misunderstanding is by maximising message clarity by choosing language carefully. Pauline explains how she used this technique, particularly early on in the project:

“All I think I’m more confident now. Because sometimes, first of all, I’d be thinking, ‘how can I put this as simply as possible?’ And then when you realise they understand it, you think, ‘oh right, next time round I’ll say it slightly [differently]’, yeah, so it’s adding a bit more complexity […].”

Back then, interpersonal relationships were not as well developed and hence team members were arguably less familiar with the sub-roles they could assume. Additionally, MELIs’ reserves of linguistic capital were lower. However further reference to ICP theory suggests that salience may be another reason why Pauline favoured use of simple language in the project’s early days, as I now explain.

For Kecskes (2012: 78), salience of meaning is that which "is the most probable out of all possible". Salience is a key part of communicative cooperation in both message production and comprehension. "Language processing is anchored in the assumption that what is salient or accessible to oneself will also be accessible to one’s interlocutors" (ibid.: 79). Thus, Pauline’s careful choice of language can be explained as recognition of the need for salience between herself and her MELI interlocutors. Kecskes explains that salience is particularly important in intercultural communication, since interlocutors from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds may share a limited amount of common social context in which to situate the language they are using to communicate. Thus, to achieve meaning-making, the linguistic code somehow needs to be tied to an interlocutor’s prior experience. Pauline’s awareness of the MELIs’ prior experience is limited to her knowledge of their nationality, languages spoken and other forms of cultural capital held. Therefore, her attempt to simplify her use of language could be explained as an attempt to achieve salience by using a more straightforward register, which MELIs would understand based on their prior experience.
Pauline explains that simplifying the language register is not easy:

“So, in meetings, Michelle and I used to tie ourselves up in knots sometimes thinking, ‘How simply can we say this?’ And then I said one day to her, ‘No, if they don’t understand it, they know now’, [and they’ll ask] ‘oy, what’s that?’ ”

Her and Michelle’s efforts seem to imply an awareness of interpersonal relationships also being instrumental in their cross-lingual exchanges. The second part of Pauline’s statement suggests they both realise that less well developed interpersonal relationships could mean that MELIs may feel less able to seek clarification. This further illustrates the significance of sub-roles discussed in section 6.2. MELIs can now comfortably interject to clarify anything they do not understand, so EAs do not feel they need to simplify their language quite as much. Headteacher Tony makes a similar observation, comparing his use of language in the early days of the project with his current experiences of cross-lingual communication:

“Perhaps earlier on I might have been quite controlled with the linguistic register that I use. I think ‘I mustn’t use that word because that’s a bit complicated, let’s make it a little bit more simple to understand’. I don’t tend to do that now and you can have much more of a conversation, you can see how they [the MELIs] have grown in their ability to speak.”

Like Pauline, Tony admits he was probably making a conscious effort to use simpler language in the project’s early days. However, more recently he appears to have relaxed this effort and speaks more naturally. Furthermore, his observation of the MELIs’ improved skills in the lingua franca suggests he recognises that their reserves of linguistic capital have also increased.

Sarah acknowledges she continues to consider her choice of language register according to the person with whom she is speaking:

Me: “Do you change your style of talking or writing with different MELIs?”
Sarah: “I think I probably do. If their English is slightly, well I mustn’t make judgments about their English, if it is slightly, not lower level but, you know, less developed, perhaps, you know, try and be less complex, you know, in my speech, or in the written word.”

Sarah’s decision to adapt her linguistic register illustrates her continued effort to ensure clarity is made according to her judgment of a particular MELI’s capacity in the lingua franca. She therefore acts according to her knowledge of each MELI’s reserves of cultural and linguistic capital.

Sarah explains another way in which she makes efforts to be clear when speaking to MELIs as against native English speakers (NSs):

Me: “Do you find when you speak to the MELIs that you, sort of, adjust your English? Compared to how you would speak to, say, your colleagues, or even me. Do you speak differently?”
Sarah: “I think, I think I do, yes. I tend to use more standard English, I think really, than I do with colleagues. Less colloquialisms.”

Sarah mentions that she avoids ‘colloquialisms’; a term I understand, following Kecskes (2012), as meaning a form of formulaic or figurative language used in local dialect or informal speech. Her avoidance seems to suggest that she recognises that the MELIs may not have experienced cross-lingual communication in the local and/or informal situational contexts where such a specialist form of linguistic capital would usually be acquired. Sarah’s reluctance to use colloquialisms can also be explained with reference to ICP theory. Kecskes (ibid.: 79) explains that "some studies in English lingua franca (ELF) use found that ELF users rely on semantically more transparent language rather than formulaic and/or figurative language […]". Thus, Sarah is using her pragmatic competence in this situation to ensure she chooses a linguistic code that is as transparent as possible to achieve salience in intercultural communication. This is because "in intercultural communication, the most salient meaning for interlocutors is usually the literal meaning" (ibid.: 80).

Pauline and Michelle also mention things they avoid in their attempts to communicate clearly:
Pauline: “[…] Now if I put ‘visit to wherever’, I would actually continue to refer to that throughout the e-mail, so there could be no misunderstanding. And I’d tend to use less abbreviations and I wouldn’t use any acronyms because I know it used to take me a while to get used to acronyms.”

Michelle: “Also when I’m writing e-mails, I tend not to use any, erm, idioms much and just make it clear about what I want […].”

Abbreviations, acronyms and idioms, like colloquialisms, all appear to be recognised as types of formulaic or figurative language that the MELIs may not have encountered when acquiring their reserves of linguistic capital in the lingua franca of English. Pauline and Michelle therefore avoid using these with the aim of achieving greater semantic transparency and hence clear cross-lingual communication. I observed another example of Pauline striving to achieve semantic transparency in a team meeting:

Observation note: “Pauline talked about "refuges" and checked that everyone understood what a refuge was. Post-meeting, she told me that she launched straight into her definition/explanation of a refuge after asking the question to save any MELI the embarrassment of admitting they did not know what it was.”

Pauline is not sure if the word ‘refuge’ is semantically transparent to all MELIs. Therefore, she offers an explanation or alternative without waiting for problems of misunderstanding or negative feelings to arise.

EA Martin indicates he also seeks to achieve greater semantic transparency by modifying the way he speaks to different MELIs. He gives one example of how he might do this:

Me: “[…] You just said to me if I was a MELI you’d modify what you say to me. How, can you describe how you would modify it? What strategies you would use?”

Martin: “I’m sure one of the things I would do would be to think just slightly longer about the right order in which to say things. Quite literally. If you’re going to give information or get a meaning across, it actually
involves a sequence of process, a very quick one, but it nevertheless involves that. […] I'd be doing that a bit more, a bit more consciously, taking a bit longer over it, than [when] I am talking to you. I’d probably think, ‘well it doesn’t matter what I say to you, I can easily revise and go back and forward in time and you would still follow me’. If I’m talking to somebody with whom I’m not absolutely so sure that they will understand what I’m saying, I’ll take slightly longer to think of the right order in which to say things.”

Martin considers it is not just the words he chooses but also the order in which he says things that may potentially affect the way in which his message is understood, particularly by NNSs. He thus appears to guard against misunderstanding by thinking carefully about semantic transparency in terms of the structure of his message as well as the words it contains. Once a verbal message has been ‘issued’, there follows a second stage in which team members check understanding. I explore how they do this in the next section.

