

Changing practice by reform



# Changing practice by reform

The recontextualisation of the Bologna process  
in teacher education

Richard Baldwin



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## Abstract

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The purpose of the thesis is to investigate a specific case of curriculum change; that of organizing teacher training courses around learner outcomes in line with the Bologna process. The investigation is an example of a practitioner research case study and looks at how official Bologna policy messages are re-interpreted and recontextualised at the local micro level.

A variety of methods are used to collect and analyse the data produced. A form of discourse analysis, as well as a survey of research literature, is used to identify policy discourses connected with the Bologna process. At the local micro level, local documentation as well as teacher talk in planning meetings are analysed to throw light on how the Bologna process was implemented.

A number of discourses were found in policy documents; including the need to modernize higher education and to move towards a more student centred approach to learning. The thesis shows that these discourses were mediated locally by a regulative discourse portraying teachers as role models who have the task of passing on knowledge that is essential for the students to obtain before entering the profession. Instead of challenging the pedagogic identities for teachers and students, the introduction of learning outcomes acted to strengthen the fundamental vertical relations between teachers and students, cementing and confirming the level of control that teachers had over all aspects of the curriculum. Changes made in connection with the introduction of learning outcomes had a minimal influence on practice and were contested by some teacher educators. Teacher educators resisted and mediated the changes made by continuing to use their traditional practices.



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Boras 20 September 2013

Richard Baldwin

# Chapter 1: Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the influence of policy discourses on policy implementation and pedagogic practice. In this chapter I will attempt to locate the research in its theoretical and empirical fields as well as to describe the significance of the case study and the research questions.

The thesis concerns the process of policy implementation and recontextualisation, which is located within the literature on educational reform and policy studies. Empirically, the study is a specific case of curriculum change; that of organizing teacher training courses around learner outcomes in line with the Bologna process. Theoretically, the thesis is located within the field of the sociology of education and more specifically the theories of Basil Bernstein.

## Theoretical and empirical fields

Brown and Dowling (1998) describe the process of research as involving a division between theoretical and empirical fields. The theoretical field comprises general claims and debates relating to the researcher's area of interest and their specific research question. The empirical field comprises the local practices and experiences from which the researcher will make claims.

As far as my research is concerned, the theoretical field of this study is the sociology of education, while the empirical field is curriculum reform in higher education connected to the Bologna process. The local environment is a department of education within a university college in Sweden. In line with the Bologna process, from January 2008 the courses which are the focus of this thesis; for prospective teachers of English as a foreign language, were for the first time organized around student learning outcomes. In the thesis I address how official Bologna policy messages are re-interpreted and recontextualised, inspired by what Ball (1993) calls policy

trajectory studies, which ‘employ a cross-sectional rather than a single level analysis by tracing policy formulation, struggle and response from within the state itself through to the various recipients of policy’(p.51). Rather than a cross sectional analysis, my focus in this thesis is on how the Bologna process was interpreted at the micro level; which in this case is in my own field of practice.

### Research questions

My research questions are as follows:

- How is the Bologna process presented as a pedagogic discourse?
- How is the Bologna process recontextualised locally into pedagogic communication?
- How does the Bologna process interplay with practice at the micro level?

### Significance of the research

Research into the implementation of the Bologna process at both national and institutional levels has shown that instead of leading to the homogenisation of higher education in Europe, the process has been put into practice in diverse ways: in terms of speed, degree, and interpretation (European Journal of Education, 2004). Research has shown that the process has been received differently according to national policies and cultures (Witte, 2006, Zmas, 2012). Because the European countries implementing the Bologna process have different traditions and cultures; the processes of change have also been different in each country.

Institutional level case studies on the implementation of the Bologna reforms are less common, but research by Shaw, Chapman, and Rumyantseva (2011) suggests that the cultural beliefs of local staff can be important in determining how the Bologna reforms are implemented. The research found that the cultural beliefs and assumptions of instructional staff in Ukraine served as filters for new educational innovations introduced since Bologna. This research found that two foundational beliefs about the centralization



## CHAPTER 1

of authority and decision-making, and the primacy of teaching in the academic mission were central to teachers' professional identity and as a result affected the process of implementing the Bologna process at the institution. The research concluded that the danger of the Bologna reform, especially when implemented outside of Western Europe, is that

it may take away that which motivates faculty to do their work without providing them with sufficient resources to construct the meaning of their role in a new way. If that occurs, a system of higher education is in danger of losing the benefits it once enjoyed for the sake of reform without accruing the reform's benefits (p.14).

These studies show that the Bologna process has been met by a range of responses and mediated and introduced in diverse ways according to different traditions and cultures. The importance of these traditions and cultures appears to have been underplayed in policy documents. This thesis recognizes the importance of local pedagogic cultures in influencing how the Bologna process reforms are implemented at the micro level. The introduction of learning outcomes as part of the Bologna process is an intervention into the normal curriculum planning process and as such is the main way in which most university practitioners will come into contact with the Bologna reforms. The thesis looks at how local traditions can influence how the learning outcomes process is implemented and understood, as well as the influence that learning outcomes planning can have on local pedagogic practice.

This thesis is part of the response to what Marginson (2007) has called the need for detailed 'situated case studies' to better understand the dynamics of globalisation in higher education. The Bologna process reforms are part of this globalization process. Most research on the Bologna reforms has focused on national level changes and issues of convergence between national systems of higher education within Europe. Very little research has focused on how the policy discourses behind the Bologna process reforms have been interpreted at the micro level within higher education, including the reaction to learning outcomes planning. Young (2003) notes that,

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apart from a number of country-specific analyses, there has been relatively little debate about qualifications frameworks as a global phenomenon in either the policy or research literature (p.223).

This thesis is a contribution to that debate. It is also part of the debate on the influence of learning outcomes planning on academic autonomy and local practice. Karseth (2005) argues that

the underlying curriculum assumptions and new forms of curriculum management in higher education put forward by the Bologna process represent values and visions that challenge an academic content-driven curriculum based on an understanding that it is the teachers, due to their formal research qualification, who should be in charge of the content and pedagogy of the programme. Implicitly, one senses a critique of the traditional disciplinary-based curriculum as having limited relevance to students' interests and the requirements of the labour market (p.63).

As Karseth suggests, the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna reforms can be seen as a challenge to traditions of academic autonomy. More critical voices, such as Gleeson (2011), discussing the introduction of learning outcomes into all levels of Irish education, argue that there is a need for a discussion of the consequences of the reforms on practitioners. Gleeson argues that there is a need

for a critical debate around issues like: the nature of learning outcomes and their appropriateness for higher education; the nature of a university education; the values that underpin education policies at all levels; the development of process-oriented indicators (p.14).

Gleeson suggests related areas for research should include the beliefs and attitudes of the academic community in relation to curriculum design and learning outcomes and 'what compliance with Bologna has meant for faculty' (p.14).

O'Brien and Brancalone (2011) too argue for a micro level analysis of the influence of learning outcomes planning, suggesting that

one may enquire if teachers are experiencing challenges with learning outcome practice and whether aspects of their identity are being shaped by demands to engage with decontextualised

knowledge.....Given that teachers, in terms of who they are and what they do, are central to any proposed reconstruction of educational culture, this would appear to be an important source of enquiry (p.12).

The need for micro level studies into the implementation of global solutions, such as learning outcomes, into higher education is the inspiration behind this thesis. My aim is to investigate the values and discourses that underpin the Bologna reforms and the influence that these discourses and changes have on the local curriculum and on local traditions of pedagogic practice.

## The learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process

The introduction of learner outcomes into course planning is a key aspect of the Bologna process. According to Michelsen (2010) ‘outcome-based learning, originally not a part of the Bologna process eventually has grown into an issue of great political significance’ (p.161). The official Bologna process stocktaking report from 2007 claims that

If the Bologna process is to be successful in meeting the needs and expectations of learners, all countries need to use learning outcomes as a basis for their national qualifications frameworks, systems for credit transfer and accumulation, the diploma supplement, recognition of prior learning and quality assurance. This is a precondition for achieving many of the goals of the Bologna process by 2010 (DfES, 2007, p.3).

Within official policy documents the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning is presented as ‘new’, and thus good, in comparison to ‘traditional’ transmission methods which are presented as being ‘old’ and no longer acceptable. Policy documents present the organization of courses around learning outcomes as representing a move towards a more student centred approach to learning. According to one policy paper

. . . learning outcomes encapsulate a learner-centred approach and shift the focus in higher education away from the traditional teacher-

centred or institution-centred perspective (Background Paper 2009, p.16-7).

Policy documents suggest that learning outcomes can lead to improved student learning as well as argue that learning outcomes are a basis for curricular re-organisation. According to O'Brien and Brancalone (2011)

In this base/superstructure model, learning outcomes are the decisive control and power mechanism: the tool for describing and prescribing expected learning; informing learners and evaluating them; tangibly acting as a key means for setting curriculum and assessment policy, as well as teaching and learning arrangements (p.9).

Learning outcomes are presented in policy documents as the key to improving the quality of higher education. Researchers such as Karseth (2005) suggest that the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process has the potential to create new pedagogic regimes in higher education, while research by others such as that by Ensor (2004a) suggest that policy changes can be met by contesting disciplinary discourses. One of the aims of my research is to investigate how the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process is mediated and recontextualised in my own field of practice and what influences local cultures and discourses can have on the implementation of the Bologna process.

### Policy implementation

During the research period I have come to appreciate that the implementation of policy reforms is a complex process rather than a rational technical one. Viewed from this perspective, I now assume that official policy messages are re-interpreted and recontextualised at various points of the implementation process. This interactive, non-linear approach to the relationship between policy messages and policy implementation is reflected in the fact that when researching policy implementation, some analysts make a distinction between 'macro', 'meso' and 'micro' levels. According to Taylor et al (1997)

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Macro issues are seen as those which impact upon the whole policy making apparatus, for example global economic pressures, 'meso' is used to refer to intermediary levels of policy making, for example, a state education department implementing a national policy, while 'micro' usually refers to policy making at the levels of schools or classrooms. While these distinctions may sometimes be useful analytically, they will not always be appropriate as they are somewhat arbitrary and tend to oversimplify policy processes (p.44).

In this thesis my focus is on the policy discourses found at the macro level and how these are interpreted and recontextualised by the discourses and cultures found at the micro level of my own field of practice. While the meso level is far less in focus, I recognize that the meso level has an influence on how macro discourses filter through and are interpreted in the field of practice.

### The structure of the thesis

In chapter one I have introduced the theoretical and empirical fields of the thesis and located the thesis in its context of the implementation of the Bologna process in a teacher training programme in Sweden. The chapter outlines the purpose and significance of the study.

In chapter two I describe the background to the Bologna process and its implementation in Europe. The theories behind the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning are discussed as well as criticisms of the learning outcomes approach. The relationship between policy making and policy implementation is introduced. Two concepts used in the research are introduced; the concept of discourse which I use to analyse policy documents connected to the Bologna process, and the concept of recontextualisation which is used to investigate how the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process was implemented and interpreted in my own field of practice. The limitations of actor agency on social action are also discussed.

In chapter three I outline the background to the implementation of the Bologna process in Sweden, as well as the introduction and implementation of learning outcomes into course planning at Swedish universities. I describe my initial position regarding the

Bologna initiative and the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning. The case environment is described as well as the introduction and implementation of learning outcomes into course planning in my field of practice. Learning outcomes based on the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) were adopted locally as the starting point for assessing the teacher students' language proficiency in English and therefore a discussion of the CEFR is included in the chapter.

In chapter four I review the research literature. I look at research on traditions of practice within higher education, including the area of teacher education. I also look at research on language teaching approaches and theories that guide language teaching and learning within higher education. Finally, I look at research on change processes within the higher education field.

In chapter five the theoretical concepts used in the thesis are described. I describe the theories of Basil Bernstein, which are used in this study to try to answer my research questions. Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device is described, as well as others that are relevant to this research; that is classification and framing, collection and integrated codes, pedagogic identities and vertical and horizontal knowledge structures. Finally, I introduce the concept of 'practice architectures', which I use to frame my analysis of how the possibilities for change inherent in the Bologna implementation process were either enabled or constrained.

In chapter six I describe the methodological issues of the thesis. I discuss my understanding of discourse analysis, which is used in the research to identify policy discourses connected with the Bologna process. As the thesis concerns my own field of practice, practitioner research and autoethnography are described. The case study approach is discussed, as well as the range of methods that were used to produce the data and how this data was analysed.

In chapter seven I look at how European policies of Higher Education are presented and disseminated through E.U. and Bologna Process policy texts. I also look at policy texts that concern teacher education in Europe and texts on foreign language learning and in relation to the CEFR. I also include criticisms of the discourses found.

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In chapter eight I analyse how the policy discourses of the Bologna process were recontextualised and mediated at the local level. The main focus is on the influence of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning on the pedagogic relations between teachers and learners. Bernstein's concepts are used to analyse the local regulative discourse which framed the implementation of the Bologna process at the local level and the extent that the outcomes produced represent changes to the existing curriculum.

The main focus of chapter nine is on the influence that the organization of the courses around learning outcomes had on teacher educator practice. The focus is in particular on the learning outcomes adopted from the CEFR and intended to be used as the starting point for organising teaching and assessing the teacher trainer students' language proficiency in English.

In chapter ten, the final chapter, I review the research questions and how the study has attempted to address them. I summarise the key findings of the research and put them in the context of previous research on practice and change in higher education and on the implementation of the Bologna process. The chapter also takes up issues of validity and ethical issues connected to the research. Finally, I discuss the significance and implications of the findings as well as the more general question of achieving change in higher education through learning outcomes.





## Chapter 2: The Bologna process, learning outcomes and policy implementation

In this chapter I will describe the background to the Bologna process and the theories behind the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning. Criticisms of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning are also presented. The implementation of the Bologna process in Europe is discussed, as well the relationship between policy making and policy implementation. The concept of discourse is introduced which I use in the research to analyse policy documents connected to the Bologna process. I also discuss the concept of recontextualisation, which I use in this thesis to investigate how the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process was implemented and interpreted in my own field of practice.

### The Bologna process

The Bologna Process is named after the Bologna Declaration, signed in the Italian city of Bologna on 19 June 1999 by higher education ministers from 29 European countries. According to the Bologna Secretariat, Brussels (2010) website the overarching aim of the Bologna Process is

to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world. The Bologna Process unites 47 countries- all party to the European Cultural Convention and committed to the goals of the European Higher Education Area.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/about/>

The European Higher Education Area requires that all countries implement policies to ensure mutual confidence and recognition, and to enhance the quality, attractiveness and comparability of qualifications, so as to promote student and staff mobility around the European Higher Education Area. It also aims to contribute to the economic, social and political objectives of all partners in the process of promoting learning and research. More specifically, one of the main aims is thus a so-called harmonization, in which the central importance of the skills and competences that graduates bring to the labour market is also stressed.

The key points of the Bologna Process are:

- The harmonisation of qualifications to encourage European mobility and cooperation in order to guarantee and develop comparable criteria and methodologies (involving strengthening the role of quality agencies) and the fair recognition of foreign degrees and other higher education qualifications.
- The Introduction of the ECTS (European Credit Transfer System); a transfer and accumulation system that focuses on the total amount of work that students do. An academic year corresponds to 60 ECTS, assuming students devote 40 hours per week to studying.
- The same system of qualifications for all countries divided into three stages: graduate, master and PhD. Countries are required to set up national qualifications frameworks that are compatible with the overarching framework and define learning outcomes for each of the three cycles.

A key part of the attempt to achieve the aims of the Bologna process is the Tuning programme. The Tuning programme is a project funded through Socrates-Erasmus for adjusting higher education curricula, with reference to the philosophy and the objectives of the Bologna process (Gonzalez and Wagenaar, 2003, p.23). Tuning started in 2000 and involves the participation of more than 175 universities of different European countries.

The basic aim of Tuning is to elaborate a method of knowledge organisation that would enable curricular and educational structures

to be compared; both within and across fields, as well as in work places and the labour market (Gonzalez and Wagenaar, 2003, p. 25-25,54). The methodology adopted is based on the idea of learning outcomes and of competences. ‘Learning outcomes’ refer to knowledge, understanding and skills that a learner is required to know, to understand and to demonstrate after completing a longer or shorter period of learning. Learning outcomes might relate to whole programmes of study of first or second cycle or brief, distinct knowledge (modules) (Gonzalez and Wagenaar, 2003, p.24). Furthermore, it is stressed that learning outcomes should be accompanied by assessment criteria, which should constitute indicators as to whether the expected learning outcomes have been achieved. Learning outcomes together with the criteria of assessment define the minimum of requirements for awarding a degree title. Also, according to Tuning documentation, the precise description of learning outcomes facilitates the accumulation and transfer of ECTS (Gonzalez and Wagenaar, 2003, p. 259).

Competences are meant to represent what a learner can demonstratively present at the end of a learning process and are expressed in terms of knowledge and its application, attitudes and abilities – which are described by the learning outcomes of a particular curriculum. Competences are distinguished into two kinds: Generic competences, which are independent of any academic field, and the academic or subject-specific competences, which are specialized according to a particular field (Gonzalez and Wagenaar, 2003, p. 255).

The importance of developing outcomes, assessment tasks and criteria to encourage deep approaches to learning has been stressed in official policy documents relating to the Bologna process (see for example Background Paper, 2009). Policy documents present learning outcomes as a basis for curricular re-organisation. As the implementation of the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process is part of the focus of this thesis, I will next discuss the arguments for and against the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning.