### 6.4.2 Checking understanding

As I explained earlier in this chapter and chapter 4, the team culture and interpersonal relationships being constructed in the MECOS team are conducive to MELIs seeking clarification of things they have not understood. Indeed, there are not many examples in my data of instances where EAs specifically say they ask MELIs directly if they have understood something. Furthermore, as Pauline explains:

“I will sometimes say, ‘let’s just check, can you tell me?’, but I’ve never been sure if they find that insulting or not, so I’m kind of quite careful about how I do it.”

She is concerned that directly checking understanding with a MELI could be perceived as insulting. The apparently scarce use of this technique is reflected by its relative absence in my data.
Sarah indicates that, in group situations, she may also check understanding to prevent embarrassment, as her following comment illustrates:

“So I’ll sometimes just turn and check. And it’s not always language. It can sometimes be culture or a difference in education systems, so sometimes I’ll check and say, ‘oh are you familiar with the…’ you know, ‘whatever’? And sometimes they are and sometimes they’re not. But in the middle of a meeting with, perhaps, a headteacher, or a senior member from the school, they might not feel comfortable, you know, saying that they don’t actually know what a certain thing is.”

In overtly asking the MELI directly about the point that may potentially be unclear, Sarah is indicating her awareness that the MELI may lack forms of cultural capital other than the linguistic that may inhibit their understanding. She is thus doing everything possible in the presence of people outside the MECOS team not just to check the MELI understands but also save them from any embarrassment.

As I explained in section 5.2.5, all members of the MECOS team make regular and consistent use of non-verbal language, principally facial expressions and silences. This language choice offers a less overt means of checking understanding and has been used since the project’s inception. Use of this method to check MELIs’ understanding continues now they are in post, as illustrated by the following interview and observation extracts:

Tony: “I try and read their faces as I am talking to them and again pick up on the non-verbal signs, I think they are not understanding, don’t wait until they have to say ‘I don’t understand’ but say ‘I mean so and so’.”

Observation note: “These two examples show how Lukas [NNS] was attempting to use language to describe what he saw in his mind’s eye and to communicate the accurate meaning to his listeners. His hesitation and searching for different adjectives and questioning looks prompted Mark [the NS trainer], as the listener, to make other suggestions until they
reached a mutual agreement as to what it was Lukas was trying to say/describe.”

Thus, as well as being a form of language choice, non-verbal language is also another method of meaning-making. It enables team members, particularly the NSs, to use any indications of misunderstanding or non-understanding as a cue to immediately rephrase or explain what they have said, without waiting to be asked. Taking such action to support team members appears to be consistent with the team culture being constructed based on the ideas of education and equality, as I explained in section 6.3.2. Such action also appears to be a conscious attempt to minimise any negative feelings that MELIs may experience, such as those discussed in section 5.4.2, when misunderstandings or non-understandings occur.

Thus far, this chapter’s analysis can be summarised as an exploration of the meaning-making methods used by MECOS team members according to their assumed sub-roles, as explained principally through ICP theory (Kecskes, 2012) and reserves of linguistic and other forms of cultural capital, as defined by Bourdieu (1977a; 1991). In explaining the apparent relationship between the interaction of different forms of cultural capital and how meaning is made in cross-lingual communication, my analysis shows that linguistic capital, though clearly essential, is not the only form of cultural capital required in meaning-making. Furthermore, an absence of certain types of cultural capital may hinder meaning-making attempts. However, further analysis also suggests that a person may possess cultural capital, which they are nevertheless unable to use in certain cross-lingual communication situations. I now explore this to understand how it affects the cross-lingual communication experience for members of this team.

6.5 Cultural capital: facilitation or frustration?

The foregoing analysis suggests that, the greater one’s reserves of cultural capital, the better the chances of a positive cross-lingual communication experience. However, evidence in my data also suggests that, on occasions, a person can be precluded from using their cultural capital reserves when communicating cross-lingually. My analysis
in this section provides an important illustration of how meaning-making might be frustrated due to a lack of voice rather than language (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014).

MELI Agata told me about an assignment in which her own reserves of cultural capital, acquired through previous professional experience, were effectively rendered redundant:

“All right, yes I can tell you about my, erm… another, it’s, it’s, erm… a role as an interpreter, but totally different situation. So it wasn’t an official meeting at school, it was erm.. [an] antenatal session, led by English nurse, for Polish pu-, erm… for Polish… parents expecting children.”

Me: “Oh!”

Agata: “Yeah. So, erm, I was, with Wiktoria, my friend, we were both interpreters. And it was difficult for me, because, erm… you have to, erm… translate everything what, for example, erm… English nurse say about, erm, labour, everything. Even if you don’t agree sometimes. You know what I mean?”

Me: “Yes, yes.”

Agata: “Yes, because I’m biology, biologist and it was difficult sometimes for me not to add anything more when I translate to Polish, erm, parents. But I, I had to, erm, stay close, you know, to my work and to erm, interpreting, just interpreting, yes.”

As a trained biologist and secondary school biology teacher, Agata clearly has good reserves of cultural capital pertaining to this subject. As my analysis in this chapter has found, this would normally be expected to improve her cross-lingual communication experience. However, this does not appear to be the case here. She suggests that, based on her own professional training, she did not agree with everything the nurse was telling the pregnant woman. However, she found herself unable to use these particular reserves of cultural capital in this context to provide the parents-to-be with more accurate information. In her formal and assumed sub-role of intermediary, Agata was unable to speak with her ‘own voice’ and simply had to convey the nurse’s voice to the patient in Polish. This exemplifies Janssens and Steyaert’s (ibid.: 630) citation of Blommaert, first referenced in section 1.2, to posit their argument that cross-lingual communication is
not just a matter of "the language you speak, but how you speak it, when you can speak it and to whom it matters. It is a matter of voice". However, far from negating my previous analyses using the concept of cultural capital, Agata’s experience suggests further considerations that should be taken into account when attempting to understand how cross-lingual communication works for MECOS team members.

These considerations can be explained through the following fine-grained analysis of Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) theory of social practice as it applies to the MELIs’ organisational roles and assumed sub-roles. I begin my explanation by contrasting Agata’s experience above with the following classroom situation experienced by Kimberly.

“I only get a certain amount of time in a school. So, I’m given, like, perhaps a term, erm... once a week, sort of thing. And, my... I think, if I can’t achieve anything with that child, then, I would be happy knowing that the teacher supporting the child... knows what to do... when I’m not there... any more. So it’s... not just supporting the child, it’s also setting the teachers off, to know where to go with this child. And what sort of, erm, erm, journey that child’s gonna go on... in that school and in, in that class. So it’s making sure that the, that, that the progress factor is factored in... into their learning process. That’s important...”

Me: “And is that your, is that your responsibility then? To sort of clarify to the teacher?”
Kimberly: “I think that’s very much yeah, what I have to do, yeah. Because, otherwise, there’s no point going in to, to support the child. And I’m only there for a limited amount of time. So that teacher would have to know where to go for resources. Erm, what sort of resources can be used... for that child.”

Unlike Agata, Kimberly suggests that she can bring aspects of cultural capital acquired through professional experience to bear on her cross-lingual exchange. In both instances, Agata’s and Kimberly’s identical organisational role as MELI is to provide linguistic and cultural mediation to support all parties with whom they are communicating. Yet there appears to be a stark difference between their cross-lingual
communication experiences. Both Kimberly and Agata have considerable reserves of cultural capital acquired through education, professional training and subsequent professional practice in their home countries prior to their current role as MELI. Therefore, given my argument so far in this chapter, these cultural capital reserves should facilitate their cross-lingual communication experience. Yet Agata finds herself unable to support the pregnant woman to an extent that she considers acceptable based on her own professional and educational experience. Understanding the reason behind these different experiences requires further investigation into how different forms of cultural capital work in different settings. When analysing these extracts in terms of the sub-roles being assumed, they serve to illustrate the more subtle workings of Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital.

Explaining the restriction and freedom of use of cultural capital reserves experienced by Agata and Kimberly respectively first requires an understanding of the sub-role(s) adopted in their cross-lingual exchanges. As I stated in section 4.2.2, when working in locations other than schools, the MELI’s role is predominantly that of interpreter. This is not merely a role assumed tacitly as MELIs are expressly requested to provide an interpreting service. Therefore, the only sub-role possible for MELIs to assume when interpreting outside of schools is that of intermediary, and so this was the only sub-role possible for Agata to assume in her situation. Kimberly, on the other hand, working as interpreter in the classroom, had the choice of assuming a range of sub-roles and switching between them as befitted her task and interlocutor(s). As I explained in section 4.2.2, these sub-roles include pedagogue and pedagogical assistant, as well as intermediary. Thus, although both Agata and Kimberly share the same organisational role of MELI, the only sub-role common to these examples is intermediary. This suggests that it is the assumed sub-role rather than the organisational role that determines the extent to which Agata and Kimberly can operationalise their reserves of cultural capital other than the purely linguistic. I now expand upon this suggestion with further reference to Bourdieu.

In section 2.5.5, I established that Bourdieu (1977a; 1991) sees the value of any form of capital as being linked to its potential to be converted from one form to another. Skeggs (2004a) describes this value as exchange value. According to Bourdieu, capital can only be exchanged, or converted into other forms of capital, if the right context or field
exists. Bourdieu explains that a person’s position in a social space can be defined according to the amounts of cultural, economic and social capitals available for them and their interlocutors to convert into symbolic capital. This implies that the interaction of these various types of capital is what enables people to act, or not, in particular fields or contexts. However, in analysing Kimberly’s and Agata’s statements, I would argue that it is not just the interaction of these various types of capital, but also the interaction of the components of these types of capital in their respective sub-role(s), that enable them to act.

Kimberly is located in a school classroom; Agata in a health authority class. Whatever economic and social capital they each have, in the form of wealth and social connections, is of no consequence in either location. Therefore, it can only be the cultural capital they possess that enables them to make an exchange in order to acquire the symbolic capital that enables them to speak in their own voice (Janssens and Steyaert, 2014). However, if we regard cultural capital purely at this macro level, then there is no other form of capital with which it can be exchanged. Therefore, I argue that cultural capital has to be deconstructed and analysed at the level of its components to understand where the exchange is taking place.

As I explained in section 2.4.4, forms of cultural capital include language, professional qualifications and experience. Experience also includes life experience, which may not include the attainment of professional training or qualifications, as I explained in section 4.3.6 using the example of Akbar interpreting for doctors in a diabetes case. Therefore my empirical data suggest it is the interaction of these cultural capital components that produces symbolic capital in these instances. Furthermore, the MELIs’ assumption of sub-roles in different social settings, explained in section 4.2.2, also appears to be significant when it comes to operationalising their cultural capital components. This understanding enables me to explain what is happening in Kimberly’s and Agata’s respective classrooms and why this results in the former MELI’s cross-lingual communication experience being positive and the latter negative.

As explained above, when working in the school classroom, Kimberly can assume various sub-roles including pedagogue, pedagogical assistant and intermediary. Kimberly can move between these sub-roles, hence creating different social
relationships, and thus different Bourdieusian fields in the same classroom, to suit the task at hand. As I explained in section 4.3.5, different forms of capital assume different values according to the field in which they are used. Thus, moving between the sub-roles of pedagogical assistant and pedagogue enables Kimberly to create different fields, which enable her to operationalise her linguistic capital together with her professional expertise, to the extent required to convert them into symbolic capital. This enables her to speak to the teacher and child to provide both with support.

Following Bourdieu (1991), Kimberly can make herself heard because her assumed sub-role of pedagogical assistant affords her the right to speak in this field and her listener (the pedagogue) considers she is worthy of attention. This can be seen as a form of power that Kimberly has in this communicative situation. She is able to speak not only because of her ability to mechanically encode and decode messages by using her reserves of linguistic capital, but also because of the rights and authorities afforded to her by each field created in the classroom. Thus, her utterance is not merely an utterance of language. It is a performative utterance because what she says has value within the respective field. The educational institution with which the fields are associated authorise her to speak and others in the fields recognise this authority.

In contrast, the health authority’s antenatal classroom only enables Agata to assume the sub-role of intermediary. She has only one form of social relationship, creating just one type of Bourdieusian field. This field does not enable Agata to combine her linguistic capital and cultural capital (professional expertise), since the latter is not seen as having any form of value in this field. Therefore she has no opportunity to convert her cultural capital into symbolic capital. This is evidenced by her explaining that she cannot add anything to the message that she believes is being inadequately communicated by the nurse. Agata does not have the same power in the health authority classroom that Kimberly has in the school classroom. Agata is therefore unable to speak with her own voice because this field affords her no such right or authority. Her utterance is less of a performative utterance because what she says has little value within the field.

These two examples illustrate a potential problem in assuming that linguistic ability, or linguistic capital, facilitates cross-lingual exchanges. Merely seeing cross-lingual communication as a mechanical exercise of encoding and decoding utterances
overlooks the possibility that some utterances may not even be possible. My analysis illustrates Bourdieu’s view that the competence of actual speakers is not only based on their (linguistic) ability to generate an unlimited sequence of grammatically well-formed sentences, but also on their "capacity to produce expressions which are appropriate for particular situations" (Thompson, 1991: 7). In other words, competence is the ability to produce expressions appropriate to context. Both Agata and Kimberly are linguistically competent in the lingua franca of English. Yet, although they share this common linguistic resource, it does not afford them linguistic equality. This is because, as Grenfell (2012c) argues, Bourdieu did not consider that linguistic form could speak for itself. It is Kimberly’s field that affords her the capacity to produce expressions appropriate for her situation, where Agata’s does not. Therefore, they do not share linguistic equality since Kimberly is seen as having competence, whereas Agata is not.

6.6 Chapter summary

This chapter has extended my findings in the previous two chapters to explore how meaning is made by MECOS team members and the extent to which they are able to speak in their own voice in cross-lingual exchanges. In section 6.2, I explained the significance of interpersonal relationships and assumed sub-roles in meaning-making. I drew on Williams’ (2008) discussion of interlanguage pragmatics and Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory to explain how assuming these sub-roles permit team members involved in cross-lingual communication to change their social status. I also drew parallels with Phipps (2007), explaining that the particular sub-roles of pedagogue-pupil create a language education opportunity for the ‘pupil’ as meaning is made. The ability team members have to change their social status enables them to maintain, extend or reduce the social distance between themselves and their interlocutors, thus affording them varying degrees of pragmatic competence in meaning-making.

In section 6.3, I explained the principal meaning-making methods used by MECOS team members to understand others, subdividing these into methods used least and most. In exploring methods used least, I drew further on ICP theory to provide one explanation of why participants may be experiencing these methods as less effective. In
exploring methods used most, I explained how a combination of pragmatic competence and culture appears to be involved in methods such as seeking clarification and modelling being experienced as more effective. For the method of using context, I explained the involvement of Hall’s (1989) concept of high-context and low-context culture and communication. Furthermore, I explained how Bourdieusian forms of capital are operationalised to facilitate the provision of context with which to assist meaning-making.