## The learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning

Learning outcomes are a key aspect of the Bologna process. According to Karseth (2008), the origin of the learning outcomes approach can be traced to Tyler's *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1949) which had the aim of developing 'a rational, scientific and procedural process of curriculum development, which puts the development of educational objectives to the fore' (Karseth, 2008, p.62). Another important influence on the learning outcome approach is Bloom's *The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook 1: The Cognitive Domain* (1956) which expressed educational objectives in terms of active verbs which attempt to describe the skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes acquired by the learner.

The ideas behind the learning outcomes approach are not new and can also be traced back to behaviouristic approach, which points out the clear identification and measurement of learning and the necessity to produce observable and measurable outcomes (Adam, 2004, p. 4). In recent times, however, the learning outcomes approach is more influenced by constructivist theories, which stress that learning should be active, self-conducted, situated and social. From this perspective, teachers and trainers play the role of guides or coaches rather than instructors.

Learning outcomes are also seen as a key way of achieving curricular re-organisation; a point made in Bologna policy documents. According to the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning, learning outcomes should be aligned with learning opportunities and assessment processes to ensure that students achieve the outcomes. Biggs (1996) has described alignment as a situation where the components of a teaching system, especially the teaching methods used and the assessment task, are *aligned* with the learning activities assumed in the intended outcomes. The importance of alignment is expressed in many documents referred to in official Bologna policy documents. In a guide to writing and using learning outcomes, Kennedy et al (2007) suggest that

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The challenge for teachers is to ensure that there is alignment between teaching methods, assessment techniques, assessment criteria and learning outcomes. This connection between teaching, assessment and learning outcomes helps to make the overall learning experience more transparent. Student course evaluations show that clear expectations are a vitally important part of effective learning. Lack of clarity in this area is almost always associated with negative evaluations, learning difficulties, and poor student performance (p.19).

The idea of constructive alignment has been taken up by Brown (2004-2005) who suggests that assessment tasks need to be authentic and that the link between what students expect to learn and how they are required to demonstrate that learning needs to be clear. Rust (2002) suggests that assessment should relate to the verbs that are used within the learning outcomes.

As far as assessment is concerned, according to Kennedy et al (2007) the type and form of assessment is crucial to learning outcomes curriculum planning;

In terms of teaching and learning, there is a dynamic equilibrium between teaching strategies on one side and learning outcomes and assessment on the other side. It is important that the assessment tasks mirror the learning outcomes since, as far as the students are concerned, the assessment *is* the curriculum (p.19).

Kennedy et al distinguish between formative and summative assessment. Summative assessment is presented as assessment of learning, while formative assessment is presented as assessment for learning, where the focus is that the information from assessment is used diagnostically to guide learning and future lesson planning. They conclude that ‘formative assessment can help improve the learning and performance of students’ (p.20).

As I will explain in chapter three I was initially positive towards the Bologna reforms and the idea that learning outcomes could be seen as a key way of achieving curricular re-organisation had a key influence on the changes made locally in response to the Bologna process. The ideas behind curriculum alignment and formative assessment were also influential. The influence of these changes on the local micro level will be discussed in chapters eight and nine.

First, however, I will present research suggesting that outcome led education can have positive benefits on student learning.

### **The benefits of outcome led education on student learning**

Supporters of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum design argue that learning outcomes can help to improve quality because they provide direction in the planning of a learning activity. One case study is provided by Watson (2002), who has shown how the requirements of professional bodies, in this case from the construction industry, can be accommodated within the university's framework. It is suggested that the learner centred approach encourages better outcomes for the students; that students do better if they know why they are studying something and how they will use it. Mager (1962), for example, claimed that students will learn more, and learn more quickly, if they know where they are going. The benefits of outcome led education have also been shown in a number of research studies (see for example Appleby, 2003; Daugherty et al. 2008 and McKenney, 2003).

In research on the impact of outcome-led design on students' conceptions of learning in higher education, Allen (1996, p.245) suggested that the redesign of courses as the result of introducing a learning outcome model resulted in a much greater degree of congruence between how lecturers and students regarded learning which in turn encouraged students to foster 'deep approaches to learning'.

### **Criticisms of the learning outcomes approach**

The learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning is not without its critics. Souto-Otero (2012) suggests that much of the critical literature on learning outcomes argues that

learning outcomes are a managerial turn that can inhibit useful learning processes; fail to recognise explorative and unintended learning; create a target-lead culture; attack liberal conceptions of education; are technically difficult to introduce and result in the social de-differentiation of skills (p.250).

Hussey and Smith (2002) criticize learning outcomes that are based on generic level descriptors such as those based on Bloom's taxonomy. They question the claim that learning outcomes are clear, explicit and objective. They argue that different degrees of knowledge need to be allowed for (such as 'detailed and precise', or 'crude and vague') and that this is very difficult to express precisely. Another problem is that learning outcomes require interpretation and they only appear to be clear to those who already know what they signify, based on their prior knowledge of the subject. Hussey and Smith suggest that students are unlikely to have the levels of knowledge required and therefore are unable to interpret learning outcomes precisely.

Hussey and Smith also argue that learning outcomes might restrict student learning. If learning outcomes are used to specify the pass/fail threshold there is a risk that students only aim to achieve that level. Secondly, the emphasis on planned learning outcomes ignores, and may even squeeze out, emergent '...ideas, skills and connections, which were unforeseen, even by the teacher'(p.229). They suggest that the demand that teachers and academics formulate precise learning outcomes, 'amounts to the requirement to translate "knowledge how" into "knowledge that" – into a set of statements – and that this is largely either fatuous or impossible' (p.229). In conclusion, Hussey and Smith state that learning outcomes have

been misappropriated to serve in the development of a system that is more suited to modern management techniques, and to survival in a competitive market economy. Learning outcomes have become a central component of the new approach because they are essential to the commodification of learning and hence to the desire to audit and monitor the performance of those involved (p.231).

Similar criticisms of learning outcomes are made by Oates (2004), who suggests that the learning outcomes approach is based on two related assumptions; the first that '... competence can be described using explicit and transparent descriptions (which can be used in assessment processes)' and second that '...competence can be

broken down into its constituent components....' (p.59). Oates goes on to question those assumptions.

O'Brien and Brancaleone (2011) argue that despite their learner centred image, 'learning outcomes can, in reality, disempower learners'; suggesting that assessment based on learning outcome objectives 'could never capture the myriad of teaching and learning moments a student experiences' and that in fulfilling learning outcome requirements, '....students risk losing the essential learning characteristic of third-level education -criticality' (p.16).

Knight (2001) uses the term rational curriculum planning to describe the learning outcomes based approach to educational planning. Knight argues that embedded in it

is a commitment to efficiency, since things not listed as objectives should not be designed into curriculum and instruction. It can be presented as a logical way of proceeding, redolent of scientific method. Like classical scientific method it assumes a determinate and linear universe in which the specialness of setting are irritants that science should rise above (p.372).

Knight puts forward three arguments against this way of planning. First he argues that complex learning '....is not easily reducible to precise statements predicting what the outcomes will be' (p.374), and secondly that planning is not rational or linear in complex educational systems. Instead teachers usually begin planning

by thinking about how to organise the content in the light of the different types and amounts of time available, frequently calling upon 'lessons-in-memory', fragments of those past lessons or tasks that have worked well at other times (p.374).

Finally, Knight argues that rational curriculum planning is too efficient, and that 'creativity, innovation and flexibility depend on there being slack, spaces or spare capacity in a system' (p.374).

The whole idea of curriculum alignment has been questioned by Daugherty et al (2008) who have investigated the relationship between curriculum and assessment. The authors conclude that in practice learning outcomes are often strongly contested and that



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there is a multiplicity of ways, at every level from programme design through to the individual student and her/his teacher, of expressing the anticipated outcomes of learning (p.244).

The authors criticize the idea of constructive alignment, which they claim

presupposes that the curriculum is expressed clearly enough for the alignment of the one to the other to be feasible. This in turn assumes that the constructs of interest are already established, agreed and expressed in unambiguous terms (p.244).

The research concludes that rather than seeing the relationship between curriculum and assessment in terms of alignment, a multi-layered process of knowledge is constructed

with numerous influences at work at every level from the national system to the individual learner. Rather than thinking in terms of aligning assessment more closely to curriculum, the construction of learning outcomes is better understood as a complex, non-linear, interacting system with the ultimate goal being a synergy that embraces curriculum, pedagogy and assessment (p.253).

As this section has shown, the main criticisms of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning are;

1. Against the assumption that learning can be expressed in terms of learning outcomes.
2. That learning outcomes can restrict learning and take away critical thinking.
3. That learning outcomes are an attack on the liberal ideas of education and are part of a process of the commodification of learning.

The criticisms of the learning outcomes approach outlined here are matters which can help in the understanding of the reaction to learning outcomes locally. In my analysis of the data produced I attempt to look at the extent that the student learning outcomes produced at the local level represent changes to the curriculum; both in terms of the contents to be transmitted to students and the learning that is required of them. Also of interest are local perceptions about the relationship between learning outcomes and

student learning and about using learning outcomes as a measurement of student learning. By looking at these issues I attempt to understand the extent to which the Bologna process has influenced local practice. As I will show next, official reports suggest that the Bologna process has had less influence on higher education than policy makers expected.

## The implementation of The Bologna process

A number of tools and procedures have been set in place for producing and gathering information and for evaluating the implementation of the Bologna Objectives. These include for example national reports, Trends reports, and Stocktaking reports.

The majority of reports describe slow progress in implementing the Bologna reforms. A report by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop, 2009) concludes that

The shift to learning outcomes..... shows a broad consensus among policy-makers, social partners and education and training practitioners on the relevance of learning outcomes for improving access to and progression within education, training and learning. However, more and more stakeholders warn that the learning outcomes perspective can easily be reduced to mere rhetoric having little effect on education, training and learning practices (p.2).

The report further concludes that the transformation

from using traditional input/content approaches to output/outcomes approaches to conceive, validate, monitor and express qualifications is proving slow and difficult (p.82).

and that

in most countries the higher education sector has been more successful in carrying through reforms to the formal structures of qualifications than in underpinning reform by placing emphasis on learning through the innovative use of learning outcomes (p.86).

The report places the ideas behind the Bologna process as being a threat to traditions in higher education, suggesting that

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It is clear that labour market requirements, professional demands and generic transferable skills and competences are now recognized as important elements, mainly due to the work of the European Commission Tuning project. There are tensions between these new dimensions and the traditional subject-based knowledge skills and understanding that dominated academic higher education in the past (p.86).

In an independent assessment of the Bologna Process carried out by a consortium of researchers in preparation for the launch of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in March 2010, it was concluded that whilst legislation and national regulation enabling the EHEA had been implemented, there was a large difference in the speed of implementation between individual countries. According to the assessment

The extent to which the key objectives of compatibility, comparability and attractiveness (desired outcomes of the Bologna Process) will be achieved is still partly an open question. First, it is too early to answer the question across all participating countries because achieving some of the desired outcomes will require many years of post-implementation experience (especially labour market effects and those involving all three cycles). Second, even among countries that were on the whole high achievement cases, compatibility and comparability have not yet been fully achieved (Westerheijden et al. 2010, p39).

The resulting Budapest-Vienna Declaration (European Higher education area, 2010) claimed that

while much has been achieved in implementing the Bologna reforms, (independent assessment and the stakeholders' reports ) .... also illustrate that EHEA action lines such as degree and curriculum reform, quality assurance, recognition, mobility and the social dimension are implemented to varying degrees (p.1).

The 2009 Bologna With Student Eyes survey (ESIB:2009, p.11) found that only 33% of institutions in participating Bologna countries define their courses and modules in terms of learning outcomes' and concluded that

...the implementation of ECTS has been done in a very formal manner without reference to concrete curricular reform and reconsideration of the role of students and of the institution in the

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learning process' and that... teacher-centred provision is the dominant feature of the curricula (p.91).

Official evaluation reports explain the slow progress of the Bologna process in terms of a lack of understanding and commitment from different groups of stakeholders. The independent assessment of the Bologna Process in preparation for the launch of the European Higher Education Area (Westerheijden et al. 2010) concludes, for example, that

Greater involvement of staff within higher education institutions and other non-state actors may be a key factor for successful implementation of many Bologna action areas in the practice of education (p.39).

In similar fashion, the 2010 Trend report (Sursock and Smidt, 2010) concluded that progress in the Bologna process was slow because institutions do not fully understand the importance of learning outcomes and their central role within qualifications frameworks to facilitate mobility and lifelong learning.

Evaluation reports and policy documents suggest that obstacles may be overcome by clarifications and better communication between the experts at the European level and responsible actors at the national level. The Budapest-Vienna Declaration following the launch of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in March 2010 (European Higher education area, 2010), for example, suggested that 'staff and students increasingly identify with the goals of the Bologna Process', but that '.... some of the Bologna aims and reforms have not been properly implemented and explained' (p.1).

While official reports suggest that slow progress of the Bologna process can be explained in terms of a lack of understanding and commitment, other research has attempted to show how local discourses and cultures can influence the adaptation of global and generic solutions such as the Bologna process. According to Michelsen (2010)

Another type of research on the Bologna process takes its point of departure in case studies or cross-national comparative studies of reform trajectories in a selection of participating countries. These

studies have demonstrated a variety of national reform trajectories (p.163).

The idea of looking at the Bologna process in terms of policy reform trajectories, and more specifically policy recontextualisation, is a key part of this thesis. In the next section I discuss the relationship between policy making and policy implementation, and in particular the influence of local cultures and discourses on policy implementation.

### The relationship between policy making and policy implementation

In this section I look at the relationship between policy making and policy implementation, and the importance of processes of 'recontextualisation.' I will refer to research that suggests that the relationship between policy making and policy implementation is a complex one and that the consequences of policy initiatives in education are not always as intended.

Taylor et al (1997) describe two broad approaches to looking at policy. The first involves making a distinction between politics on the one hand and policy making on the other. In this view policy is seen as rational decision making, involving the efficient allocation of resources and optimal outcomes. The second approach is the critical approach. The critical approach questions the distinction between politics and policy, and in this approach policy is seen as an exercise of power and control. According to Simons et al (2009)

...the term critical refers first of all to a very specific ethos or way of relating to one's present, and holding to the belief that the future should not be the repetition of the past (xii).

Being critical in the area of educational policy means

...being concerned with what is going on, and about developing knowledge and building theories in view of that concern (xii).

As supporters of the second approach, Taylor et al argue that the policy context is essential for the understanding of the policies themselves because 'policies do not exist in a vacuum' (p. 11). Policy

issues are ‘embedded in a wider set of pressures or contexts; historical, political, economic, which would need to be understood’ (p.12).

The importance of understanding the context of the Bologna policy is the starting point for this investigation. When the changes were made to the courses that are the subject of this thesis I was largely unaware of that context. However, by engaging with the research literature and with policy documents themselves, I have been able to develop a more critical understanding of the Bologna process. Importantly, this greater understanding of the policy context is also the starting point for helping me understand the process of implementation and recontextualisation of the Bologna process in my own field of practice.

As far as the relationship between policy making and policy implementation is concerned, the technical/rational model of policy implementation assumes that the translation of policy into action is largely unproblematic. Policy implementation is seen as a linear process, where policy intentions are accepted and implementation is simply a matter of technical ability, resources and the will of those taking part in the implementation. My initial understanding of policy implementation reflected this technical/rational model. As I explain more in chapter three, I was initially a Bologna policy optimist and my lack of engagement with the research literature meant that I saw policy implementation as largely unproblematic.

The technical/rational model has been questioned by those who regard the translation of policy into action as a complex process involving mediation between competing interests. Research by Goodlad (1988), for example, has shown that curriculum developments do not often follow the rhetoric of change proposed in policy documents and have rarely worked as they were intended. Policy intentions do not always have an impact on those who have to implement policy at the local level. According to Nudzor (2009)

Although a tremendous investment is made in enacting policies, there is ample evidence to suggest that policy actors are impervious to policy information. Change agents and implementers are often seen as pursuing different agendas when it comes to the task of implementation (p.501).

As far as educational change is concerned, the research literature shows

stark differences between policy rhetoric and the reality of policy implementation, referred to as the “implementation gap” or “black box” of educational reform (Blase and Bjork, 2010, p. 239).

An appreciation of the policy context and engaging with the research literature has meant that I have gained a more critical understanding of the relationship between policy making and policy implementation. This more critical understanding led to a change in my research focus and an understanding that policy implementation is never a straightforward matter. I will return to these matters in more detail in chapter six.

### **Discourse, recontextualization, and social change**

The relationship between policy making and implementation has been addressed by Ball (1993), who suggests that there are two ways that policy can be analytically conceptualized; policy as text and policy as discourse. Policy as text implies that policies are

representations which are encoded by authors in different ways (via struggles, compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and decoded in complex ways ( via actor’s interpretations and meanings in relation to their history, experiences, skills, resources and context) (Ball, 2006, p.44).

Policies are also discourses, which are about ‘...what can be said and thought and who can speak, when, where and with what authority’ (Ball, 2006, p.48).

In this thesis I use the concept of discourse to analyse policy documents connected to the Bologna process. My understanding of discourse is influenced by Foucault’s (1980) ideas about ‘truth’ and discourse. ‘Truth’ he suggests

is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power (p.131).

Truth, according to Foucault, is something that decision-makers have the power to define. Each society, Foucault suggests

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has its régime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (p.131).

Hayward (2000) argues that discourse is about defining 'the (im)possible, the (im)probable, the natural, the normal, what counts as a problem' (p.35). Discourse defines what is 'normal' by organising knowledge systematically and putting limits on what can and cannot be meaningfully argued. Conceptualizing policy as discourse means an understanding of how policy limits and constructs the possibilities of who has power. According to Nudzor (2009)

discourses, and in this context policies, do not merely represent social reality but help as well in creating them.... discourses disguise the created nature of social reality by denying and or limiting the language resources needed to be able to think about and describe alternatives (p.507).