In section 6.4, I explained the meaning-making methods used by MECOS team members to make themselves understood. Again, I drew upon ICP theory, explaining how team members guard against misunderstanding by carefully considering salience of meaning and semantic transparency in their cross-lingual exchanges. For the method of checking understanding, I noted how non-verbal language is used in preference to more overt methods. Here, I referred back to the language choice of non-verbal communication discussed in section 5.2.5 and explained how this provides team members with another method of meaning-making.

Finally in section 6.5, I applied Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) theory of social practice to two specific empirical examples to argue that cultural capital reserves may not always guarantee a positive cross-lingual communication experience for MELIs. I explained how Kimberly’s assumption of different sub-roles in the same work location enabled her to create different Bourdieusian fields. These in turn facilitated the interaction of forms of cultural capital, authorising her to speak in her own voice. I contrasted this with the experience of Agata who had only one sub-role at her disposal, which in turn frustrated the interaction of her reserves of cultural capital, thus denying her any authority to speak in her own voice. Thus, where combinations of cultural capital components have hitherto appeared to increase participants’ chances of a positive cross-lingual communication experience, I explained in this section why experiences can also be negative.

In the next chapter, I conclude my thesis by summarising my research findings, detailing my contribution to academic knowledge and suggesting future research trajectories.
CHAPTER 7 Conclusion

This thesis has presented a multi-layered investigation of the cross-lingual world of an organisational team employed in a public sector context in the UK. Its distinctive contribution emerges from the novel application and extension of the concept of ‘languaging’ (Phipps, 2007) to an underexplored domestic organisational setting for the study of linguistic diversity. The extant literature I consulted pays relatively little attention to cross-lingual communication at work and even less to the people undertaking it. Unsurprisingly, much of the attention resides in international business and management (IB&M). Much less consideration is given by scholars of organisation studies, even though this thesis has stressed that languages are an increasing concern for domestic organisations. Furthermore, the language problem is largely seen as one of mechanical translation to be solved with mechanical solutions, taking no account of the people involved. In contrast, this thesis has argued that cross-lingual communication is a person-centred practice and that people’s practices and experiences in this regard are significant for the jobs they do.

This chapter provides an overall conclusion to the thesis by summarising the key points from each chapter. From the literature I reviewed in chapter 2, I summarise the key underlying assumptions that this thesis has challenged and the conceptual framework used to formulate, situate and answer my research questions. I then summarise and justify the methodological choices I made to answer my research questions, as detailed in chapter 3, including their limitations and implications for my analysis. From there, I move to summarise the findings from each of my three research questions, detailed in chapters 4, 5 and 6. The chapter closes with a statement of the contribution made by my research and suggested trajectories for future research in this area.

7.1 Summary of extant knowledge and conceptual framework

Given the aim of this thesis, I needed to understand what was already known about cross-lingual communication and how I would explore it. Therefore, chapter 2 began by reviewing the IB&M and diversity management (DM) literature to explore international
and domestic perspectives. This identified two key underlying assumptions, which this thesis has challenged. The first assumption underlying the IB&M literature is that cross-lingual communication problems are language-centred. However, in noting discussions of challenges, including linguistic ability and fatigue, I argued for cross-lingual communication to be considered as a person-centred practice. The second assumption underlying the DM literature is that language can be conflated with culture and separated from people, even though some DM research suggests that linguistic diversity is a separate problem experienced by people. In contrast, I argued that language cannot be separated from the people using it and, though associated with culture, should be decoupled from it. This argument forms the basis of my exploration of the significance of culture’s involvement with language in cross-lingual exchanges.

In considering culture’s involvement, I needed to understand how it should be conceptualised and how it is operationalised in cross-lingual encounters. In conceptualising culture, I do not see it as fixed, rooted in national characteristics and passively embodied. Instead I argued that MECOS team members use their experiences from all aspects of their personal and professional lives to actively construct culture in this workplace. Subsequently, in operationalising culture, I rejected intercultural communication (ICC) theories underpinned by positivist, objectivist concepts of culture, favouring intercultural pragmatics (ICP) theory. The two main reasons for this were firstly because ICP theory conceptualises culture as an ongoing construction. Secondly it views cross-lingual interaction as a social activity at the level of individual interpersonal encounters.

Chapter 2 went on to build the conceptual framework used to conduct my study and analyse my data. Here, I explained the two main reasons why Phipps’ (2007) concept of languaging is pivotal to this thesis. Firstly, it considers language as a means of relationship building; thus it is person-centred. Secondly, it views language skills as embodied; thus people and language cannot be separated. This concept therefore enabled me to challenge the assumption underlying the IB&M literature that cross-lingual communication problems are language-centred and the assumption underlying the DM literature that language can be separated from people.
Regarding the latter argument, I followed Phipps in invoking Bourdieu’s (1977a) concept of habitus to augment my conceptual framework. This enabled me to explain how linguistic skills are embodied, arguing that they are amongst the set of dispositions we learn and assimilate for taking action in the world. Also following Phipps, I identified Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concepts of capital and fields as a means of exploring how culture and language skills are mobilised at the level of individual cross-lingual exchanges as people move between different workplace contexts. I argued that language, as a subcategory of cultural capital, is separate from other forms of cultural capital, whilst being inextricably linked to them. Thus I explained how conceptualising culture as capital provided a means of analysing the interrelatedness of language and culture, whilst distinguishing between them. Furthermore, I explained how this capital acquires different values as people move between different social, and hence workplace, contexts. Chapter 2 finally introduced de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space as a practised place as a means of exploring how linguistic capital in particular is operationalised and experienced through movement between languages and different workplace settings. Given the richness of my conceptual framework, I summarised its content and application in this thesis in Table 1 in section 2.5.7.

Chapter 2 closed with the following three research questions, formulated from my review of the foregoing literature:

1. How, where and with whom is cross-lingual communication practised and experienced in the multilingual MECOS team? How is culture involved?
2. How are languages chosen and how are languages and languaging experienced in this team?
3. How is meaning made via cross-lingual communication in this team?

7.2 Summary of methodological choices, implications and limitations

Chapter 3 began by explaining the philosophical context in which I investigated the foregoing research questions. In adopting an ontological position of constructionism and an epistemological position of interpretivism, I identified a qualitative methodology as appropriate. This is because, rather than representing populations or generalising
findings, I have sought to explore the cross-lingual communication phenomenon within a specific team and understand how it is experienced from the team members’ point of view. I explained why the case study was the most appropriate research design and also the benefits and limitations of my three data generation methods.

Firstly, I explained that semi-structured interviews gave participants the opportunity to talk freely about their experiences. However, for the non-native English speakers, interviews were not undertaken in their own language. I explained the benefits and limitations of the alternatives of using interpreters or conducting interviews in English and why I concluded the latter option was favourable for this project. Furthermore, I explained that, though time-consuming, transcribing some interview data gave me a valuable insight in experiencing participants’ languaging first-hand. It also enabled me to become immersed in my data prior to analysing it.

Secondly, I explained that participant observation enabled me to observe cross-lingual communication in action. However, for logistical and ethical reasons, this was limited to team meetings. In practice, these meetings involved fewer cross-lingual exchanges than envisaged, thus negating conversation analysis as a means of data analysis. However, meetings provided evidence, in particular, of language use and meaning-making methods, which informed my subsequent analysis. Thirdly, I explained how the use of language diaries arose as a data generation method whilst in the field. In reflecting firstly on participants’ difficulty of recalling specific examples of languaging experiences in interviews and secondly on the limitations of reported information, I explained how diaries might enrich my data. In subsequently discussing the problems encountered with this method, I explained why these benefits were limited in practice.