In this way, Schmidt (2008) argues, discourse

serves not just to express one set of actors' strategic interests or normative values but also to persuade others of the necessity and/or appropriateness of a given course of action (p.312).

Ball argues that looking at policy discourses helps us to understand how policies 'work to privilege certain ideas and topics and speakers and exclude others' (Ball, 2008, p.5). According to Ball, policy discourses

organise their specific rationalities, making particular sets of ideas obvious, common sense and 'true'. Policy discourses make claims on the 'truth' and as such can be seen as constituting rather than simply reflecting social reality.....the ways in which policies are spoken and spoken about, their vocabularies, are part of the creation of their conditions of acceptance and enactment. They construct the inevitable and the necessary (Ball, 2008, p.5).

'Policy texts' work to



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translate policy abstractions like globalisation and the knowledge economy and public sector reform, into roles and relationships and practices within institutions that enact policy and change what people do and how they think about what they do (Ball, 2008, p.6).

Seddon (2009) argues that the policy-as-discourse approach has been particularly helpful in understanding contemporary changes in education; arguing that particular economic discourses have been mobilized to justify and drive education reform (p.260).

As part of this thesis I look at how European policies of Higher Education are presented and disseminated through E.U. and Bologna Process policy texts. At the same time I look at research literature that is critical of these discourses and put them in their political and economic context. My aim is to use the idea of policy as discourse to obtain a greater understanding of the ideas and messages that are behind the Bologna process initiative. My aim is to investigate the ideas and messages that are presented as being 'normal' or 'good', and to then in my micro analysis try to judge the extent to which these ideas can influence ways of thinking, acting and doing at the local level.

Bowe et al (1992) have used the notion of a policy cycle to describe where and how policy is made and remade in different contexts. The implementation of policy is seen as a complex process where interest groups struggle over construction of policy discourses. According to Ball (1998) education policies are 'grafted onto and realised within very different national and cultural contexts and are affected, inflected and deflected by them' (p.127).

Ball (1998) suggests that we should remain aware of processes of 'recontextualisation' and the role of local politics and cultures that mediate global and generic solutions. The idea of the policy cycle means that policy can be recontextualised throughout the policy process. Bowe et al (1992) identify three primary policy contexts: the context of influence (the construction of policy discourses); the context of policy text production (where texts may contain inconsistencies and contradictions); and the context of practice (where policy is subject to interpretation and recreation). Each of these contexts contains arenas of action (both public and private) where struggle and recontextualisation can take place. Policy

implementation is thus described as being a constant bargaining process, where policy is transformed at each level of implementation, as individuals interpret and act on it. Policies are recontextualised in what Muller (1998) calls 'fields of contest', involving 'various social fractions with different degrees of social power sponsoring' different 'pedagogic regimes' (p.190). Bacchi (2000) suggests that 'policy-as-discourse analysts need to spend more time theorizing the "space for challenge"' (p.55), arguing that there has been

an overemphasis on the constraints imposed by discourse/s and a tendency to concentrate upon some groups, those described as 'having' power, as the makers and users of discourse (p.55).

The focus of this thesis is on the space for challenge; the context of practice and the agency of individual practitioners in constructing policy at the local level. I use the concept of recontextualization to investigate the influence of local discourses on the implementation of the Bologna process. The ideas and messages that are propagated in the Bologna process initiative are inevitably met by local discourses and cultures which can influence the adaption of the universal and generic solutions behind the Bologna policy rhetoric.

The concept of recontextualization has been used by, for example, Elias (2011) to look at how the Bologna process has been implemented in Spain; by Veiga and Amaral (2009) to look at the implementation process in Portugal, and by Wodak and Fairclough (2010) who have used the concept to analyse the implementation of the Bologna process in Austria and Romania. Wodak and Fairclough (2010) suggest the need to use the concept of 'glocalization' to understand how global processes '... are being implemented, recontextualized and thus changed on local/regional/national levels' (p.22). They recognize the influence of discourse on social change suggesting that

processes of social change are in part processes of change in discourse, and that change in discourse may, subject to certain conditions, have constructive effects on processes of social change more generally (p.21).

At the same time however, social events ‘are also deployments of social agency’ and

Conflicts between different agents and strategies include contestation between discourses and may lead to the hegemony of particular discourses, argumentative standpoints or ideologies manifested in these discourses (p.22).

This post-modernist conceptual approach to policy, as it is referred to by Nudzor (2009), calls for ‘a fundamental re-conceptualisation and redefinition of policy and its role in the decision-making and implementation processes’ (p.504). Such a call

stresses the existence of different ‘life-worlds’ ..... and the realisation of small communities within larger society with their own understanding of the nature of reality and how to move on in life (p.504).

According to Nudzor (2009) this approach explains the ‘policy implementation paradox’ as being a natural policy phenomenon

occurring as a result of discursive contexts and/or shifts that emerge as policy gets enacted, and that this needs to be acknowledged and concerted efforts made to manage its effects on policy processes (p.511).

### **Constraints on agency**

So far this chapter has shown that most theory and research describe the relationship between policy making and policy implementation as being a complex process and involving interaction between structures and agency. The importance of being aware of processes of recontextualisation and the role of local politics and cultures that can mediate policy solutions is stressed. However, it is also important to be aware of the limitations of actor agency. As Taylor et al (1997) suggest, not all policy players are able to influence the policy implementation process equally; ‘often there is conflict and contradiction between the perspectives or interests of those involved, and not all the players benefit equally’ (p.15).

As far as this case study is concerned, it is important to understand that the changes made locally as a result of the

introduction of learning outcomes were implemented into an existing field of practice containing discourses concerning appropriate curriculum knowledge and teacher and student identities. Within this field of practice there are traditions and cultures which may guide practice at the local level and at the same time put limits on teacher agency to achieve change.

In the review of the research literature in chapter four, I look at research on traditions of practice within higher education, including research looking at language teaching approaches and research in the area of teacher education. By looking at previous research I hope to be able to better understand the importance of traditions and cultures in guiding academic practice and in influencing the potential for change.

In this thesis I use the concept of ‘practice architectures’, developed by Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008), to describe the powerful norms which frame and construct the identities and subjectivities of actors and can work to help or mediate change. Practice is shaped by the practice architectures of teacher education, and of language teaching and learning approaches which act to either enable or constrain the possibilities of change. I will return to the concept of ‘practice architectures’ in more detail in chapter five.

In the next chapter I outline the background to the implementation of the Bologna process in Sweden, present an overview of the case environment and describe the introduction and implementation of learning outcomes into course planning in my field of practice.

## Chapter three: The case study environment and the changes made as a result of the Bologna process

In this chapter I outline the background to the implementation of the Bologna process in Sweden, as well as the introduction and implementation of learning outcomes into course planning at Swedish universities. As I was a key person in implementing many of the changes made in connection with the Bologna process in the courses that are the concern of this thesis, I describe my initial position regarding the Bologna initiative and the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning. In addition, I present an overview of the case environment and describe the introduction and implementation of learning outcomes into course planning in my field of practice.

The courses which are the focus of this thesis are designed for prospective teachers of English as a foreign language. As part of the process of developing and introducing the learning outcomes for the courses, it was decided that the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) should be used as the starting point for organising teaching, and assessing the teacher students' language proficiency in English. To put this in context, I also outline in this chapter the background to the CEFR and issues connected to the implementation of the CEFR into curriculum planning.

### The Bologna process in Sweden

In February 2006 the Swedish parliament passed the Government's bill 2004/05: 162 'Ny värld – Ny högskola' ('New World - New University') which had proposed the adaption of Swedish higher education to the Bologna process. The bill became law in the summer of 2006 and the 2007 higher education reform meant that the Swedish higher education curriculum system was changed and

now based on the Bologna reforms. Higher educational institutions in Sweden had ten months to develop new degrees and programmes, and not least to rewrite course plans so that they were in line with the Bologna process.

Since 1 July 2007 all higher education qualifications in Sweden have been defined in terms of learning outcomes, levels (using the first, second and third cycles specified in the Bologna process) and workload (using the European Credit System). One academic credit point (*högskolepoäng*) in the new system corresponds to one ECTS credit point, or two thirds of a credit point in the old system (*poäng*). Some Swedish universities decided to introduce the ECTS standard grading scale for all students, while others will only use it for international students. Some universities only give grade Failed or Passed (F or P) on certain courses.

As part of the 2007 higher education reform, amendments were made to the Swedish Higher Education Act and Swedish Higher Education Ordinance to align the Swedish structure for degrees and programmes with the Bologna process. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education (Högskoleverket) was given the task by the Swedish government to develop a national qualification framework, which was developed in collaboration with higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders.

In the National Qualifications Framework expected learning outcomes for all degrees are described in great detail. Learning outcomes are divided into three categories: Knowledge and understanding, Competence and skills and Judgement and approach. For bachelor degrees the student should achieve the following:

### Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrated knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including knowledge of the disciplinary foundation of the field,
- understanding of applicable methodologies in the field,
- specialised study in some aspect of the field as well as awareness of current research issues.

Competence and skills

- demonstrated the ability to search for, gather, evaluate and critically interpret the relevant information for a formulated problem and also discuss phenomena, issues and situations critically,
- demonstrated the ability to identify, formulate and solve problems autonomously and to complete tasks within predetermined time frames,
- demonstrated the ability to present and discuss information, problems and solutions in speech and writing and in dialogue with different audiences,
- demonstrated the skills required to work autonomously in the main field of study.

Judgement and approach

- demonstrated the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues,
- demonstrated insight into the role of knowledge in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used,
- demonstrated the ability to identify the need for further knowledge and ongoing learning.<sup>2</sup>

## The introduction and implementation of learning outcomes into course planning at Swedish universities

In 2006, the Swedish government provided around 3 million Euros to be shared between all Higher Education Institutions to support the process of the introducing and implementing learning outcomes into course planning at the institutional level. Most institutions used some of the money to employ a Bologna-coordinator. Some institutions made funds available for development activities, but generally budgets set by institutions in 2005 did not include any re-direction of funds to support the process. According to Lindberg-Sand (2007) most of the tasks, including the re-design of courses

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hsv.se/download/18.7433f8012f7262642c80002636/12-5202-10-national-qualifications-framework.pdf>

and planning for new degrees, were distributed to academics as extra work on top of their ordinary tasks, without any compensation. On the initiative of the European Commission, the Swedish Ministry of Education and Science delegated to the International Programme Office for Education and Training the task of putting together a National Team of Bologna Promoters. Before the implementation of the Bologna process, the Swedish Bologna Promoter Group organized 16 regional seminars for Higher Education Institutions in Sweden and three national seminars on the Bologna process (DfES Bologna process stocktaking report, 2007).

Higher Education Institutions in Sweden also provided support to staff in terms of seminars and training on the introduction and implementation of learning outcomes into course planning. A report commissioned by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education looking into different approaches to evaluating learning outcomes in the Nordic countries (Nordic Quality Assurance Network for higher Education, 2008), describes how three institutions in Sweden; the University of Gothenburg, Karolinska Institute (KI) and Malmö University College organized workshops and seminars on the subject of learning outcomes for teachers, education planners and students.

According to the report as a part of the implementation of the Bologna process, the University of Gothenburg established an action plan in which the implementation of learning outcomes was referred to. A working group produced guidelines for the departments on writing syllabi containing learning outcomes (p35).

The report also describes how the three institutions use learning outcomes. According to the report the institutions reported that they mainly use learning outcomes as performance indicators and as a tool in the evaluation of the courses and programmes. The report goes on to say that 'All three institutions attached a high value to learning outcomes. The most frequently stated merits of learning outcomes are:

- that they provide a better understanding of what a course or programme offers the student in terms of skills, competences, etc;
- how they relate to a certain labour market or further studies;



- how they provide better information to the student about the curricula (p36).

### According to the report

Teachers and stakeholders are also mentioned as groups that will benefit from a well implemented set of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes offer a good basis for pedagogical development of the courses and programmes themselves; they strengthen the connection between content, examination and assessment (p36).

As I will show later in this chapter, similar arguments were put forward by the information department of the university college in which the courses which are the basis of this thesis take place. Before detailing those arguments, however, I will first describe my own initial position regarding the Bologna process and the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning.

### My initial position regarding the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning

At the beginning of the research process I was positive towards the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process. I was inspired by the argument in some of the literature on the Bologna process that the introduction of learning outcomes could be seen as part of a 'paradigm shift' in education. At the time I was unaware of the criticisms of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning, some of which I have outlined in chapter two.

My initial optimism towards the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning can in part be explained by my background as an English teacher and my teaching experiences here in Sweden. I am a native speaker of English, who, when moving to Sweden did not have a teaching background or any formal teaching qualification. Although I have worked for the University College since 1994, I also have a wide experience of running company based language training in Sweden.

My experience of running company based language training has influenced my theories of how second language teaching and learning should best take place. I have been widely influenced by the

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approaches and methodology. ESP has always been more concerned with practical outcomes, rather than a theory of ESP (Dudley-Evans, 2001). My starting point when teaching company based language training has been that language must be seen as a means of communication and as far as possible related to concrete reality. I believe that focus must primarily be on the message to be conveyed and that the basic fabric of most learning, including the selection of examination tasks, should be activities which use the learners' personal experience and simulate their real situation as closely possible.

My theories of how second language teaching and learning should best take place appeared to be echoed in official policy documents describing the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning. Official documents presented the learning outcomes approach as representing a more student centred approach to learning; with focus on the active, self-conducted learner, carrying out tasks which were situated and social. It was suggested that assessment tasks need to be authentic and that the teacher should play the role of guide or coach rather than instructor. Many of the suggestions corresponded with how I had tried to work whilst taking part in company based language training.

I was also inspired by the argument in policy documents that learning outcomes could be seen as a key way of achieving curricular re-organisation and a move away from traditional forms of teaching and learning. I was motivated by the suggestion that curricular re-organisation could result in students fostering 'deep approaches to learning' as a result of the greater degree of congruence between how lecturers and students regarded learning. My initial research questions (outlined in more detail in chapter six) were to try to describe, analyse and reflect on the changes made as the result of organising the courses around student learning outcomes and to investigate what affect the changes have had to the learning environment, and in particular student learning. As I also explain in chapter six, these research questions changed; mainly due to the growing realisation during the research process that policy implementation is a complex matter and that the translation of policy into action is never straightforward.

In the next section I will describe the environment in which the case study is situated.

## The case study environment

The case study environment is a department of education within a university college in Sweden. The courses that are the concern of this thesis are two 30 credit courses within the teacher education programme. Each course typically attracts around 20 students and each one is taught by a small group of teachers and who have typically been responsible for organising learning around either the subject (English) or the subject didactics part of the courses. Each course involves a school based period (practicum) of 7.5 credits; both in a Swedish secondary school and in a school in an English speaking country. I have been involved in the courses since 2002 and have been course co-ordinator since 2005.

During the entire research period I was the course co-ordinator for both courses. My teaching responsibilities during this time covered teaching various aspects of the subject English. Five other teacher educators taught in the courses concerned and took part in the planning meeting discussions which form part of the data produced in this case study. The five teacher educators were as follows:

Teacher A: who has previously taught English in a Swedish school and teaches English subject didactics.

Teacher B: who has previously taught English in a Swedish school and teaches various aspects of the subject English.

Teacher C: who works part time as a teacher of English in a Swedish school and teaches both English subject didactics and various aspects of the subject English.

Teacher D: who teaches various aspects of the subject English.

Teacher E: who works part time as a teacher of English in a Swedish school and teaches English subject didactics.

The courses which are the focus of this thesis formed part of the teacher education programme introduced in Sweden in 2001 which offered one teacher degree for all teachers, with the diploma awarded upon completion showing the graduate's specialization and status of qualification. The teacher education programme has since been replaced. As part of the 2001 teacher education, those students who wished to become teachers within the compulsory school were required to achieve 140-180 credits, whilst those who wished to become teachers in the upper secondary school required 180-220 credits. Pre-school teachers and leisure-time (or recreation) centre instructors required 140 credit points. According to local documents at the time, the students taking the education should become acquainted with scientific methods in their search for and in the creation of knowledge. Matters relevant to the profession should be discussed from a critical perspective.

Within the teacher education programme students were required to study a general field of education containing areas of knowledge that were deemed central to the teaching profession, such as teaching, special needs education, socialization and development, ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) and issues related to the common national values of the Swedish society and schools. The second part of the programme consisted of an educational area with emphasis on particular subjects or subject areas and themes or inter-disciplinary issues of relevance for the age groups and school forms chosen by the student. It comprised at least 60 credits and included a school based period (practicum) of 15 credits for every module of subject studies of at least 60 credits. The third part of the programme was a specialized educational area of at least 30 credits. The aim was to deepen, supplement or provide new approaches to the knowledge previously acquired by the student.

Courses within the teacher programme typically involve lectures, seminars, study group meetings, mentor meetings and group activities, also labs, excursions, projects, study visits, academic

vocational training and other field studies. Local documents put focus on active student participation and the importance of interaction between students and also between students and teachers as the basis of the construction of professionally based knowledge. The importance of sustainable development, equality and diversity in the students' education is also stressed. Local documents point to the influence of examination form on learning and that teachers try to vary the form of examinations.

After most lectures students are required to attend study group meetings where they have time to reflect, discuss and connect literature, lectures and practical experience. Mentor group meetings, where students meet a mentor from the profession; either a pre-school or school teacher, provide students an arena for a meeting between theory and practice. The practicum periods during the education are also seen as a chance for the student to connect theory and practice.

Local documents stress that students should reflect and report on their work and learning processes. Students are required to keep a professional diary throughout the whole of their education where they record and reflect on their thoughts and actions and connect them to different forms of knowledge and skills. According to local documents the students' education is based on a constructivist, socio-cultural perspective of learning. The importance of integration between subject and subject didactics in each course is stressed in local documents. According to local documents subject studies are based on a holistic view of knowledge and have their origins in the field of praxis.

In total approximately 1300 students study at the institute and the department has about 100 employees. In 2010 46 % of teachers working at the department had PhDs. The department has economic and administrative responsibility for teacher education, and at the time of the investigation the teacher education board oversaw the quality of the education by assessing course plans and applications for research funds from teachers.

In contrast to teacher education at bigger university colleges and universities in Sweden where subject teachers, subject didactics and general didactics teachers come from different departments, in the

teaching programme teachers are generally all from the same department. Where competence is not available it is bought from elsewhere at the university, or sometimes from other higher education departments.

According to local documents all members of the teaching group are responsible for decision making. For every course a course coordinator has responsibility for the course budget, in terms of working hours for the different teaching group members. The course coordinator, together with the other teaching group members, are responsible for making sure that these working hours are translated into teaching and learning opportunities. The course coordinators role is that of a facilitator; not to carry out the various tasks required by the teaching group but to help make sure that they happen. Each teacher has responsibility to carry out their teaching, research and administrative duties. Teachers are also required to follow developments in their own area of competence as well as developments in the wider society that have an influence on their work at the university.

The course coordinator is responsible for booking the course schedule and for organizing the students' participation in course planning and evaluation. The course coordinator also has the task of ensuring that the teaching group's work matches the goals in the plan for the teaching education in general, as well as the goals in individual course plans. The course coordinator is also responsible for writing a course evaluation in coordination with the others in the teaching group at the end of each course.

As far as students who want to work as teachers of English is concerned, at the time of the research the department offered two options for students who plan to teach English in the future; a basic course for those wishing to teach younger children and an English with a didactic emphasis course, for students planning to teach pupils in grades 7-9. The other option is the courses that are the concern of this case study. They are part of the English with a didactic emphasis education, which comprise 60 credits and an optional 30 credits for those students who wish to specialise in the subject.

## The introduction and implementation of learning outcomes into course planning at the local level

In the local case study setting, just as at other universities in Sweden, the university college provided support in terms of seminars and training on the introduction and implementation of learning outcomes. On 14 August 2006, prior to the introduction of learning outcomes into course planning, the university college's Bologna coordinator organized a seminar for the teaching department. The Bologna coordinator explained that learning outcomes for a course should be formulated by the teachers responsible for the course, using a holistic approach with regard to the education that the course was part of. It was argued that the learning outcomes for a course should be formulated so that they

- provide details of the knowledge and skills students will have achieved during the course
- are understandable for students and teachers and other stakeholders (employers)
- can be the basis for courses and educational planning
- can be the basis for examination
- can be the basis for monitoring and quality assurance

According to the Bologna coordinator learning outcomes should be: written for the student, observable and possible to examine, connect to the Swedish Higher Education Act's national goals for higher education, written in the future verb form tense, identify the central learning goals and finally should avoid terms like 'know', 'understand', etc. as they are difficult to assess.

Information on the Bologna process can be downloaded from the university colleges' homepage in the form of a brochure containing information for students. The brochure was produced by the University College's information department in 2007. According to the brochure the Bologna process creates a range of new opportunities, both during and after training. The brochure claims that the Bologna process will 'increase student and teacher

mobility, improve graduate students employability and strengthen Europe's competitiveness.'

According to the brochure the Bologna process implies '....a new pedagogical perspective, a shift from a teacher centred to a more learning and student centred educational process.' The brochure informs the student that to a great extent under the new Bologna process '.....you will be expected to achieve more active and goal orientated knowledge.' The brochure claims that 'This will allow you to increasingly influence your study process' (my translations). According to the brochure the Bologna process not only provides new opportunities, but means that as a student that you have to take more responsibility for your studies.

The claims of the brochure mirror many of the claims in official EU Bologna policy documents. Indeed, the brochure explains that the Bologna Process objectives of mobility, employability and competitiveness are also the objectives of the University College. The brochure suggests to the student that 'It is important to choose the courses and subjects which lead to a qualification and skills needed by the labor market.'

### **The background to the changes that were made to the existing courses**

As I have already explained in this chapter, at the beginning of the research process I was positive towards the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process. I saw the learning outcomes aspect of the process as an opportunity to improve quality in the courses for which I was the course co-ordinator. I believed that the learning outcomes approach could help to improve aspects of the students' education which had been identified in course evaluations.

A course evaluation in December 2005 of a 30 credit course within the English with a didactic emphasis education showed that students had a number of criticisms of the course. The majority of students felt for example that



- The balance in the course was weighted towards their own language proficiency and it did not give them enough help in how to teach the language
- The overall structure of the course was unclear and there was a lack of clear instructions
- The significance of some aspects of the course was unclear
- They had not understood all aspects of the course such as English grammar
- There was a perceived lack of communication between teachers.

The issues raised by students in this course evaluation have been found in other research looking at learning in higher education. Ramsden (1992), concludes that

A good deal of research has been carried out into what students actually remember and understand from their studies. And there is no shortage of complaint about the quality of student learning, and by implication methods of teaching (p.19).

My own personal observations at the time were that some of the teaching and assessment methods used in the courses encouraged surface learning approaches. Surface learning approaches are one of the two approaches to study, derived from original empirical research by Marton and Säljö (1976) and since elaborated by Ramsden (1992), Biggs (1987, 1993) and Entwistle (1981). Although learners may be classified as either 'deep' or 'surface', they are not attributes of individuals. A deep approach is characterised by a student's active engagement with the subject matter. In contrast a surface approach is characterised by memorisation of information and procedures, students are bound by the syllabus, do not self question and often fail to perceive the relevance of the subject.

I felt that there was also a lack of clearly stated academic expectations; for language proficiency tasks, for example, no commonly agreed criteria for success existed. Students had very few opportunities to exercise choice in the method and content of study. I felt that the courses were structured around teaching methods and assessed in the ways they were because of tradition or administrative convenience. I believed that a teacher-dominated view of subject

content prevailed. Finally, and importantly, there did not appear to be any clear agreement within the teaching group on what the key issues of learning for students were.

I believed that the introduction of learning outcomes into the courses concerned was an opportunity to make an intervention into the normal planning procedure which would hopefully stimulate an improvement in practice. At the same time I was aware of the suggestion made by Karseth (2005) that the change to organising courses around learning outcomes could be seen as a challenge to many of the assumptions around how planning is normally carried out in higher education (p.63).

### **The process of developing and introducing the learning outcomes**

In my capacity as course coordinator, I took an active role in the development and implementation of the learning outcomes for the courses that are the subject of this thesis. The process of developing and introducing the learning outcomes into the two courses concerned began about a year before most other teachers at the university started to introduce them into other courses. The reason for this was because I applied for and received in 2006 a three month grant from the university college to work on the development of the learning outcomes.

The process of developing the learning outcomes started when I put together a discipline specific group made up of me, another teacher from the teaching group, three teachers working in the Swedish secondary school system and three students from previous courses given for prospective teachers of English. The discipline specific group met between June and October 2006 and its role was to discuss and identify the general areas of knowledge needed by students and specify the knowledge, competencies and/or skills for each area. The next stage was the development of the learning outcomes (May-June 2007) where teacher C and I specified what students will do to demonstrate learning and wrote learning outcomes for all three courses. Students were not involved in this process as at the time it was felt to be the responsibility of the

teaching group. The final stage involved the implementation of the learner outcomes (October 2007- ), where the teacher educators involved in the courses wrote new course plans, made changes to course content, instruction and assessment (based on the learning outcomes) and introduced the new courses. This final stage can be seen as an on-going process, where content, instruction and assessment are modified in the light of feedback from course evaluations etc.

The details of the learning outcomes that were developed and the changes that were made to course content, instruction and assessment as a result will be discussed in detail in chapters eight and nine. One potentially significant change that was made, however, needs to be mentioned here. As a result of process of developing and introducing the learning outcomes it was decided that the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) should be used as the starting point for organising teaching, and assessing the teacher students language proficiency in English. The descriptors in the CEFR were seen by the group as already functioning learning outcomes that could be used to describe the students' language proficiency in examination tasks in the courses concerned.

This decision is potentially significant because the implementation of a CEFR-informed curriculum can be seen as an attempt to move away from the more traditional ways of language learning at university level towards a more contextualized, meaning-based view of language. To help explain this point, I will next outline the background to the CEFR, criticisms that have been made of it, and issues connected to implementing the CEFR into curriculum planning.

## The Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR)

During the process of developing and introducing the learning outcomes in the courses that are the focus of this case study it was decided that the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) should be used as the starting point for

organising teaching, and assessing the teacher students language proficiency in English.

The CEFR was developed by the Council of Europe between 1989 and 1996. Influenced by Hymes' (1971) theories of communicative competence, the CEFR represents a language view where the target language functions primarily as a means to communicate. While students are seen to need knowledge about the forms to be able to use the foreign language, the focus and aim are communication in the target language (CEF 2001).

The CEFR aims to help describe the levels of language proficiency required by existing standards, tests and examinations in order to facilitate comparisons between different systems of qualifications across Europe. Its aim is to provide a reference work that can be applied to any European language and that would present language professionals a basis for language teaching and learning as well as assessment. The CEFR describes second language proficiency as the ability to use the language across five activities (listening, reading, writing, spoken interaction, and spoken production) at six levels: A1 and A2 (basic user), B1 and B2 (independent user), and C1 and C2 (proficient user) (Council of Europe, 2001). The descriptors for each category are written as "Can Do" statements which describe what learners can do in their L2s at each proficiency level.

The CEFR offers guidelines for the development of the communicative competence of language learners, by describing 'what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what (other) knowledge and skills they have to develop' (CEF 2001, p.1). The reference scales describe the cultural context in which each language is situated and defining different levels of the knowledge and command of the language in order to judge the learner's progress. However, the CEFR does not specify how and what language teachers should teach or what curricula should include.

The Council of Europe plays a significant role in developing language policies and actions in Europe, even if those policies and actions are guidelines rather than directives. As well as the CEFR, the Council of Europe also promotes the use of the European

Language Portfolio (ELP). According to the ELP website, the ELP is ‘a personal document in which language learners can record and reflect on their language learning and cultural experiences.’ The ELP consists of three parts; a language passport describing the individual’s language skills, a language biography showing experience of using one or more languages, and a language dossier containing examples of the individual work in the languages concerned. The CEFR and ELP are used increasingly today in all levels of foreign language learning, not only at different levels in Europe but well beyond Europe, for example in North and South America, Australia and Asia.

The communicative view of language learning behind the CEFR has influenced teacher training for EFL teachers in Sweden and how foreign languages are taught today in Swedish schools. However, its influence on higher education has been much less. According to Little (2007a), the CEFR has only had a limited use at university level, and again according to Little (2007b), its impact on language testing ‘... far outweighs its impact on curriculum design and pedagogy’ (p.648).

### **Criticisms of the CEFR**

A number of criticisms have been made of the CEFR. A number of researchers have raised criticisms about how the CEFR scales were developed. Fulcher (2004), for example, points out that the Framework

refers to agreement between teachers in the study samples when sequencing descriptors. The levels into which the descriptors are placed are ‘natural’, in that they reflect the way European teachers, publishers and testers think of language levels in terms of elementary, intermediate and advanced (p.258).

According to Hulstijn (2007), in some cases, teachers had only one student as a point of reference and based their descriptions on that one point of reference. Hulstijn concludes by stating that

The CEFR rests only on the pole of teacher perceptions. Valid and reliable as they are or may be, they provide a foundation too weak for the CEFR building, with its heavy-weight implications for language

education policy in Europe. Educational authorities and politicians must be aware of the missing linguistic [...] poles underneath the CEFR and the urgency of making funds available for collaborative research (p.666).

Another criticism of the CEFR is that it lacks a theory of language development. Alderson, for example, argues that it is unclear to what extent developers have taken into account the empirical findings from 30 years of research into the second language acquisition (Alderson 2007, p.660). North (2007) acknowledges that ‘the formulations used in the descriptors are not based upon second language acquisition (SLA) research’, noting that their basis is teachers’ perceptions of language proficiency (p.657).

The CEFR is also criticised for not providing enough information for test development and for being ‘all too frequently couched in language that is not easy to understand, often vague, undefined, and imprecise’ (Alderson, 2007, p. 660). Weir (2005) suggests that a number of studies have experienced difficulty in attempting to use the CEFR for test development or comparability and that the wording of some descriptors is ‘not consistent or not transparent enough in places for the development of tests’ (p.282), whilst Alderson et al. (2006) argue that many of the terms used in the CEFR are not defined. They quote the example of the word *simple*, which

is frequently used in the scales, but how is one to decide what is *simple* compared to what is *less simple* and, especially, what is *very simple* is not clear (p.12).

Finally the potential misuse of the CEFR is mentioned by some critics. The use of the CEFR has been seen as an attempt to impose a monolithic, standardised approach to language study. McNamara (2011), for example, argues that the use of the CEFR reduces local variation and thus ignores other accounting systems, or sets of cultural values, or formulations of the goals of language education, which cannot be directly translated into the language of the CEFR. By doing so the CEFR erases the

historical and cultural complexity and specificity of language learning in particular settings, and the meaning of language learning in the lives of individuals (p.39).

McNamara suggests that it is being seen as more and more important for language curricula and tests to be calibrated against the CEFR. Otherwise they have ‘no currency.’ Fulcher (2004) makes a similar point, describing what he calls the ‘institutionalization of the Framework’. Fulcher argues that if the CEFR is widely used, there is a risk that teachers begin to believe that the CEFR scales represent

an acquisitional hierarchy, rather than a common perception. They begin to believe the language of the descriptors actually relates to the sequence of how and what learners learn (p.260).

### **Implementing the CEFR into curriculum planning**

Many researchers have drawn attention to the issue of implementing the CEFR into curriculum planning. North (2004) argues that the function of the CEFR is to ‘stimulate reflection and discussion’ to ‘empower and to facilitate, not to prescribe or control’ and that the CEFR

doesn't try to define what should be taught (content specifications), let alone state how it should be taught (methodology). Content specifications differ according to the target language and the context of the learning; methodology varies with pedagogic culture. The CEF aims to stimulate reflection and discussion on these issues; only the professionals concerned can take the decisions (North, 2004).

North (2007) suggests that the aim of the CEFR is to

(a) establish a common meta-language to talk about objectives and assessment; (b) encourage practitioners to reflect on their current practice, particularly in relation to analyzing practical language learning needs, setting objectives, and tracking progress; and (c) agree on common reference points (p.659).

While many other advocates of the CEFR describe it as being descriptive, rather than prescriptive (see for example Piccardo, 2010), Little (2009) has suggested that the CEFR's

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communicative orientation and its characterization of language learning as a form of language use point unmistakably towards a task based approach to teaching and learning in which use of the target language plays a central role; while its understanding of the learner's role suggests that the development of learner autonomy (learning how to learn, assuming proactive responsibility for the learning process) should be a priority (p.2).

According to Little (2009) the 'can do' descriptors of the CEFR

can be used to define a curriculum, plan a programme of teaching and learning, and guide the assessment of learning outcomes; and in this way the CEFR offers to bring curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into a closer relation to one another than has traditionally been the case, challenging us to rethink each from the perspective of the other two (p.1).

Little (2011) claims that the innovative nature of the CEFR is due to its use of Can Do statements to describe language proficiency as language use. Can Do statements focus on what students know and are able to do using the language rather than what they don't know.

Little (2010) sets out the stages for 'implementing' the CEFR

- 1 Explore the proficiency levels of the CEFR. Use a version of the CEFR that is faithful to the proficiency levels while taking into account the particularities of the (local) context.
- 2 Explore the implications of the selected descriptors for linguistic content.
- 3 Develop teaching and learning supports designed to encourage the adoption of task-based approaches to use the target language for classroom management and explanation.
- 4 Design forms of assessment that reflect the communicative orientation of the CEFR so that teachers and learners can ensure a strong continuity from curriculum through pedagogy to assessment (p.21).

Little (2010) acknowledges that the route from the CEFR to the language classroom is far from straightforward and direct and suggests that 'an adequate implementation of the CEFR is still rare'(p.21).



Despite the claims that the CEFR is not prescriptive, it would seem that to adapt the CEFR to an entire language program, teachers must share its basic philosophy and ideas. This point is taken up by Westhoff (2007) who argues that

supporting foreign language (FL) proficiency development through the stages described in the CEFR requires a shift in pedagogic routines for those practitioners who are used to teaching in traditional ways, especially in the role they conceive for grammar in the language classroom (p.676).

Westhoff suggests that

for many European countries, such shifts would mean a small revolution. But without such changes, the CEFR as a framework of reference .....will not be compatible with methodologies commonly used in European FL classes, with the risk that teachers and learners ....will see the ELP as an optional extra whose use will involve them in extra work (p.678).

The potential problems that Westhoff identifies were found in recent research done in Canada by Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, and Crowley (2011) on teachers' perceptions of CEFR-informed instruction. The research found that the two main challenges that teachers faced in implementing CEFR-informed instruction were: (a) time restriction related to viewing the CEFR as an additional component, and (b) lack of understanding the CEFR and its applicability in their classrooms. The study found that the majority of teachers who participated in the study indicated that

they often faced a time crunch and did not have sufficient time in the classroom to implement the CEFR-based activities and cover the demanding curriculum. Therefore, some teachers viewed the CEFR as an "add-on" rather than as an approach that could be used to cover various aspects of the curriculum (p.11).