Chapter 3 continued by explaining thematic content analysis as my chosen data analysis method. In particular, I explained how this facilitated my understanding of participants’ lived experiences. Furthermore, transcribing some interview data enabled me to become quickly immersed in this, facilitating my identification of emerging themes. I explained my coding method and inductive approach that enabled the generation of key themes. I then explained how I used NVivo 9 to assist my detailed analysis.
Finally, chapter 3 considered what constitutes ethical, reliable and valid research. I explained the care taken throughout this thesis to ensure participants were fully aware of and consenting to their involvement in my study and how confidentiality and anonymity have been maintained as far as possible. I also explained how I sought to satisfy reliability and validity criteria by means of thoroughly documenting all project stages and using participant validation as a means of ensuring people felt fairly represented.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 presented my data analysis pertaining to each of my three research questions, in conjunction with the literature I consulted. I summarise my findings from each of these research questions in turn in the following section.

7.3 Summary of research findings and limitations of analysis

7.3.1 Research question 1

How, where and with whom is cross-lingual communication practised and experienced in the multilingual MECOS team? How is culture involved?

As identified in chapter 4, there are three locations where members of the Multi Ethnic Community Support (MECOS) team practice and experience cross-lingual communication. At head office, team members communicate almost exclusively with each other. In school, they communicate less with each other and more with children, educational personnel and parents. In other locations, they communicate almost exclusively with non-MECOS team members.

In analysing team members’ accounts of how they practise and experience cross-lingual communication, I followed Cohen and Cooper’s (1986) typology of tourist roles to argue that, within their overarching organisational role as Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediaries (MELIs), these participants tacitly assume the sub-roles of colleague, pupil, pedagogue, pedagogical assistant and intermediary as they move from one workplace context to another. Similarly, the Team Leader (TL) and Educational Advisers (EAs) take on the sub-roles of either colleague or pedagogue. Therefore, I concluded that cross-lingual communication is practised and experienced according to
participants’ adopted sub-roles, rather than their organisational roles, in cross-lingual encounters.

To address the second part of this research question, chapter 4 considered culture’s involvement from national culture to forms of Bourdieusian cultural capital. I argued that various definitions of culture were evidently at work, sometimes in the construction of the MECOS team’s culture as well as in cross-lingual exchanges. Rather than referring to national culture as a static form of categorisation, I argued, following Ailon-Souday and Kunda (2003), that MECOS team members use it as an idea, or symbolic resource, to assist task completion in two key ways. Firstly, my analysis found that non-native English-speaking (NNS) MELIs draw on the idea of national culture to lead classroom activities. Secondly, it found that native English-speaking (NS) MECOS team members believe that national cultural backgrounds may facilitate or impede mutual understanding. In the latter case, they use the idea to take action to facilitate understanding. A key limitation to this analysis is that it was not always clear what participants meant by culture. My analysis and findings are therefore based on the view of culture as conceptualised in this thesis, which may not be the view of my participants.

I subsequently analysed how culture is constructed in the MECOS team, drawing also on Schneider et al.’s (2014) concept of interacting spheres of culture and Holliday’s (1999) concept of small culture. Here, I argued that the team’s organisational context of education is used as an idea to actively construct a team culture that supports MELIs’ linguistic development whilst facilitating cross-lingual communication for everyone. I also argued that, in contrast to much of the DM literature, the MECOS team culture exhibits diversity as a shared, positive experience that is marked by language, amongst other things. However, one limitation here is that I had little means of substantiating the positive view of culture reported. Although I observed such positive behaviour in team meetings, I qualify my analysis by acknowledging that my presence may have changed participants’ behaviour.

In developing my analysis, I drew on Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory to explore how team members’ previous involvement in different professional, and other, cultures, might shape how they practise and experience their current cross-lingual exchanges. I argued
that the team’s culture, or interculture, is constructed based on everyone’s prior life experiences. These experiences are used to take a pragmatic approach to communication, with participants adapting the way they speak in different situations. In so doing, they seek to maximise understanding without compromising the team’s interculture of inclusiveness that continues to be constructed.

I subsequently analysed how team members’ prior cultural experiences play out at the level of face-to-face cross-lingual exchanges by referring to the interaction of different forms of Bourdiesian (1977a; 1991) cultural capital. In recruiting the MELIs, I noted that linguistic capital was a key form of cultural capital required. However, I followed Bourdieu’s (1977b) concept of a linguistic marketplace to argue that this linguistic capital was not valued intrinsically. Instead, it was valued according to how the other forms of cultural capital MELI candidates possessed interacted with their linguistic capital. I thus outlined how culture was involved in cross-lingual recruitment interview exchanges.

In analysing cross-lingual communication post-recruitment, I argued that the interaction of forms of cultural capital continues to shape cross-lingual communication practice and experience within the MECOS team. Whilst sufficient and relevant linguistic capital is required, I found that other relevant forms of cultural capital interacting with linguistic proficiency and vocabulary could facilitate their cross-lingual communication. Conversely, insufficient reserves of forms of cultural capital could hinder their practice. I argued this was also the case for cross-lingual communication outside the MECOS team, where the outcome was notably successful when relevant forms of cultural capital were interacting with linguistic capital.

Finally, I presented evidence to argue that the way in which cultural capital is acquired can also shape the practice and experience of cross-lingual communication. I gave the example of where Akbar was responsible for communicating a mathematical learning process but initially had difficulty doing this. I explained that this was because the particular form of cultural capital he had acquired in his home country to undertake the process was different from the form required in this country to explain it. He therefore had to re-acquire that cultural capital by repeating the learning process in his new
environment. I argued that this was necessary for him to be able to successfully communicate that process cross-lingually between teacher and child.

As before, a key limitation to my analysis of this interaction of forms of cultural capital is that it relies upon individuals remembering and summarising their experiences. As I was unable to observe team members’ cross-lingual exchanges anywhere other than in team meetings, I could not analyse any naturally occurring instances of the interaction of forms of cultural capital.

7.3.2 Research question 2

How are languages chosen and how are languages and languaging experienced in this team?

Chapter 5 identified that MECOS team members communicate principally with each other using the lingua franca of English. However, they also choose to use other shared languages, their own native languages and non-verbal language, where possible or deemed appropriate. Following Warren (2012), my analysis found that MELIs choose language, or combinations of languages, according to the interaction of three phenomena, namely, assumed sub-roles, work context and communicative intention. Furthermore, I followed Snow (2004) to argue that MELIs can negotiate language choice because of the language ideology produced in their various work contexts. MELIs who share the same native language may choose to code-switch to obtain clarification or mental respite. They may also choose to code-mix to facilitate conversation flow or assist schoolchildren’s language development. However, and consistent with Kecskes’ (2012) ICP theory, my analysis also found that the choice of which language to mobilise is made according to what is pragmatically useful in each cross-lingual encounter. I argued that MELIs ascertain pragmatic usefulness by considering the status afforded to them by their tacitly assumed sub-role, its relationship to that of their interlocutor(s) and the resulting social distance and symmetry or asymmetry of status between them. I also found that non-verbal language, particularly facial expression, is used in conjunction with the lingua franca, code-switching and code-mixing. As well as helping to check understanding, some participants also claim it can indicate whether the reason for code-switching is positive or negative.
I also explained in chapter 5 how different language choices result in different experiences of language. My analysis found that the *lingua franca* of English is experienced as a hierarchically ordered set of language registers or sub-languages, rather than as a single linguistic medium. Furthermore, I found that MELIs experience a baseline register of English, as learned in their home countries, which precedes the most basic register reported in the literature I consulted. This experience resulted in some participants feeling robbed of confidence and linguistic ability when they came to experience English as spoken in England. I also found that the English of professional life is experienced as technical and more complex than everyday English. Thus, I argued that considering language merely as a code to be learned is of limited value, since my analysis suggested that improving experiences of this technical register requires familiarity with context.

Finally, my analysis in chapter 5 explained how MECOS team members experience languaging and the significance this has for their cross-lingual communication experiences. I extended Phipps’ (2007) argument that languages are used to develop and maintain relationships by arguing that MECOS team members undertake this relationship work according to the sub-roles assumed in each relationship, in order to maintain the necessary symmetry or asymmetry of status. MELIs thus experience languaging as easier or more difficult according to their sub-roles and relationships developed and not just according to their linguistic proficiency. My analysis identified that moving between languages can feel onerous and I extended de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space as a practised place to explain this movement as one between linguistic spaces. I argued that, although the results of this movement are audible, efforts to achieve it are embodied. Thus, others may not be aware of the effort involved, unless it is expressed through facial expressions, for example, a look of confusion.

Furthermore, I argued that MELIs may be more or less aware of this movement according to their linguistic skills. I explained, following Volk *et al.* (2014), that this is because less developed linguistic skills require controlled mental processes, whereas, for well-developed linguistic skills, mental processes are more automatic. I argued that MELIs’ feelings of tiredness and difficulties in multitasking may be attributed to them requiring more controlled mental processes when languaging, thus reducing their working memory capacity to undertake other tasks simultaneously. My analysis also
found that feelings of confidence appear to be linked with the MELIs’ languaging experiences and that positive and negative feelings experienced when languaging can feed into future languaging practice. Given MELIs’ reports of fluctuating confidence levels, I argued that this suggests that their confidence is not entirely linked to linguistic ability and that sub-roles may also be significant for confidence levels and hence languaging experiences.

Finally, chapter 5 argued that languaging in the MECOS team is experienced through team members’ acknowledgement of it and action upon it. Languaging is almost unanimously and principally acknowledged through accent. By applying de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space as a practised place to my analysis, I argued that understanding accents requires all team members to move between different linguistic spaces created within the lingua franca to surmount the challenge of receiving another person’s languaging attempts. In acting upon languaging, my analysis found two techniques being practised by MECOS team members. The first technique used, particularly by the NSs, I called ‘supportive verification’. This is where NSs check their understanding of MELIs languaging efforts, whilst seeking not to undermine them. In this way, I argued, NSs seek to foster a positive languaging experience for MELIs. The second technique, used by all team members, I called ‘mental adjustment’. This is when team members use their own knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to mentally fill in gaps or correct errors made by the person who is languaging. I argued that this is a similar attempt to foster a positive languaging experience by seeking to empathise with and avoid causing embarrassment to the person languaging. In summary, I argued this acknowledgement of and action upon other people’s languaging efforts demonstrates that cross-lingual communication within the MECOS team is not merely a transactional exercise of sending and receiving messages. Instead, it is a collaborative process through which team members seek to maintain their relationships and maximise positive languaging experiences.

My findings from chapter 5 are limited, like those from chapter 4, in relying largely upon experiences reported by participants and only observed by myself to a limited extent. I must therefore acknowledge that my findings may be nuanced by participants’ desire to paint a positive picture.
7.3.3 Research question 3

*How is meaning made via cross-lingual communication in this team?*

Chapter 6 built on findings from chapters 4 and 5 to explore how meaning is made in the MECOS team and the extent to which team members are able to speak with their own ‘voice’. I began by defining meaning-making as a dynamic, social and negotiated process (Tietze et al., 2003). I then used this definition to explore the importance of interpersonal relationships for meaning-making from participants’ explicit references in interview data. Having argued in chapter 5 that these relationships are constructed through tacitly assumed sub-roles, my analysis in chapter 6 proceeded by exploring the involvement of these sub-roles in meaning-making. Following Kecskes (2012) and Williams (2008), I argued that these sub-roles afford MECOS team members an awareness of each party’s social status in their cross-lingual exchanges. In turn, this awareness affords them the pragmatic competence of being able to make meaning in their cross-lingual exchanges. For this reason, I argued that newly recruited MELIs may initially be unaware of these sub-roles and thus lack pragmatic competence and meaning-making ability in the early stages of assuming their organisational role.

In cross-lingual exchanges outside the MECOS team, I found that sub-roles continue to be significant for meaning-making. However, my analysis suggested they may be less clear in these instances. I subsequently argued a lack of clarity of sub-role limits pragmatic competence, resulting in uncertainty regarding how to approach meaning-making. From this analysis I further argued that meaning-making opportunities appear to be enhanced when MELIs’ status is higher than that of their interlocutors and restricted when their status is lower.

The chapter continued by analysing meaning-making methods used to understand others. Those less preferred included reference material, which MELIs find is of limited use in the moment of face-to-face interactions. Following Kecskes (2012), I argued that this is because coherence is a collaborative process between people and not between the words uttered. My analysis identified three preferred meaning-making methods: seeking clarification, modelling and using context. I argued that the preference for seeking clarification appears to be connected to the sub-role assumed by communicating parties,
their shared understanding of it and the idea of culture used as a symbolic resource in assuming it. Nevertheless, I found that MELIs use this method judiciously and consider the importance of the message so as not to cause nuisance or disruption to people or proceedings.

I found that the second method of modelling is used by EAs and the TL for two main reasons: firstly as a form of meaning-making to ensure their own and others’ understanding; secondly as a pedagogical method for enhancing MELIs’ linguistic capital reserves. In using this method, I argued that the EAs and TL appear to operationalise their pragmatic competence in two ways. In the first instance, they assume the sub-role of colleague to eradicate the social distance between themselves and the MELIs. In the second instance, they assume the sub-role of pedagogue to minimise the social distance sufficiently to present themselves as "more capable peers" (Williams, 2008: 60).

For the third preferred meaning-making method, I found evidence of two forms of context being used. Firstly, I applied Hall’s (1989) concept of high-context and low-context cultures to argue that context internalised within individuals is used to make meaning. I used empirical evidence to argue that meaning-making can be frustrated when this type of context is limited; for example, when communicating parties are unfamiliar with each other. Secondly, I followed Bourdieu (1991) to argue that meaning-making relies on forms of cultural capital in addition to linguistic capital. From this I concluded that cultural capital provides another form of context for meaning-making.

Chapter 6 continued by analysing how MECOS team members make themselves understood. Here, I presented evidence of two meaning-making methods at work. Firstly, team members, particularly the EAs and TL, guard against misunderstanding by simplifying their language, making efforts to be clear and pre-empting misunderstanding. Following Kecskes (2012), I argued that this method recognises the need for salience of meaning. Thus team members seek to use language that is semantically transparent and tied to their interlocutors’ prior experience or situational context. Secondly, team members check understanding, consistently using non-verbal
language as their cue. However, they use this method judiciously to avoid causing embarrassment or other negative feelings.

Chapter 6 closed with an analysis of two contrasting experiences by MELIs to argue that, whilst cultural capital reserves usually facilitate meaning-making and hence cross-lingual communication, their use may be frustrated. I argued that the sub-roles assumed in each workplace context enable MECOS team members to create different Bourdieusian fields within the same context. These fields enable or inhibit the MELIs in operationalising the constituent components of their cultural capital reserves. I continued by arguing that Kimberly’s ability to create different fields in her workplace context enables her to operationalise more of her cultural capital reserves. This facilitates her acquisition of symbolic capital, enabling her to speak with her own ‘voice’. This contrasts with Agata who is unable to acquire any symbolic capital; therefore her own ‘voice’ is silenced. I thus argued that this illustrates the fallacy of considering cross-lingual communication as a mechanical exercise of encoding and decoding utterances, since some utterances may not even be possible in some contexts.