The adoption of the CEFR as the starting point for organising teaching and assessing students' language proficiency in the courses that are the focus of this thesis has the potential to lead to changes in practice for teachers. As has been shown in this chapter, a number of criticisms have been made of the CEFR and the

implementation of the CEFR into a language program is not without problems. As I will show in the review of the research literature in the next chapter, two broad approaches to language teaching and learning have been identified, which have differing and conflicting assumptions about the practice of language teaching and learning; for example about what constitutes language knowledge, and how language learning should be measured. The adoption of the CEFR represents an attempt to change from one approach to the other.

## Chapter 4: Review of the research literature

In this chapter I will discuss research that is relevant to my thesis. Already in chapter two, where I looked at the background to the Bologna process, I discussed the theories behind the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning as well as research that was critical of the learning outcomes approach. In chapter three, where I discussed the changes that were made locally as a result of the Bologna process, I discussed the theories behind the CEFR, research that is critical of the CEFR, as well as research that addresses issues connected with the implementation of the CEFR into curriculum planning.

In this chapter I look at research on traditions of practice within higher education, including the area of teacher education. By looking at previous research on educational traditions I hope to be able to better understand, and communicate more clearly, the traditions and cultures which may guide practice within the field which is the focus of this thesis. I also look at research on language teaching approaches to be able to better understand the theories behind the CEFR, and other theories that guide language teaching and learning within higher education. Finally, I look at research on change processes within the higher education field.

The focus of this thesis is on how the policy discourses behind the Bologna process reforms are interpreted at the micro level within higher education. Looking at previous research on changes processes within higher education can help the understanding of how the introduction of the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process was recontextualised and influenced practice at the local level.

## Traditions of practice within higher education

As far as educational traditions and cultures are concerned, what a lot of the research shows is the complex nature of university culture and the lack of any unified culture both within and between departments and disciplines. Because of their complexity, researchers such as Brown and Duguid (2000) and Trowler and Knight (2000) suggest that universities cannot be seen as single entities. According to Bargh et al (1996) universities are complex institutions, consisting of different organisational strands that co-exist uneasily together. Bok (1986) describes university organizations as being decentralised with little hierarchical authority over teaching and research. Brown and Duguid (2000) and Trowler and Knight (2000) highlight the complexity of university departmental work which is often contested and provisional and the result of negotiation and construction. According to Martin (1991)

...it is important to recognise the complexity of the academic community, which is splintered by internal hierarchies, disciplinary boundaries, bureaucratic and professional sources of status and advancement, diverse sources of external funding and legitimacy, and the familiar categories of gender, ethnicity and age. Academia, in a distorted way, reflects a wide range of power structures and perspectives in the wider society. Academia's enormous diversity, in the context of limited funding and the inherently scarce resource of status, provides a fertile ground for conflict: conflict between different disciplines, between different paradigms and between different personalities (p.2).

Warner and Palfreyman (1996) highlight the tensions that exist between different university sub-cultures, particularly between academics and administrative staff. They argue that while the main focus for academics is on performance and human relationships, teaching and tutoring students, and research activities; administrative staff focus on the day-to-day management issues of the institution.

The existence of different cultures within universities and the contested nature of higher educational work are of key interest to this case study. As I outlined in chapter two, research shows that local cultures and discourses can have a key influence on how policy is implemented, and the idea of policy recontextualisation suggests

that local discourses can have a powerful mediating effect on how policy messages are re-interpreted.

According to Clark (1987), one common norm amongst academics is the principle of academic freedom, the freedom to choose what to research, what is taught and learned and when. A second norm relates to the Humboldtian tradition of trying to cultivate citizens, with intellectual institutions having a call to 'devote themselves to the elaboration of the uncontrived substance of intellectual and moral culture, growing from an uncontrived inner necessity' (Humboldt 1970, p.243).

Although academics share many core values, according to Clark (1987), they tend to identify strongly with their discipline rather than with the norms of the university as a whole and it is the norms of the discipline which guide their professional behaviour.

Becher and Trowler (2001) have described how academics perceive themselves and colleagues within their disciplinary communities. They claim that disciplinary cultures have identities and cultural attributes, which create a sense of belonging. These so called 'academic tribes' have their own specific cultural beliefs and practices and consequently

being a member of a disciplinary community involves a sense of identity and personal commitment, 'a way of being in the world': a matter of taking a cultural frame that defines a great part of one's life (p.47).

According to Becher and Trowler academics organise their social practice primarily in accordance with their loyalty to their subject as well as to others who work in their field of study. To be part of the tribe, staff must not only to be technically and intellectually proficient, but also loyal to the collegial group and its norms and values. The language and literature of an academic discipline not only plays a key role in establishing and maintaining cultural identity but is also used to defend the culture against outsiders.

According to some researchers university teachers have the reproductive task of participating in the socialization of newcomers or their students into the community that they themselves have once been socialized into. This task involves not only that of selecting

and teaching the skills of the discipline but of socializing their students into the cultural discourse. This process is described by some researchers as the 'hidden curriculum' (Margolis, 2001).

According to Clark (1987) it is only those who are schooled in the field who are seen as competent to review academic work and this tradition of peer review and the strong disciplinary influence has meant that academics have traditionally expected to work without management interference. One consequence of the principle of academic freedom and peer review is a radical and self-assertive individualism amongst academics, Clark argues, where the isolated study of specialized fields is preferred before a concern with how their work relates to that of other colleagues. According to Becher and Trowler (2001) higher education teachers are reluctant towards engaging in critical conversations with colleagues. Handal (1999) found that university teachers felt it was not 'culturally accepted' to talk to colleagues about their teaching.

The Bologna process can be seen as a threat to the influence of disciplinary culture and academic authority. As was shown in chapter two, the ideas behind the Bologna process can be seen as part of an attempt to reduce the influence of the discipline on practice in higher education and a potential threat to academic freedom and to the Humboldtian tradition; representing as they do an attempt to restructure higher education curriculum more to the needs of the labour market. The interplay between the Bologna process and local disciplinary traditions, culture and practice is one of the key concerns of this case study.

Research shows that disciplinary traditions can have strong influences on how policy reforms are interpreted and recontextualised at the local micro level. Henkel (2005) looking at the implications of policy change in the UK for academic identities found that the discipline had a prime place in academic working lives and academic autonomy. Winter and O'Donohue (2012) focus on the work ideologies that academics draw upon when reflecting on the purpose of higher education and academic work. The study found that university professors and lecturers 'expressed a strong preference for professional beliefs and goals in higher education over managerial beliefs and goals' (p.345). The study found little

evidence of academics aligning themselves to a managerial ideology and concludes that academics

continue to emphasise their professional identities by voicing moral discourses of “making a difference” in terms of teaching and student learning ..... and experiencing identity conflict when they see learning and knowledge creation being subordinated to economic principles and narrow efficiency criteria (p.348).

Research has also shown that differences exist between disciplines as far as practice within higher education is concerned. Research by Dressel and Marucs (1982) and Stark and Lattuca (1997, 2000) shows that course planning is closely related to the assumptions that university teachers have and which are embedded in the disciplinary conceptions and educational beliefs into which the teachers have been socialised. Norton et al. (2004) found that disciplinary influence on teachers’ beliefs and intentions were stronger than the amount of teaching experience and the influence of the institution.

Research has shown disciplinary differences in the types of learning goal prescribed (Cashin and Downey, 1995), and accepted attitudes and approaches to teaching (Stark and Lowther, 1988) and the time spent on teaching (Smelby, 1996). While disciplinary differences have their influence on teaching and learning, practices are also influenced by the educational ideologies and the conceptions of teaching held by the individual academic (Trowler, 1998). Pratt (1998) has shown that teachers’ practice concerning teaching and learning is influenced by their views of teaching, learning, knowledge as well as the roles of both the student and the teacher. According to Prosser and Trigwell (1999), student or learning centred teaching are less common than teacher or content centred orientations at the basic course level in undergraduate education. Lea et al. (2003) found that ‘many institutions or educators claim to be putting student-centred learning into practice, but in reality they are not’ (p.322).

As the research above shows, disciplinary traditions can influence key areas of teacher practice: how course planning is carried out, the types of learning goal prescribed, attitudes and approaches to

teaching and learning, as well as influencing views about the appropriate pedagogic roles for both the student and the teacher. These key areas of teacher practice are at the heart of my analysis of the influence of the Bologna process on the micro level; representing as they do the areas of practice that the Bologna process attempts to change and the areas of practice which has been shown are strongly influenced by disciplinary traditions.

In the next section I look at research into traditions of practice found in teacher education.

## Teacher education

Teacher education in Europe has traditionally been characterized by diversity and Hudson et al (2010) conclude that the systems of teacher education seem to still be extremely divergent. Garm and Karlsen (2004) conclude that

.....we cannot say that there exists a common teacher educational system in Europe. In relation to structure, curriculum, length of education and achievement standards, diversities are more striking than similarities (p.734).

Within this tradition of variation, Beach and Bagley (2012) nevertheless identify common elements in teacher education programmes in advanced knowledge-based economies which have their basis in three strongly expressed policy ideas;

The first is the recognition that scientific knowledge (i.e facts and principles that are acquired through the long process of systematic theoretical and empirical inquiry and stringent disciplinary investigation and analysis) is increasingly essential for economic growth and social, technological and cultural development....The second is a recognition of the relationship between formal education (schooling) and economic production and the third is a recognition of the role of teacher education in respect to this relationship and the value of placing this education inside the modern university (p.288).

Along similar lines, in Europe Valenčič Zuljan and Vogrinc (2011), argue that



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...teacher education is thought to influence the ability of the European Union to increase its competitiveness in a globalised world. In European countries teacher education has therefore been subject to numerous systemic modifications, as well as changes to concrete content, in the last 10 years. In addition to national projects, various European projects in the area of teacher education and professional development have also been undertaken (p.10).

In 2004, Garm and Karlsen (2004) summarised five trends that could be discerned in teacher education in Europe;

- Expansion; increased length of the education from two to four years for general college education,
- Assimilation; the integration of discipline studies and didactics,
- Academization; more subject-centered and discipline-oriented teacher education,
- Specialization; students may specialize in certain subjects, teaching for special age groups or specialize in different teacher functions,
- Didactisation; in the meaning more emphasis on subject-oriented teaching methods and didactics as well as on practice (p.737).

Not only has teacher education in Europe been traditionally characterized by diversity, diversity can be found within the group of teachers responsible for its implementation at university level. In a review of the research literature, Swennen, Jones and Volman (2010) found four sub-identities of teacher educators: teacher educators as school teachers, teacher educators as teachers in higher education, teacher educators as researchers and teacher educators as teachers of teachers (or second-order teachers). The review discovered that the sub-identity of teacher educators as teachers in higher education was dominant, but that not all teacher educators have a strong identity as teachers in higher education, especially when they were former school teachers. The review found that school teachers who start working in higher education

have to develop specific knowledge and skills to work with adult students, to work with different pedagogical teaching and assessment

methods, and to work in a different, and often larger, organisational context (p.140).

Furthermore, the review found that

There seems to be a broad understanding that teacher educators have to transform their identity as teachers to become teachers of teachers in higher education and, increasingly, to become researchers of teaching and teacher education (p.144).

Bernstein (2000) uses the terms teacher education *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* to describe two discourses of knowledge within teacher education. The teacher education *Trivium* derives from the problematization of internal learning and reflection and is related to internal control and the development of thinking skills and attitudes toward teaching and learning processes and their outcomes. The *Quadrivium* relates to the 'external' independent subjects that students will be expected to teach in schools as teachers (Beach, 2011; Beach and Bagley, 2012). According to Bernstein (2000) the organisation and communication of content, forms of communication, the relative distributions, and relations between them have varied over time in relation to teacher education development.

In the next section I will describe research on teacher education in Sweden.

## Teacher education in Sweden

Teacher education in Sweden, including pre-school teachers and vocational teachers, has been offered at higher education since 1977 and takes place at universities or other institutes of higher education. Swedish teacher education has for a long time been the subject of much political debate and has, as a result of this, been restructured and remodeled often. According to Lundström (2010), policy discourses in the reforms of teacher education in Sweden reflect the discourses on reform in Swedish upper secondary school. For example,

The rhetoric underpinning the reforms of the early 1990s was to a large extent about rapid changes in the surrounding world and the

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need to prepare for the high change pace and the uncertainties and competition of globalization (p.188).

The discourse of the knowledge society finds expression in policy documents of that time:

Knowledge and education is one of the most important means for a society to create welfare and prosperity...The knowledge growth is one of the most important forces for social reform in our time...The knowledge explosion, changes in working life, internationalisation and the global responsibility for our common future will raise new and growing demands for education in our society (prop.1990/91:85:42).

The proposals behind the changes made to teacher education in 2001, for example, refer to the changes in a fast changing society and the demands of lifelong learning (SOU 1999:63). One of the aims of the 2001 change was to create a stronger link between teacher education and the education sector in the now decentralised and municipally run schools (Fransson and Lundgren, 2003). The change attempted

.... to strengthen the school based part of teacher education..... and broaden the general professional knowledge base and competence of each teacher through curriculum theory and cross-disciplinary thematic subject studies (Beach et al 2011, p.7).

Lundström (2010) argues that the notion of international economic competitiveness within globalised economy underpins both the reforms of the early 1990s and more recent reforms. He argues that the notion is more implicit in the recent school reforms. According to Lundström, the rhetoric behind the reforms of upper secondary education in Sweden from the beginning of the 1990s show a shift from an emphasis on teachers' professional judgement towards a greater emphasis on the demands of working life and higher education. Lundström describes more recent policy discourses on teacher education as being primarily ones expressing discontent with educational quality in upper secondary school. Lundström suggests that these changes have been accompanied by a narrower definition of knowledge in policy documents, with a more a technical or

instrumental sense used than in the past. Teachers levels of autonomy are negatively affected too, with

working life and higher education,.....given the role of deciding what to demand from the education and the quality of the results (p.5).

The shift in emphasis towards the demands of working life and higher education in Sweden reflect the changes in Europe generally and those outlined by Valenčič Zuljan and Vogrinc (2011) above. Increasingly teacher education is seen as part of the trend to increase the ability of the European Union to be competitive in a globalised world.

Research into the contents of teacher education in Sweden distinguishes between different traditions within teacher training programmes. Looking at the content of teacher education in Sweden historically, Beach et al (2011) argue that one of the main aims of teacher education policies in Sweden over the past fifty years has been to eliminate the distinction between two traditions of teaching. The first tradition, the seminar tradition, focuses on practical aspects of teaching directed to teaching of younger children, and the academic tradition focuses on subject studies and directed toward the teaching of adolescents. According to Beach et al (2011) the seminar tradition has been based on

a school teaching content related subject knowledge curriculum that generally consisted of the same literature that the prospective teachers could use in their future teaching. It was aimed at the teaching of younger children and historically also children from low social-economic backgrounds in the so-called *folkskolan*. The academic tradition on the other hand emphasised formal subject (disciplinary) knowledge for teaching older children, mostly from the middle and upper-middle classes in the so-called *realskolan* and *läroverk* institutions. Knowledge of teaching as a professional practice was regarded as scientifically unproblematic in this tradition and treated more as a personal orientation (p.2).

Askling (2006) has described the inherent tension in Swedish teacher education between subjects and interdisciplinary orientation, and between an academic orientation and an orientation towards practice. According to Askling, university teachers either identify

with professionals in the compulsory school system or with the national and international research society.

According to Beach et al (2011) the 2001 teacher education changes (Regeringens proposition 1999/2000: 135, *En förnyad lärarutbildning*) can also be seen in this light. The changes were inspired by a need for a unified professional knowledge based on the scientific study of teaching as praxis, with the suggestion that a special Education Science Committee (Utbildningsvetenskaplig kommitté: UVK) should be formed within a new organization for research funding called *Vetenskapsrådet* (VR/ the Swedish Research Council: Government Bill 2000/01: 3). The aim was

to promote the development of educational research and research training by economically supporting high quality research in close proximity to teacher education and directly relevant to teachers' professional needs (Beach et al 2011, p.7).

In contrast to earlier policy intentions, Beach et al (2011) suggest that the most recent policy change (SOU 2008) makes an argument for reinstating the distinction between the two teaching traditions, with policy documents proposing different skills and training courses for teachers depending on the age group they are to teach.

Research has shown that despite the aims to eliminate the distinction between two traditions of teaching in Sweden, policy has had little influence on practice. Beach's (1995, 1997) research into the 1985 teacher education reform shows that despite the intention to create a teacher education where theoretical and practical training elements are integrated, education in practice was dominated by traditional teacher training, including the subject theoretical tradition and its conservative and traditional forms of teaching. Beach (1997) suggested that implementation problems can be related to the gap that exists between policy makers and practitioners, a gap associated with top-down control and which excludes most of the teachers and students who will be affected by the changes.

The existence of different traditions within teacher training programmes in Sweden and the fact that policy has had little influence on practice on teacher education in Sweden in the past are research findings that are of key interest to my thesis. These

research findings reflect the findings of similar research into policy implementation mentioned in chapter two, which showed that the implementation of policy is a complex process, where local discourses and cultures can mediate the influence of policy solutions (Beach, 1995). As was shown in chapter three, the teacher group that is part of this case study is made up of teacher educators who have different backgrounds and relationships to the teaching profession and academia. These different relationships to the profession, and the discourses which are associated with them, help to guide individual practice and what is regarded as appropriate knowledge.