Having summarised my research findings, the final section of this chapter states the contributions made by this thesis to academic knowledge and suggests possibilities for further research.

7.4 Thesis contributions and future research trajectories

This thesis is a novel application of Phipps’ (2007) concept of languaging in an organisational context featuring considerable linguistic diversity. The contributions detailed in this section use languaging to offer insights into a complex multilingual organisational world. Furthermore, in refining and extending Phipps’ concept, this thesis makes a theoretical contribution. Its fine-grained analysis of how forms of Bourdieusian cultural capital play out in the MECOS team’s languaging practices demonstrates the advantage of analysing cultural capital at the level of its constituent components. In so doing, this thesis sheds new light on culture’s involvement in cross-lingual communication at a level of detail previously unexplored in the literature I consulted. Additionally, by extending de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space as a
practised place to this workplace, this thesis draws attention to the inevitable need, when practising and/or experiencing languaging, for all team members to move between each other’s linguistic spaces. In so doing, it exposes the effort associated with languaging, which is otherwise embodied and thus largely invisible to others. It also identifies the significance of this effort for team members in undertaking their assigned tasks.

As initially stated in section 1.2, I argue that the foregoing contributions are important to organisation studies in following Parker’s (2000) argument that organisation is a process of making, rather than something that exists as a bounded entity or a cohesive whole. To this, I would add that organisations are made by people. Therefore, in putting people at the centre of my research, this thesis makes a firm and unique contribution to organisation studies as it investigates the process of organisation making through languaging, which has not been the focus of any previous study.

In situating my contribution within the field of organisation studies, I have argued that scholars in this field need to take greater ownership of the language issue. This is essential, given that – for example – UK domestic organisations are inevitably involved in the globalised mobility of labour, resulting particularly from the presence and continuing influx of non-native English-speaking migrant workers. By applying Phipps’ concept of languaging and extending it from tourism to a domestic workplace, this thesis demonstrates how language diversity at work can be considered at the level of individuals rather than as a mechanical problem. In so doing, it sheds light on the importance of roles and relationships in this team’s cross-lingual exchanges, thereby demonstrating that cross-lingual communication success does not just depend on language. Furthermore, with a person-centred approach to language which takes account of the context in which it is used, this thesis argues that not only is such an approach significant for the individuals concerned. It is also an important consideration for the organisation in which they work.

Applying the concept of languaging also enables this thesis to contribute to discussion amongst IB&M scholars. In following recent formative turns in IB&M research noted by Brannen et al. (2014), it illustrates how the way in which language is conceptualised shapes the way it is researched. By conceptualising language from the perspective of
languaging, I demonstrate how language can be investigated as a social practice, rather than as a linguistic code. As well as applying Phipps’ concept of languaging to my workplace study and extending it from the field of tourism to that of organisation studies, I also expand upon this concept as I engage with some of the key theories in Phipps’ study and apply them to my own. This enables me to extend my intellectual contribution in the following ways.

Phipps (2007) draws upon Bourdieu’s (1977a; 1991) concept of capital, conceiving of language as linguistic capital and hence a form of personal asset. However, her discussion isolates linguistic capital from other forms of cultural capital and hence does not investigate their interaction in communicative exchanges. This thesis expands upon Phipps’ work by applying Bourdieu’s concept to analyse the MECOS team’s cross-lingual exchanges. In so doing, it demonstrates that cross-lingual communication is not merely undertaken using linguistic capital. Instead, communication and meaning-making are achieved through the interaction of linguistic capital with other components of cultural capital. Thus, it is not different forms of capital that are exchanged but rather different components of cultural capital in particular. My empirical site enabled me to undertake a fine-grained analysis of the workings of Bourdieusian capital. In finding that components of cultural capital are exchanged in cross-lingual interactions, I provide a level of detail of the workings of Bourdieu’s concept of capital that so far remains undiscussed in the literature I consulted.

Additionally, my analysis of Bourdieusian capital enables me to contribute to discussion amongst DM scholars, who frequently conflate linguistic diversity with cultural diversity, thereby rendering any language problems invisible. I follow IB&M scholars in arguing for language to be decoupled from culture and call for DM scholars to do the same. In the literature I consulted, DM studies provide evidence of challenges associated with linguistic diversity. Nevertheless, DM scholars do not consider language as a distinct marker of diversity. In investigating language and culture as two separate, albeit interlinked, phenomena, this thesis therefore contributes to DM scholarship by demonstrating that both phenomena are at work in organisation making. Therefore, linguistic diversity should not be subsumed within cultural diversity.
The final contribution made by this thesis comes from its engagement with de Certeau’s (2011) concept of space as a practised place; a core element of Phipps’ (2007) study. Phipps uses the concept to illustrate how tourist maps assist movement through unfamiliar geographical places. Following de Certeau, she argues that as we move through such places in practice, we transform them into spaces by furnishing them with our experiences. This thesis expands on Phipps’ usage of de Certeau to argue that language itself is a place which is transformed into a linguistic space when it is languaged. This argument is premised on de Certeau’s (2011: 117) assertion that "space is like the word when it is spoken". This thesis therefore makes a further contribution by extending the relevance of de Certeau’s assertion to organisation studies. It does this by using empirical evidence to demonstrate how the word (or language) is transformed from a place to a space when it is spoken (or languaged) and what this means for the people involved in that process.

Given the foregoing contributions made by this thesis, one final question remains: what next? As noted in sections 7.2 and 7.3, my methodological choices and research findings were subject to some limitations. Future research may wish to address these limitations and I make the following three suggestions in this regard.

The realisation that it would not be feasible to observe cross-lingual communication in the MECOS team’s various work locations was initially a disappointment. This meant that much of my data generation was limited to reported experiences, which were also limited by participants’ recall. Furthermore, it limited my opportunity to observe naturally occurring talk. Therefore, my first suggestion would be for research to be conducted within an organisation which could provide the opportunity of observing cross-lingual communication first-hand. A sociolinguistic analysis of data generated in this way would enrich the analysis presented in this thesis and develop the discussions I have begun.

The present case study is also limited to one team situated in the field of education. As I explained in chapter 4, this field provides some of the cultural context used by the team to construct its own culture. Having discussed culture’s involvement in cross-lingual exchanges, the data generated are arguably shaped by this cultural context. My second suggestion is therefore for further study to be situated in organisations within a different
cultural context, to investigate the significance of the construction of a different organisational culture in employees’ languaging experiences.

Finally, there is considerable linguistic diversity amongst my research participants. However, very few of them share the same native language. This limited my opportunity to explore how people sharing the same native language might use this to make sense of their languaging practice. Therefore, my third suggestion is for a future study to be conducted within an organisation that employs a linguistically diverse workforce that includes a higher proportion of people who share the same native language.

With the exploration documented in this thesis and the foregoing suggestions for further research projects, I have demonstrated a clear need for scholars of organisation studies to continue investigation into languages, and languaging, at work.