Other research has drawn attention to the influence of different traditions on Swedish teacher education. Carlgren (1997) identifies three different cultures within teacher education in Sweden, ‘cultural conservatism’, ‘progressivism’ and ‘cultural radicalism’. Carlgren suggests that each of these sub-cultures has values which influence teachers’ understanding of their work and their professional attitudes and dispositions. According to Carlgren, these sub-cultures take shape from a number of underlying assumptions about education and society and represent different subject traditions, as well as different levels of teaching.

Cultural conservatism promotes subject knowledge in teachers, where teaching is treated as a subject rather than an ‘upbringing’ and teachers have feelings of autonomy in relation to the National Curriculum. Progressivism on the other hand emphasizes the need for change. It is closely connected to the overall ideas of the National Curriculum which is considered the basis for teachers’ work, with a focus on the individual child and child-centred teaching. Unlike the other two sub-cultures, cultural radicalism has an orientation towards broader societal issues and democratic schooling, and is based on individual teachers’ critical analysis and interpretation of the curriculum.

Carlsson (2008) has shown that despite the rhetoric of a ‘holistic’ and interdisciplinary approach within teacher education in Sweden, it is often characterized as being implemented by departments and faculties that adhere to their own logic, perspectives and ideals. The traditions have also influenced the kinds of teachers that make up

teacher educators at universities in Sweden. Linde (2003) has described one group that has a past as successful teachers in schools, and another that has been recruited from inside the universities and whose members often have a PhD degree.

According to Linde, these two groups have different views on what is important in the teacher education curriculum. The first group stress a content that is closely connected to the daily work in schools; such as how to create a good working environment in a school, how to deal with different kinds of learning difficulties, how to build good relations between schools and parents, how to work in teams, how to present various kinds of content and so on. The latter group; the academics, tend to stress the theoretical underpinnings of educational work. Topical areas of interest are: understanding education from its historical and philosophical base, relations between change in society and change in schools, sociological and cultural aspects of education and so forth.

Linde suggests that the different standpoints on what is important in teacher education do not necessarily cause any clashes between the two groups of teacher educators. They can teach different courses. However, when it comes to the compulsory courses for all students within the ‘General study’ area in the reformed teacher education

the two different groups of teacher educators, really have clashed. Each group has been fighting for expanding courses on what they consider important (Linde, 2003, p.119).

As far as the process of developing the learning outcomes into the two courses that are the basis of this case study is concerned, it is worth noting that the first group of teachers identified by Linde; those who have a past as successful teachers in schools, played a key part in the process. Within the discipline specific group responsible for the initial process of discussing and identifying the general areas of knowledge needed by students, there were three teachers working in Swedish secondary schools and teacher C from the teaching group, who worked part time at the college and part time in a Swedish secondary school. The next stage of specifying what students would do to demonstrate learning and writing the learning

outcomes was carried out by me and teacher C, who worked part time at the college and part time in a Swedish secondary school.

In the next section I will look at research on language teaching approaches.

## Research on language teaching approaches

The changes made to the courses that are the concern of this study included the adoption of the CEFR as the starting point for organising teaching, and assessing the teacher students language proficiency in English. The adoption of the CEFR in the courses represents an attempt to move language teaching and learning practice away from the traditions of university studies towards the more instrumental paradigm as represented by the CEFR. To help understand the significance of this change, I have included here a review of the approaches to teaching and learning found within the area of second language learning. Two broad approaches have been identified by researchers; the liberal tradition and the instrumental paradigm.

According to Bailey (1994) the liberal tradition is typical of modern language teaching at university and has the aim of 'instilling 'an appreciation of foreign literature and language through a scholarly analysis of their content and structure'. Language teaching itself, within this tradition, has been modelled on the teaching of the 'dead languages', as the classics were seen as the highest expression of the liberal philosophy (Bailey, 1994).

Quist (1999) suggests that language studies contributed to the development of the cultural and intellectual capabilities and sensibilities of students.

The emphasis was strongly on grammar and the development of written skills – an oral element to language teaching was either non-existent or incidental. This is because communication had no role to play in the traditional liberal humanistic language curriculum; its rationale for language teaching is the teaching of logical thinking skills and a certain way of describing reality (p.129).



According to Quist another aim of the liberal tradition is to expose the student to ‘good’ language use and the development of an aesthetic appreciation of language, through the study of literature.

This embodied the liberal humanist principle of language as striving for human perfection and beauty based on the Enlightenment ideas about the interpretation of the concept of culture and a wider epistemology (p.129).

### The aim of language teaching

... is to instill a sense of appreciation for the language and to recognise language as it functions and gives meaning to the ‘individual’ voice of the author. Language teaching is not geared around developing a language proficiency or communicative ability (p.130).

Following criticisms of this traditional methodology, most university language courses now contain some communicative content.

The Instrumental Paradigm is the other broad approach to language teaching and learning. It is more typically found outside of higher education, for example in the area of English for special Purposes (ESP). According to Quist (1999) the instrumental approach to language learning aims ‘...to provide students with the ‘real-world’ skills which are valuable to employers, language classes are aimed at developing a communicative competence’ (p.131). The communicative approach has a pragmatic view of language, focusing on real communicative tasks, the use of authentic material and ‘getting the message across’, based on the descriptions of language use derived from Hymes’ (1972) notion of communicative competence and Speech Act theory. According to Quist (1999)

These approaches generally start from a sociolinguistic description of how meaning is communicated in particular settings, situations and contexts and take account of a variety of parameters such as the intention to mean, the relationship between participants in the communicative act, the topic, the mode of communication and so forth (p.132).

The individual teachers that make up the teaching group that is part of this case study all have their own views about language teaching

and learning, which correspond more or less to the two broad approaches described here. They also have their own experiences of the two broad approaches based on the kind of language teaching they have been encountered during their careers. Those teachers, for example, that have worked in Swedish schools are more likely to have experience of the instrumental or communicative approach. At the time of the research period, foreign language learning in Swedish schools followed the 1994 Curriculum for the Compulsory School System (Lpo 94) which was expressed in terms of learning outcomes and where a more instrumental and learner-centred approach to foreign language learning was encouraged. As someone who has worked for the University College since 1994, but also has a wide experience of running company based language training in Sweden, I have experience of both approaches.

The potential significance of a move away from the liberal tradition towards a more instrumental approach to language teaching and learning should not be underestimated. According to Quist (1999) the two approaches are

... almost diametrically opposed in two of the areas which inform language teaching methodology: the view of what language is and the different educational aims. The liberal tradition aims to develop autonomous critical thinking and an aesthetic appreciation, whereas language learning in the instrumental or communicative approach aims at developing the competence to be able to communicate in work and/or social environments. It follows then that the pedagogical theories underlying these views also differ, but in the case of the liberal tradition of language teaching, even though based on clear educational values, there is no theory of *language learning* which informs teaching methodology (p.132).

The differences between the two approaches in terms of the view of what language and educational aims naturally mean that achieving a change from one approach to the other is difficult. The differing relationships that practitioners have to the profession, and the discourses which are associated with them, not only help to guide individual practice, but have the potential to mediate the effect of the discourses contained in Bologna policy documents which suggest the need for change in higher education.

In the next section I will present research on change processes within higher education.

## Change processes within the higher education field

The purpose of the thesis is to investigate a specific case of curriculum change; that of organizing teacher training courses around learner outcomes in line with the Bologna process. As mentioned above, the potential significance of some of the changes, such as the adoption of the CEFR to organize language teaching and learning should not be underestimated. At the same time, this thesis attempts to understand how policy is recontextualised at the local level, implying that policy implementation is seen as complex process, where local practitioners can influence how policy is implemented and where local discourses can mediate change. In this respect, previous research on change processes in higher education is of particular interest to this thesis. Previous research can throw light on how higher education institutions adapt to change and provide clues as to help understand the change processes in this particular case study.

A review of the research literature reveals that universities do not change easily (Clark, 1987; Ehn, 2001) and that wide differences exist among institutions, and among academic development staff, in how pedagogical change is conceived and implemented. As already mentioned in this chapter, Beach (1995, 1997) has shown that teacher education reform in Sweden had little influence on practice, and that this seemed to be in large part due to the gap that existed between policy makers and practitioners.

The research literature on educational change and curriculum reform shows how important it is that teacher's attitudes and values are in congruence with proposed changes (Stenhouse, 1975; Fullan, 1993; Hargreaves, 1995) As Apple (1999) has pointed out, the curriculum is always the result of conflicts and compromises which are a product of power and other forces from both within and outside of the educational context. MacDonald (2003) suggests that struggles over the curriculum are struggles over what education is for and whose knowledge is worth knowing.

Boyce (2003) concludes that many universities when adding, eliminating and revising courses and programmes, tend to keep the core values, assumptions and internal structures of a university stable. Identifying the core values, assumptions and internal structures in my own case study environment is one of the challenges that I face in my analysis of the local change process.

Hannan and Silver (2000) describe a level of scepticism amongst those who work in higher education towards policy initiatives which are greeted with a wide range of reactions and response. Research has also shown that through noncompliance, teachers will openly resist or dramatically revise policy with which they are ideologically opposed (Blase, 1997) and reform will be 'subverted by the complex interplay of human transactions that do not happen to fit the printed scenario' (Benveniste, 1989, p.329). Land (2001) has described a range of orientations adopted by educational developers to effect change in their respective institutions in the light of how they interpret the strategic 'terrain' in which they find themselves practising, and the varying interests of particular stakeholders. Different conceptions of the change process were found to be important determinants of practice as was the perceived need to work within disciplinary cultures and discourses.

This research above draws attention to the need to appreciate practitioner responses to the changes made in the local environment, and the need to understand how disciplinary cultures and discourses can act as a mediating factor on how change processes are interpreted and carried out. These are key issues which I explore in this thesis.

Guskin (1996) and Lucas and Associates (2000) give a number of reasons for resistance to change; change can be a challenge to the beliefs of the group and as such seen as a threat to the group's existence. Change can also be seen as a threat to existing power and resources. Finally change or the threat of change can bring out natural tendencies to resist the imposition of the will of others. King (2006) in a study of curriculum reform in higher education found that the reform process created 'intense levels of emotion' (p.8). The development team expressed frustration because of the collaborative decision-making process and the time spent on developing the

curriculum, but also from ‘challenging previous conceptions of teaching and work procedures’ (p.8). King found that

Shared decision-making represented a new demand on participants that was not only time consuming but also necessitated confronting colleagues and negotiating differences in order to make decisions..... This situation was contrary to our previous patterns of interaction where we had been relatively autonomous in our decision-making and control of our specialty teaching areas (p. 9).

King found that the critical review and reconstruction of the old curriculum and teaching practices unearthed many previously hidden conceptions and beliefs and concludes that

Significant change makes explicit the norms of behaviour and routine practices inherent in our teaching culture. Thus, change unearths the deeply held, but often hidden beliefs, values and understandings underpinning this practice, bringing them to the foreground of our consciousness (p.11).

In the study King found participants experienced a disparity between their former understandings of their educators’ role and their new practice, causing them to feel displaced;

They felt a sense of loss and incompetence: loss of expert status and loss of prestige. For a time this affected their self-esteem and for some, it resulted in a loss of pleasure in teaching (p.12).

The research above makes clear how important it is to consider the emotional significance of change, and how change can challenge teachers’ beliefs about how they should carry out practice, and create feelings of not being able to carry out their work as they feel they should. The research also highlights how change can be seen as a threat to existing power relations. These are again issues which can guide me whilst analyzing my data.

In an analysis based on a series of case studies conducted by the European Institute of Education and Social Policy in Paris, Cerych (1987) found that the implementation of higher education reforms ‘...depends largely on the degree of consistency (congruence) or inconsistency of a given reform with the rules and values already prevailing in the system’ (p.12). The analysis found that

the difficulties of policy implementation are exacerbated by the natural complexity and "bottom heaviness" of the system' and that reforms have always been '... a mixture of achieved, partially achieved, and unachieved goals, of intended, unintended, sometimes positive, and sometimes negative, results (p.14).

Van Driel et al (1997), as well as Dill (1999), have argued that educational change is more likely to occur through activities which are already necessary parts of everyday teaching and administration. These can then be used as a vehicle for systematic attempts to disseminate new ideas and practices, and to reflect on them. Change in teaching and learning within disciplinary communities is seen by Webb (1996) as a hermeneutic process, essentially dialogic and dialectical - a learning conversation. Yet, organisational tensions and constraints may impede any such conversations.

How any reform is implemented will depend on the nature of existing institutionalized practices (Beach, 1995, 2000; Gornitzka 2007). Gornitzka (1999) draws attention, for example, to two potentially conflicting influences on change in academic departments. The first is 'resource dependency', which emphasises the influence of the wider higher education environment and counters notions of self-directed and autonomous academic organisations, pursuing their own ends. The second stresses the survival value of conformity to powerful disciplinary norms, often operating in opposition to resource dependency.

The research review illustrates the importance of being aware of the rules and values already prevailing in the system under investigation; the importance of existing institutionalized practices and the influence of resources on how change process will be carried out. These are issues again I will attempt to have in mind during the analysis of the data produced.

More generally this review of the research literature on change in higher education makes clear that universities do not change easily and that disciplinary norms can play a key role in how change processes are perceived. The review also makes clear the importance in my own case study of being aware of the difference between policy rhetoric and policy implementation. In the next chapter I describe the theoretical concepts that I use in the thesis to

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understand the relationship between policy discourses and policy implementation and to understand how the Bologna process was implemented at the local micro level.





## Chapter 5: Theoretical concepts

As I outlined in the introduction chapter, this thesis concerns a case of curriculum change; that of organizing teacher training courses around learner outcomes in line with the Bologna process. The thesis concerns the process of policy implementation and recontextualisation at the local micro level, in my own field of practice. The research questions that I address are as follows:

- How is the Bologna process presented as a pedagogic discourse?
- How is the Bologna process recontextualised locally into pedagogic communication?
- How does the Bologna process interplay with practice at the micro level?

A number of theoretical concepts to be used in this thesis have already been referred to in chapter two. The first of these is the concept of discourse, which is used to frame the analysis of policy documents connected to the Bologna process. My aim is to use the idea of policy as discourse to obtain a greater understanding of the ideas and messages that are behind the Bologna process initiative. The second concept referred to in chapter two is the concept of recontextualization, which is used to investigate the influence of local discourses on the implementation of the Bologna process. The concept allows one to understand how local discourses and cultures can mediate the influence of the global and generic solutions behind policies such as those in the Bologna process. In the rest of this chapter I present the other concepts that I use in this research to frame my understanding of the case study findings.

As I mentioned in chapter one, official policy documents present the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning as ‘new’, and as representing a move towards a more student centred approach to learning. Many have gone as far as suggesting this change represents a ‘paradigm shift’ in education. In order to analyse

these claims, a theoretical tool is required which enables one to focus on how educational policies and practices may relate to power and ideology. I believe that Basil Bernstein's (2000) concept of the pedagogic device, as well as other theories developed by Bernstein, provide a tool for that analysis, and these theories will be presented in the next section.

Whilst the concept of recontextualisation and Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device contain the idea of struggle and human agency, they both as I see it lack sensitivity to context, and in particular the context of the area of change. Because of this I also use the concept of 'practice architectures' in my analysis. The concept is used in this study to not only understand the details of local practice, but more importantly to frame my analysis of how the possibilities for change inherent in the Bologna implementation process were either enabled or constrained by the practice architectures of teacher education, and of language teaching and learning approaches. I will present the concept more fully after the discussion of Bernstein's theoretical concepts.

## Bernstein's theoretical concepts

Bernstein's theoretical concepts address the field of education and the power relations in pedagogic communication. The concepts are particularly useful for education researchers as they make it possible to describe pedagogical discourse at various levels and move away from the rhetoric of 'learner-centred' or 'teacher-centred classrooms' (Ensor and Hoadley, 2004). This is particularly useful in this thesis as much of the rhetoric and discourse around the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process describe a more student centred approach to student learning.

Bernstein's theoretical concepts concern forms of symbolic control that take place both formally and informally through pedagogical practices (Bernstein, 2000, p.123). This symbolic control is a function of class relations of domination by the dominant social classes through the ideological control of subordinate groups through the school curriculum and instruction (Bernstein, 2000, 2001), which for Bernstein are maintained by human agency in

contested linguistic formations or modalities at the micro level (Bernstein, 2001). Bernstein argued that there are differences in the social-class assumptions about pedagogy, but that despite these differences the reproduction of power and symbolic control is often unaffected.

The understanding that power and control relations often remain unaffected is crucial in framing my analysis of the implementation of the Bologna process at the local micro level. Some of the literature on the Bologna process suggest that the introduction of learning outcomes can be seen as part of a ‘paradigm shift’ in education; a way of achieving curricular re-organisation and a move away from traditional forms of teaching and learning. Bernstein’s concepts allow a more critical analysis of education practices and the relationships of power and control, and the understanding that educational policy making often involves the re-permutating of old ideas in the face of perceived problems. As such one should not be surprised if curriculum change proposals in fact do little to alter the fundamental power and control relations that exist in education practice.

Bernstein’s theoretical concepts are examples of middle-range theory, introduced initially into sociological analysis by Merton (1967). According to Merton, middle range theories are

Theories that lie between the minor but necessary working hypotheses that evolve in abundance during day-to-day research and the all-inclusive systematic efforts to develop a unified theory that will explain all the observed uniformities of social behaviour, social organization and social change (p.39).

Middle-range theory does not look for universal social laws, but instead looks to generate propositions which account for a degree of regularity across time and place. It aims at integrating theory and empirical research, starting with an empirical phenomenon and abstracting from it to create general statements that can be verified by data.