I look forward to continuing that discussion.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1: MECOS team members’ biographical details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team member</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Home country</th>
<th>Native language</th>
<th>Other languages spoken*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pauline</td>
<td>Team Leader (TL)</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol</td>
<td>Educational Adviser (EA)</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>EA</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agata</td>
<td>Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediary (MELI)</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Polish</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akbar</td>
<td>MELI - Casual</td>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>Pashto</td>
<td>English, Farsi (also known as Dari), Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva</td>
<td>MELI - Casual</td>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>Latvian</td>
<td>English, Russian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Izabela</td>
<td>MELI - Full time</td>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>Czech</td>
<td>English, Russian</td>
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<td>Kimberly</td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>English, Japanese, Mandarin, French</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lukas</td>
<td>MELI - Casual</td>
<td>Lithuania</td>
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<td>Rana</td>
<td>MELI - Casual</td>
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<td>English</td>
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<td>Samuel</td>
<td>MELI - Casual</td>
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<td>Kinyarwanda</td>
<td>English, French, Swahili, Kirundi, Lingala</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shilpa(^{34})</td>
<td>MELI - Unconfirmed</td>
<td>Unconfirmed</td>
<td>Unconfirmed</td>
<td>English. Other languages unconfirmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>Headteacher and MECOS project sponsor</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>None</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Despite varying degrees of fluency, everyone speaks good English, this being an essential requirement for the job. Other languages listed are those in which the person has some ability. However, in many cases, people’s levels of fluency in these other languages are not as high as in English.

\(^{34}\) Shilpa left the organisation shortly after I began my data generation. Therefore, I was not able to generate any data with her and have few biographical details for her.
Appendix 2: Participant information sheet

PhD research study: participant information sheet
Researcher: Hayley Harris  Tel: 07887 853262  e-mail: heh5@le.ac.uk
Supervisor: Professor Joanna Brewis  e-mail: jpb18@le.ac.uk

Background information
My name is Hayley Harris and I am working on a PhD research study at the University of Leicester. My study is called Languages at Work and focuses on how people in an organisation manage to communicate with each other at work when they do not all share the same first language. My research focuses on the following questions:

- How and where is communication being done and experienced in an organisation between people who do not share the same first language?
- To what extent is this communication successful?
- What are the implications for an organisation where people working together do not all share the same first language?
- What problems and opportunities arise from this communication?

Invitation
I am inviting you to participate in my study as I understand you are directly involved in the type of communication described above. Whilst Countyshire County Council has not commissioned the research, they consider it to be a worthwhile investigation and have therefore kindly offered their support. In return, I shall be providing them with a report of my findings. Please rest assured that this study in no way affects any individual’s employment contract and no one will be identified in the report to the Council. The primary aim is to enable me to make a positive contribution to academic management knowledge on language use at work, since there has been little research in this area.

Ways to participate
I propose to collect the information I require in the following ways:

- Individual interviews (60-90 minutes in length)
- Focus group interviews with small groups of 5-8 people (to be confirmed)

I hope you will be able to participate in the above activities so that I may get as detailed a picture as possible of how communication is practised and experienced in different situations.

In all cases and with your permission, I will make audio recordings so that I can give my full attention to you and not be distracted by having to take detailed written notes.

Confidentiality
Absolute confidentiality will be maintained at all times. All information gathered will be used for the purpose of my research project and academic writing. Interviews will be conducted in private and in complete confidence. Similarly, your own identity and that of the organisation will remain completely anonymous in the thesis and any academic publications that result from the research. All data will be stored securely.

Thank you for agreeing to participate
Consent Form

PhD research study: Languages at Work

This information sheet and consent form is part of the informed consent process. You are requested to sign it to fulfil the University of Leicester’s ethical requirements.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate willingly. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have any questions at any time, please contact Hayley Harris, University of Leicester, telephone: 07887 853262 or e-mail heh5@le.ac.uk

Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records and reference.

Participant’s signature: ______________________
Date:________________________

Researcher’s signature:________________________
Date:________________________

Participant’s signature: ______________________
Date:________________________
Appendix 3: Interview guides

Multi Ethnic Linguistic Intermediaries (MELIs)

Personal background and language profile

Name, nationality, country of birth, the time living in UK, first language spoken, other languages?

How fluent are you in your languages (1-10)?

Do you consider yourself as bilingual/trilingual/multilingual?

What is your definition of fluent/bilingual?

Organisational role

What is your role?
- What do you do (tasks, activities, responsibilities)?
- Who with (pupils, teachers, parents, Educational Advisers (EAs), other)?
- When/where/how often?
- Duration?

Language, languaging and communication with MELIs

What languages do you choose to use in your job?
- How do you choose?
- What percentage of your time do you spend using each language chosen?

What does it feel like moving between languages?

What does it feel like working in a language that is not your mother tongue?

What do you do if you have not understood something someone has said to you?

What do you do if you have difficulty making yourself understood?

How do you ensure you understand someone/they understand you?

What is it like communicating with other MELIs?
- In English?
- Receiving their English?
- Do you correct them?

How do you experience written/telephone communication in English with EAs or colleagues?
What does it feel like when you hear MELIs speaking in a language you don’t understand?

**Power and autonomy**

When working with your MELI colleagues, how do you communicate? (language choice)

When working together, how do you decide who does what task?

Have your responsibilities changed since starting the job?

How does the situation/context affect how you communicate with each other or how you might resolve uncertainty?

---

**Educational Advisers (EAs)**

**Personal details**

Name, nationality, country of birth, first language spoken, other languages?

**Organisational role**

What is your role and how does it involve you with the MELIs?
- What do you do with the MELIs?
- Where?
- When/how often?
- Duration?

**Language, languaging and communication with MELIs**

What is it like communicating with MELIs?
- In English?
- Receiving their English?

How does your experience compare with your communications with other English-speaking colleagues?
- Do you adjust the way you speak?
- Do you correct the MELIs?

How do you make sure you understand each other?
- 1-1?
- In group situations?
- How do you ensure everyone understands each other?
What does it feel like when you hear MELIs speaking in a language you don’t understand? As you have all become more comfortable and familiar in your roles, has that changed how you talk to each other?

How do you experience written/telephone communication in English with MELIs?
- Do you make corrections/adjustments?

How does the situation/context affect how you communicate with each other or how you might resolve uncertainty?

**Recruitment of MELIs**

How did you decide on who should be full-time/casual?

How did you select the MELIs?

How big a part did language play in the selection criteria?

How did you conduct interviews? (interpreters or in English?)
How did you experience communication at that time?

How did you ensure mutual understanding?

**Power and autonomy**

Do different MELIs have different levels of autonomy based on their previous experience? (e.g. teacher training)

Do different MELIs provide different types of support or provide support in different ways (e.g. resource planning)

Do different MELIs require different types/levels of support/advice from you?

Does your involvement/type of support/level of support change according to the MELI?

Do substantives have additional responsibilities?

To what extent does a MELI’s previous experience shape their individual role/autonomy?
Appendix 4: Language diary

This is a record of my personal language experiences at work for the week commencing ___/___/2011 to assist with the PhD research project entitled Languages at Work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Where were you? (Place / location)</th>
<th>What happened? (Describe your language / communication experience and the situation in which it occurred)</th>
<th>Who was involved? (Do not give people’s names: just use “titles” e.g. teacher, parent, pupil, MELI, adviser, EWO, etc....)</th>
<th>How did it make you feel? (Describe all the emotions you felt in the situation in as much detail as you can. If possible or appropriate, also say why you think you felt like this)</th>
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</table>
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Angouri, J. (2010), "'If we know about culture it will be easier to work with one another': developing skills for handling corporate meetings with multinational participation", *Language and Intercultural Communication* 10(3): 206-224.