Bernstein’s concepts allow the possibility of building a bridge between theory and the data that has been produced, and in particular to make the connection between macro level power

relations and the micro level practices in local teacher education. Bernstein's concepts link the micro level processes of education with the macro level, in terms of how cultural and educational codes and the content and process of education are related to social class and power relations. For Bernstein, power operates between agents with different and unequal power positions that regulate boundaries between discourses, knowledge production and reproduction and thus shape forms of consciousness (Bernstein, 2001). Bernstein was influenced in his later works (1990 onwards) by Foucault regarding concepts of both power and discourse, and the relations between them.

In terms of understanding the Bologna process, Bernstein's concepts require a more critical understanding of the policy context and how, as Ball (2008) suggests, the discourses contained in policy documents promote certain ideas and voices at the expense of others. Appreciating the policy context makes it possible to understand the learning outcomes reforms and what the changes represent, and to a greater understanding of the reaction to those changes in my own field of practice.

A number of researchers have used Bernstein's concepts to analyse the field of education, including teacher education (Beach, 1995; Adler, 2006; Neves, Morais and Afonso, 2004; Player-Koro, 2012), university teachers' ownership of curriculum change (Kirk and Macdonald, 2001), and exploring differences in sociology curricula in different universities (Vitale, 2001). Beach's 1995 research has influenced my study because it concerns changes in Swedish teacher education in the wake of a policy reform and addresses the processes of policy-action transformation and mediation. Ensor's 2004 research has also been influential; looking at it does at attempts to achieve a policy change in South Africa in a similar way to the goals of the Bologna process. Ensor shows how attempts to introduce a credit framework system in South Africa were resisted by a disciplinary discourse based on vertical pedagogic relations and associated with academic apprenticeship into domain-specific knowledge.

In the remainder of this chapter I describe aspects of Bernstein's theory that are of relevance to my thesis. I will first discuss

Bernstein's concept of the pedagogic device and then go on to describe the concepts of classification and framing, collection and integrated codes, pedagogic identities and vertical and horizontal knowledge structures.

### **Pedagogic device**

For Bernstein the pedagogic device is a system of rules that attempt to explain how symbolic control is created and realised in pedagogic practice. In the pedagogic device knowledge is recontextualised at the micro level and converted into pedagogic communication. Bernstein defines this communication as pedagogic discourse (Bernstein, 2000). Pedagogic discourse then is significant in the domination of subordinate classes by the dominant social classes through their ideological control of symbols and meanings. The pedagogic device is recontextualised into pedagogic discourse, establishing ideological representations which in turn create an order legitimizing and determining ordinate and subordinate relations between groups.

Bernstein's concept of pedagogic discourse describes the structure that allows pedagogic communication to be carried (Bernstein, 1990). Bernstein argues that pedagogic discourse is not an actual discourse but a reconceptualising principle by which other discourses are appropriated and brought into a special relationship with each other, for the purpose of their selective transmission and acquisition (Bernstein, 2000, pp.31-35). Pedagogic discourse concerns the production, distribution and reproduction of official knowledge and its consequences for different social groups. According to Morais (2002)

Pedagogic discourse refers not only to the scientific contents and competences to be transmitted, but also to their transmission and evaluation—that is, it refers to the what that is transmitted, how it is transmitted, and also which student realisations are considered legitimate (p.560).

In more concrete terms one can say that the concept of pedagogic discourse helps to frame how the various aspects of the curriculum

are carried out; what proof of learning is required of students, the subject content that is selected and how this is transmitted.

Bernstein's suggests that pedagogic discourse is comprised of two discourses: regulative discourse (RD), and instructional discourse (ID). According to Morais (2002)

RD is a discourse of order which translates the dominant values of society and regulates the form of *how* knowledge is transmitted. ID is a discourse of competence that refers to *what* is transmitted. The two discourses are incorporated in such a way that RD always dominates ID (p.560).

RD comprises the relations between students and teachers, while ID comprises the selection of subject content and rules for transmission and acquisition that regulate pedagogic communication. In my analysis of the implementation of the Bologna process at the local micro level I use both of these concepts. My aim is to locate and understand the distributive and evaluative rules or discourses at the local level that shape the relations between students and teachers and the selection of subject content and rules for transmission and acquisition that regulate pedagogic communication. The concept of instructional discourse is used to analyse the rules for transmission and acquisition that regulate pedagogic practice in the new learning outcomes curriculum. For Bernstein evaluative rules condense the meaning of the whole pedagogic device; the essence of the teaching relation is to evaluate the competence of the acquirer (Bernstein, 1990).

The concept of regulative discourse is used to analyse the power relations between teachers and students within the new learning outcomes curriculum. A key part of my analysis is the relationship between the new learning outcomes curriculum and the relations between teachers and learners at the local level. As part of the analysis I will use Bernstein's concept of 'pedagogic identities', to which I will return later in this chapter.

The pedagogic device is made up of three fields: the field of knowledge production where 'new' knowledge is constructed and positioned, the field of recontextualization where discourses from the field of production are selected, appropriated and repositioned

to become 'educational' knowledge, and the field of reproduction where pedagogic practice takes place. Each field has its own 'grammar' of interrelated 'rules': distributive rules, recontextualizing rules and evaluative rules (Bernstein, 1996). These rules are hierarchically related so that the recontextualising rules are derived from the distributive rules and the evaluative rules are derived from the recontextualising rules (Bernstein, 1996).

The three fields make up an 'arena' of conflict and struggle in which different groups attempt to determine how educational knowledge is constructed. These groups attempt to own the device so as to perpetuate their power through discursive means and establishing, or attempting to establish, their own ideological representations (Bernstein, 1996). Thus the device or apparatus becomes the focus of challenge, resistance and conflict (Bernstein, 1996, p.193).

The focus of this thesis is essentially about investigating the arena of conflict within the local field of reproduction. The thesis is about how the groups within the field of production organise their practice in response to the discourses found within the Bologna policy documents and associated with planning the curriculum around learning outcomes. As previous research has shown, policy implementation is a complex process, and as practitioners attempt to establish their own ideological representations, it inevitably involves challenge, resistance and conflict.

According to Maton and Muller (2007) distributive rules order the regulation and distribution of a society's worthwhile knowledge store. Distribution rules distribute different forms of knowledge to different social groups and thus determine who has access to what knowledge and under what conditions. Distributive rules distinguish between two different types of knowledge: the *thinkable* (*mundane*) and the *unthinkable* (*esoteric*), which in turn set the limits of legitimate discourse. According to Bernstein (1996)

the major control and management of the unthinkable is carried out by the higher agencies of education. The thinkable is managed by secondary and primary school systems (p.43).

For Bernstein there is no direct relationship between meaning and the material base. This means there is space for a gap, a potential discursive gap. The gap contains the potential for mediation; for alternative realisations of the relation between the material and the immaterial (i.e. the unthinkable or impossible) and any regulation of power will attempt to regulate the realisation of this potential (Bernstein, 1996).

The organization of curricula around learning outcomes in line with the Bologna process involves the real potential for a conflict over distributive rules and the regulation and distribution of worthwhile knowledge. It seems inevitable that, as part of creating the writing outcomes at the local micro level, there will be alternative realizations of the knowledge, understanding and skills that a learner is required to know, to understand and to demonstrate within a course of study. As research by Daugherty et al (2008) has shown, and referred to in chapter two, learning outcomes are often strongly contested and this conflict can express itself at the local level in terms of different interpretations within the local field as to what is worthwhile knowledge, as well as towards the representations of worthwhile knowledge found in policy discourses. These are aspects of recontextualisation, and as I have stressed in previous chapters, I use the concept in my research in a similar way to that of Ball (1998) and others to track the implementation of education policy at the local level and to show how policy discourses are contested and how local politics and cultures can mediate global and generic solutions.

Recontextualizing rules are derived from the distributive rules and they construct the thinkable, official knowledge and as a result the pedagogic discourse and structure what actually happens in the process of education. Bernstein (2000) argues that the process of recontextualisation involves both the principle of delocation (selecting a discourse or part of a discourse from the field of production where new knowledge is constructed) and a principle of re-location of that discourse as a discourse within the recontextualising field.

Recontextualisation takes place within and between both the official recontextualising field (ORF) and pedagogic



recontextualising field (PRF). The ORF is created and dominated by the state and its agents at the macro level, who operate to legitimise official pedagogic discourse.

The PRF consists of ‘pedagogues in schools and colleges, and departments of education, specialised journals, private research foundations’ (Bernstein, 1996, p.48) and is where official pedagogic discourse is interpreted and implemented. The PRF is represented in the espoused principles of those who influence the pedagogic transaction. The actors in the PRF are able to influence pedagogic discourse independently of the ORF meaning that there is a degree of autonomy over pedagogic discourse and its practices (Bernstein, 1996, p.48). In terms of this thesis, the actors in the PRF are those at the local micro level, mediating the ORF pedagogic discourses as presented by the European Union, Member States and other agents at the macro level.

Recontextualisation rules also give rise to evaluation rules. Not only do evaluation rules define what counts as legitimate knowledge, but they act selectively on pedagogic practice; both the content and form of transmission as well as on the subjectivity and agency of learners who belong to different social classes (Bernstein, 2000). In practical terms this means the evaluation rules reflect the pedagogic roles ascribed to teachers and learners; the roles ascribed to teachers and learners in relation to the contents and competencies that are to be acquired by the learners.

In order to conceptualize further the power and control aspects of education Bernstein developed the concepts of classification and framing. I will discuss these concepts in the next section.

### **Classification and framing**

Bernstein developed the concepts of classification and framing to help analyse how power and control are translated into pedagogic communication. The two concepts are embedded in each other and together they structure, appropriate and legitimise pedagogic practice (Bernstein, 1977).

The concept of classification refers to the degree of boundary maintenance between contents (Bernstein, 1973a, p. 205; 1973b, p.

88) and is concerned with the relations between various categories. Boundaries may be weak or strong between:

- disciplines (inter-disciplinary boundaries)
- different subjects within the same discipline (intra-disciplinary boundaries)
- the school discipline and everyday knowledge (inter-discursive boundaries)

Where classification is strong, contents are kept apart by strong boundaries; where classification is weak, the boundaries between contents are fragile (Bernstein, 1996).

The concept of framing takes us into pedagogy.<sup>3</sup> The concept is used by Bernstein to describe the degree of control that the teacher or the learner has over the selection of content, the order and pace of learning, and assessment. Where framing is strong the teacher has explicit control over selection, sequencing, pacing and assessment. Where the framing is weak the learner has more apparent control. Bernstein uses the word apparent as his model is based on the assumption that the teacher is always in control; suggesting that control is always present in a pedagogical relationship, but what varies is the form that this control takes.

Although classification always has an external value because it is concerned with relations, it can also have an internal value (Bernstein, 1996). In the classroom, for example, internal classification can refer to the way in which space is occupied; with strong internal classification meaning that space is strongly bounded and that there are specific places for specific activities. As far as framing is concerned, external value refers to the extent that controls on communications outside the pedagogic practice enter the pedagogic practice. Where external framing is strong, societal norms have a strong influence on the practices of school.

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<sup>3</sup> Here I am using the word pedagogy in the sense that it is used by Bernstein. In this Anglo Saxon definition it is used to describe, for example, the selection of content, the order and pace of learning, and assessment. In the Swedish and European sense the word is used to describe everything to do with the study of education.

The learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process can be seen as an attempt to exert more external influence on aspects of pedagogy. As was shown in chapter two, Bologna policy documents connect the introduction of learning outcomes planning with the importance of labour market requirements, professional demands and generic transferable skills and competences, and learning outcomes are presented as a key way of achieving curricular re-organisation. Furthermore, policy documents present the introduction of learning outcomes as representing a shift towards a more learning and student centred educational process, with teachers and trainers playing the role of guides or coaches rather than instructors. The concepts of classification and framing enable a more critical evaluation of the significance of these ideas on practice. Instead of using rhetorical phrases such as ‘student centred’, the concepts provide tools which enable the analysis of key aspects of pedagogic practice and the influence of the Bologna changes on pedagogical relationships of power and control.

The concepts of classification and framing have been used extensively to analyse educational contexts and practices and their relations to the dispositions brought to education by different social groups. Bernstein argues that the two concepts translate into particular codes (‘an orientation to organizing experience and making meaning’) (Hoadley and Muller, 2009, p.69) and that by using the concepts of classification and framing and their internal and external features it is possible to show how the distribution of power and principles of control translate themselves in terms of communicative principles and spatial relationships (Bernstein, 1996).

Two model types of curriculum code can be identified, the ‘collection and the ‘integrated’ and these are presented in the next section.

### **Collection and integrated curriculum codes**

Using the concepts of classification and framing, Bernstein outlined two types of curriculum codes: collection and integrated codes (Bernstein, 1996). Bernstein argues that as classification and framing change in value, from strong to weak, there are changes in

organisational practice, changes in discursive practice, changes in transmission practice. There are also changes in the concepts of the teacher, changes in the concepts of the students, changes in the concepts of knowledge itself, and changes in the forms of expected pedagogic consciousness (Bernstein, 1996, pp.29-30). The collection curriculum code refers to a strongly classified curriculum; the integrated curriculum code to a weakly classified curriculum.

While these models of curriculum are two ideal types, and do not exist in their ideal forms, they are nevertheless analytic tools which I use to help understand the changes made in connection with the implementation of the Bologna process and the recontextualisation of the process at the local level. The categories used to describe the models and the descriptions contained within them are used to organize the data produced in this thesis and to analyse the connections between aspects of the curriculum. The two models make it possible to better understand how power relations and principles of control translate themselves in terms of organisational practice; in terms of transmission practice, concepts of the teacher and learners and concepts of knowledge.

In the 'collection' curriculum pedagogy is 'visible', meaning that it is characterized by explicit hierarchy, explicit sequencing and explicit evaluation criteria. Subject areas are clearly and explicitly defined and classified, as are the skills and procedures to be taught to students. Classifications are strong, both over knowledge and over space. There are tight controls over the production of new knowledge and on what new knowledge categories enter the curriculum. Teachers tend to be identified with their subjects and the level at which they teach.

In the collection code spaces where learning can take place are clearly marked and regulated. Rather than focusing on what the students know already, the focus is on what teachers need to teach and what learners have yet to learn. Assessment criteria are explicit and specific, and the focus of assessment is on what is missing in the student's product. Student performances are usually graded, which gives rise to 'repair services' and diagnostic practices. Learners are clear about what they have achieved and what they must achieve in the future, but not made aware of how their

learning is socially situated and dependent on good teaching as well as the institutional context. Achievements are instead presented as the result of innate talents and abilities.

In situations where the 'collection' curriculum code structures an institution, there are clearly demarcated and segmented subject frames for teachers and because of this diverse ideological affiliations and 'weak relations between staff with respect to pedagogic discourse' (Bernstein, 1996, p.25). Research into school development suggests that the collection type of institution does not facilitate collaboration between staff in curriculum decision making and thus limits the possibilities of educational development (Fullan, 2001; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Gosling and D'Andrea, 2001).

In the 'integrated' code curriculum pedagogy is 'invisible', meaning that it is characterized by implicit or hidden rules only known to the teacher. Subject areas are more diffuse and integrated in the form of projects and themes. Teachers and learners have more control over the selection, sequencing and pace of the curriculum. Classification is weak, both over knowledge and over space. Students have considerable control over what can be seen as a pedagogic space. Assessment criteria are likely to be implicit and assessment focuses on what is present in the student's product. There is more emphasis on what learners already know and the skills they already possess. The student's self-reflection is emphasized and the teacher's role is more about facilitating learning than explicit teaching. Student work is less likely to be graded, but where grading does take place, it is covert and not shared with the learner, nor are explicit targets for attainment clarified.

Even though there are differences between the two curriculum codes, Bernstein argues that all forms of pedagogy, whether performance or competence based, involve the social formation and regulation of individual identities;

Pedagogy is a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice and criteria, from somebody(s) or something deemed to be an appropriate provider and evaluator (Bernstein 1999a, p.259).

Bernstein argues that while performance pedagogy is explicit in terms of teacher authority, the competence based model is more implicit. Authority is hidden and the fundamental evaluative nature of the schooling process is disguised. The visible pedagogy of the performance model shows clear power relations, whereas the invisible pedagogy of the competence model masks them, making it difficult to distinguish the transmitter. Both forms of pedagogy construct a particular form of 'ideal student', against which students are measured.

The inevitable power relations between teachers and students that exist in both forms of curriculum, and the construction of a particular form of 'ideal student' leads me to the next aspect of Bernstein's work which I use in my analysis; that of pedagogic identities.

### **Pedagogic identities**

In his last book Bernstein began to describe a theory of how curricular orientations projected distinct 'pedagogic identities' for both teachers and students (Bernstein, 2000). Bernstein argues that the different discourses associated with the 'integrated' and 'collection' models of curriculum might be regarded as more or less appropriate for different categories of learner. One discourse might, for example, be seen as appropriate for 'high ability' learners and another for students deemed to be of 'low ability'. In this way, Bernstein argues that official pedagogic discourse distributes different forms of pedagogic discourse and thus different ways of thinking and feeling across different categories of learners.

Bernstein describes four curricular orientations that create and distribute pedagogic identities; retrospective, prospective, therapeutic, and market orientations. According to Bernstein these curricula orientations attempt to construct in teachers and students a particular moral disposition, motivation and aspiration, embedded in particular performances and practices. The 'retrospective' orientation is shaped by 'grand narratives of the past' (Bernstein, 2000, p.66) that are recontextualised to stabilise that past and project it into the future. The 'prospective' orientation is also formed from

the past although prospective identities are grounded in the future and not the past. The prospective orientation reflects neo-conservative efforts to achieve change in order to retain desirable aspects of the past in the present. These identities are constructed to deal with cultural, economic and technological change and select features of the past which are recontextualised to defend or raise economic performance.

Both the retrospective and the prospective orientations are regarded as 'centred' because they are driven by top-down policy and aim for convergence and uniform outputs for students.

In contrast to the other two orientations, the therapeutic and the market, construct de-centred identities encouraging divergence, where education is seen as being more private and for the development of the individual. The 'therapeutic' identity is introjective and 'produced by complex theories of personal, cognitive and social development, often labelled progressive' (Bernstein, 2000, p.68).

These identities favour non-specialised, flexible thinking, team work and active participation. The de-centred 'market' identity is competitive and responsive to the market and market values. This identity is part of a culture facilitating the survival of the fittest and 'The transmission here views knowledge as money. And like money it should flow easily to where demand calls' (Bernstein, 2000, p. 69). According to Bernstein these identities are 'a reflection of external contingencies' and 'constructs an outwardly responsive identity rather than one driven by inner dedication' (pp.69-70). The focus is short rather than long term, on the extrinsic rather than the intrinsic, and upon the exploration of vocational applications rather than upon exploration of knowledge (p. 69).

For Bernstein, the four different orientations co-exist and thus curriculum, pedagogy and assessment practices in education at any time will reflect aspects of all orientations. The aim of research is to track the relative strength of each orientation over the history of educational reforms, and across different sites. Viewed in this light, educational reforms are regarded by Bernstein as the outcome of the struggle to project and institutionalize particular identities (Bernstein, 1999a). The official pedagogic discourse around

educational reform sets up different categories of learners, different definitions of learner needs, and leads to a different set of prescriptions for practice.

Bernstein's concept of pedagogic identity is helpful in understanding the Bologna process reform; the contents of the process and the Bologna discourses. The pedagogic identities presented for students in Bologna policy documents would appear to be close to the therapeutic and the market orientations described above, where education is seen as being about the development of the individual. As was shown in chapter two, policy documents connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process present a particular category of learner and particular definitions of learner needs; a category of learner who needs to be more actively involved in their own learning, and who needs to be flexible and achieve generic competences required by employers. A particular role for teachers is presented too; more akin to that of a facilitator or manager of the learning process.

The pedagogic identities ascribed to teachers and learners present particular prescriptions for practice too. As was outlined in chapter one, official policy documents on the Bologna process present 'traditional' transmission methods as being 'old' and not longer acceptable, while the organization of courses around learning outcomes is represented as 'new' and good and symbolising a more student centred approach to learning. As was shown in chapter two, supporters of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning argue that planning around learning outcomes also requires changes to practice; with for example the suggestion that assessment tasks need to be authentic and that assessment should be formative in nature. Many of these prescriptions form the basis of the changes that were made locally in response to the introduction of the new learning outcomes based curriculum and which are described in chapter nine.

The fact that educational reforms can be seen as a struggle to project and institutionalize particular identities implies the possibility of the existence of alternative discourses around educational reform which in turn present different categories of learners, different definitions of learner needs, and different sets of prescriptions for



practice. In this thesis I attempt to locate local discourses and the identities for teachers and learners which they prescribe, and to assess the extent that they act to support or hinder the cultural identities and the design and conduct of pedagogy legitimised and projected for both teachers and students in the different discourses connected with the Bologna process.

### **Horizontal and vertical discourse**

As has been mentioned already in this last section, policy documents connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process suggest that the knowledge obtained by students in higher education should to a greater extent match the requirements of the labour market requirements, with the contents of students' education reflecting professional demands and the generic transferable skills and competences required in working life. Concepts developed by Bernstein to theorise the structures of knowledge are used in this thesis to describe the significance of these policy discourses, and provide a framework within which to understand the construction of different knowledge forms across different fields and disciplines.

To theorise the structures of knowledge Bernstein (1999a) distinguishes between two forms of discourse: horizontal and vertical. Horizontal discourse is akin to everyday or common-sense knowledge, being concrete and context-dependent. It is directly and inextricably linked to a material base and while being powerful in dealing with immediate concrete situations in specific contexts it has difficulty transcending different contexts (Beach and Bagley, 2012). Knowledge is segmentally organized; knowledge is transmitted tacitly within the context of performance by means of modelling and showing (Bernstein, 1999b, 2000). Vertical discourse is abstract and context independent and is typical of academic knowledge.

Within these discourses Bernstein makes a further distinction between two kinds of knowledge structures, hierarchical knowledge structures and horizontal knowledge structures. A hierarchical knowledge structure is described as 'a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised' which

‘attempts to create very general propositions and theories, which integrate knowledge at lower levels, and in this way shows underlying uniformities across an expanding range of apparently different phenomena’ (Bernstein, 1999a, pp.161,162). A ‘horizontal knowledge structure’ is defined as ‘a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction and circulation of texts’ (1999a, p.162).

Hierarchical knowledge structures are motivated towards increasing integrating propositions, operating at more and more abstract levels (Bernstein, 1999a). The natural sciences; with physics as the archetypal example, is a vertical discourse with a hierarchical knowledge structure.

Horizontal knowledge structures are characterized by their mode of interrogation and the criteria for the construction of texts, rather than a search for a theory that encompasses all others. Learning new knowledge does not rely on previous knowledge. Horizontal knowledge structures consist of a series of specialized languages and each of these languages make differing and opposing assumptions, and have their own criteria for what counts as evidence or for what counts as a legitimate question. Development in a horizontal knowledge structure is the development of a new language that offers the possibility of a fresh perspective, a new set of questions, a new set of connections. The humanities and social sciences are examples of vertical discourses with horizontal knowledge structures

Horizontal knowledge structures contain strong or weak grammars (Bernstein, 1999a). Horizontal knowledge structures that have strong grammars have an explicit conceptual syntax capable of ‘relatively’ precise empirical descriptions and generating formal modelling of empirical relations. Knowledge structures with weak grammars on the other hand have weaker powers for empirical descriptions.

The horizontal knowledge structures described by Bernstein provides a framework within which to understand the changes made locally in response to the Bologna process, and in particular the decision to adopt the CEFR as the starting point for organising teaching, and assessing the teacher students language proficiency in English. Using Bernstein’s theories on the structures of knowledge,

this change can be understood as an attempt to force a horizontal curriculum reform; by attempting to move language teaching and learning practice away from the liberal tradition of university studies towards the more instrumental paradigm as represented by the CEFR descriptors and its focus on successful communication and ‘real-world’ skills. As was made clear in chapter three, these two traditions have differing and conflicting assumptions about the practice of language teaching and learning; for example about what constitutes language knowledge, and how language learning should be measured.

As was also shown in chapter three, there are a number of issues connected to the implementation of the CEFR into curriculum planning, and the data produced relating to the adoption of the CEFR at the local micro level can be analyzed by reference to the specialized languages within a horizontal knowledge structure, consisting of differing and opposing assumptions, differing criteria for what counts as evidence or for what counts as a legitimate question.

## Practice architectures

The final theoretical concept described in this chapter is that of ‘practice architectures’. Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008) have used the concept to help understand the conditions on which practice, including educational practice, takes place. The concept is useful in the analysis of the findings of this case study and in particular the analysis of the interplay of the Bologna process on practice. The concept relates to the tensions between the individual and the social, and as such allows for the context of change to be explored. The concept allows a framework for the analysis at the local level of the possibilities for change inherent in the Bologna implementation process. Practice architectures can act to either enable or constrain the possibilities of change to practice.

According to this theory, organizations, institutions, local settings and the people in them construct their practice which give substance and form to what is and can be said and done, by, with and for

whom. These ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’ are, according to Kemmis and Grootenboer (2008)

part of our lived relationships with others, and are so deeply sedimented in our experience that they may become invisible – taken for granted as ‘the way things are’ (p.38).

According to Kemmis and Grootenboer, social practices are the product of the complex interplay between individuals and their social circumstances. They argue that there is a strong dialectical interrelationship between the individual and the social; they reside within each other, mutually reinforcing one another. Referring to Schatzki (2001) and Lave and Wenger (1991) they argue that

organisations, institutions and settings, and the people in them, create *practice architectures* which prefigure practices, enabling and constraining particular kinds of sayings, doings and relatings among people within them, and in relation to others outside them. The way these practice architectures are constructed shapes practice in its cultural-discursive, social-political and material- economic dimensions, giving substance and form to what is and can be actually said and done, by, with and for whom (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008, pp.57–58).

Sayings, doings and relatings are not separate entities but bundled together and together they

shape dispositions and actions, both in the educator’s general response to a particular situation or setting, and in relation to their particular responses at particular moments (p. 50).

According to this theory the educator’s practice is also the product of other practices; it is ‘shaped and conditioned by circumstances and prior histories, and by the situations in which she or he acts, not entirely by the action of the practitioner alone’ (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008, p.39). The identities and subjectivities of actors are framed and constructed by these practice architectures. People construct their self-understandings and their understandings of the world, their modes of activity and their skills and capabilities, and their roles and patterns of relating to others in the terms made available to them by the practice architectures they inhabit. Thus teachers are made the teachers they come to be by complying with

and also by resisting the particular practice architectures in which they live and work.

Practices also hang together; they are organised or ‘integrative’ according to Schatzki’s (2002) notion of practices. Practices are not static, however. They can be seen as dynamic and evolving, ‘being reproduced and transformed over time as they meet changing needs and demands in different places at different times’ (Kemmis and Grootenboer, 2008, p.51).

In a paper discussing the Practice Architectures in Mathematics Education, Kemmis (2008) suggests that

The practice architectures of education and mathematics education are constructed not only by the knowledge, capabilities, and values internal to traditions in mathematics education but also by meta-practices external to those traditions – particularly the meta-practices of educational administration and policy making, initial and continuing teacher education, and educational research and evaluation. These meta-practices function as practice architectures that enable and constrain possibilities for action in education and mathematics education. They may enable and constrain action to such an extent that they may even make *education* – or mathematics education – almost impossible to enact (p.22).

Understanding how different factors combine to facilitate or constrain the adoption of new practices thus involves considering how individuals interact via these extra-individual dimensions of language, work and power. In practical terms this means looking at the discursive conditions that enable or constrain the ‘sayings’ of practice (i.e. the relationship between hearers and speakers), the material and economic conditions that enable or constrain the ‘doings’ of work practices (i.e. the relationships between educators and learners) and the social and political conditions that enable or constrain the ‘relating’ of practice (i.e. the relations between formal leading and teachers which influence leading practice).

Under some circumstances, these ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’ become sedimented and institutionalised and as such may constrain subsequent action-possibilities. When this happens they function as mediating preconditions that pre-form what kinds of practice or

praxis will be possible in particular kinds of circumstances. According to Kemmis (2008), changing professional practices

is not just a matter of changing practitioners' own particular understandings and self-understandings (cf. sayings), skills and capabilities (cf.doings) or values and norms (cf. relatings), but also changing the practice architectures that enable and constrain what practitioners can do (p.21).

In this thesis I use the concept of practice architectures to analyse the responses to the changes made locally as a result of the Bologna process. As has already been stated earlier in this chapter, teachers comply and also resist particular practice architectures. From this perspective, the Bologna process can be seen as a possible threat to existing practice architectures, coming as it does from outside of local practice. At the same time the 'sayings', 'doings' and 'relatings' of local practice in the data produced in this study can give an indication of compliance to particular practice architectures and of resistance to others.

One example of research looking at the influence of practice architectures on higher education is that by Balatti and Belward (2012), who look at practice architectures at a university in Australia. They list what they believe are 'some of the key aspects of the entrenched practice architectures defining how mathematics has been traditionally taught' (p.828). An overview of the aspects listed by Balatti and Belward is reproduced below.

Practice architecture	Examples
Saying/thinking	
About the learner	Student performance has declined since the 1990s. Student results are primarily a function of students' ability, background knowledge and application. The school system is the main source of the Problem.
About the teaching	Content and pedagogy in first year mathematics are not the cause of the problem but need to change because of the problem. Content is more important than pedagogy. Staff see themselves as mathematicians first,

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	teachers second. Pedagogy is not generally understood and is not a priority.
Doing	
Lecturing	Transmission approach.
Tutorials	Traditional—students arrive with problems and tutor answers them.
Assessment	Online quizzes; on-course and final exams; no calculators.
Resources	Lecture notes, tutorial sheets and solutions- the same year to year.
Tutors	Generally postgraduate students with no training in teaching.
Relating	
Student/student	No peer collaborative work done.
Student/lecturer	Little subject specific feedback sought.
Lecturer/lecturer	Lecturer works autonomously; conversations on teaching are rare.

From Balatti and Belward (2012, p.829).

The examples of ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’ given by Balatti and Belward give an indication of the kinds of factors which can be located within the data produced in this thesis. While the concept of ‘practice architectures’ has weak predictive capacities, it has good descriptive and analytical ones that not only help to explain the conditions on which practice takes place, but help to explain the constraints put on particular kinds of sayings, doings and relatings at the local micro level. In practical terms this implies analyzing the ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’ in the data to try to locate the practice architectures and local discourses which influence practice. As has been made clear in this chapter, these practice architectures and discourses can act to mediate the possibilities for change possible in particular situations. In the context of this case study this

means that they can mediate against the discourses presented within the Bologna policy documents.



## Chapter 6: Research methodology

The scope of this thesis is to identify the discourses in policy documents relating to the Bologna process and to investigate the conditions and effects of the implementation of the learning outcomes aspects of the Bologna process into my field of practice. The aim of the research is not to test a hypothesis or look for causes, but rather to search for happenings and understand interrelationships.

The thesis uses qualitative data in order to try to answer my research questions. I have used a form of discourse analysis to identify policy discourses connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process. However, as the main focus of the study is the process of recontextualisation and mediation at the local micro level, the investigation can be described as an example of a practitioner research case study, because of my position in relation to the research.

As in most case studies a number of methods have been used to collect and analyse the data produced, as will be described in this chapter. In order to identify policy discourses connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process, I have analysed a number of official policy documents (such as from the European Commission) as well as research which attempts to put such policies in context. To explore the process of recontextualisation and mediation at the local micro level, I have, for example, looked at local documentation (such as course plans and course descriptions) as well as my field notes and teacher talk in planning meetings and in written and verbal discussions concerning the organisation of the courses around learning outcomes. Finally there is an element of autoethnography about the research too; where I reflect on my own role in the recontextualisation process and describe the change in my understanding of the process of policy implementation and of my own field of practice. I have also

reflected on how my values, attitudes, perceptions, opinions, actions and feelings fed into the situation being studied.

## Discourse analysis

In this study I use a form of discourse analysis to identify policy discourses connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process. In chapter two I explained that my understanding of discourse is influenced by Foucault's (1980) ideas about 'truth'; which according to Foucault is something that decision-makers have the power to define. Discourse defines what is 'normal' by organising knowledge systematically and putting limits on what can and cannot be meaningfully argued.

According to Foucault the aim of discourse analysis is to examine the procedures of control and limitations of discourses, which in turn might illuminate the mechanisms and instances necessary for their existence. Codd (1988) suggests that the analysis of policy documents can be construed as a form of textual deconstruction

where the researcher attempts to examine the effects of policy documents and expose the ideological processes which lie behind the production of the text (p.235).

In this thesis my focus is both on the policy discourses of the Bologna process, but also how these discourses have influenced practice at the micro level. The starting point of my research into identifying policy discourses connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process has been to first survey secondary literature on the subject. I did this to gain an overview of the discourses in the policy area and to gain more knowledge about European education and the Bologna process generally. As a result of this survey, I was able to identify specific texts and documents which were referred to and cited in the literature and that were considered to be of importance. I then analysed the specific policy texts referred to in the literature to discover more how policies of higher education are presented and disseminated. This process also led to a greater understanding of the historical, ideological, and political climate in which policy texts are embedded. The insights

gained in this process have enabled me to connect these findings to the processes of recontextualisation and mediation at the micro-setting and to explore what Bacchi (2000) refers to as the 'space for challenge' (p.55). In other words, my greater understanding of the policy context has been crucial in enabling me to understand the processes of recontextualisation at the local micro level.

## Practitioner research

The term 'insider research' is used to describe projects where the researcher has a direct involvement or connection with the research setting (Robson, 2002). Where professionals carry out a study in their work setting this is sometimes called practitioner research. The term practitioner research has been used to describe research carried out by practitioners for the purpose of advancing their own practice (McLeod, 1999), Robson (2002) describes the practitioner researcher as

someone who holds down a job in some particular area and at the same time carries out systematic enquiry which is of relevance to the job (p.447).

This definition of practitioner research applies well to the kind of research that I have carried out in this thesis. As course coordinator for the courses that are the focus of this case study I have a direct connection with the research setting. My position as a researcher involves a new position as an insider-outsider in relation to the area of practice, continuing my role as course coordinator and at the same time taking the role of researcher. According to Kemmis (2009), researching practice from within practice traditions means

to re-orient oneself in the practice of the practice, to re-orient one's understandings of the practice, and to re-orient the conditions under which one practices (p.12).

This neatly describes the scope of my research. Because I am part of the case that is the subject of this thesis, I occupy both the spectator and participant perspectives; the grey zone as is described by Kemmis. Kemmis describes this position as the inter-subjective

perspective which enables the possibility of entering ‘a real or imagined conversation about how we see others and how others see us’ (p.12). Reid and Green (2009) also write about the possibility of being positioned simultaneously both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the immediacy of everyday experience, which enables the practitioner to think ‘dialogically’, to use their experience to understand the immediate in a larger, longer context of meaning, consequences and possibilities. Kinsella (2012) too talks about dialogic intersubjectivity; the extent to which the dialogic nature of interpretation is acknowledged and the extent to which ‘others’ versions of reality are given a hearing.

While my dual roles as course coordinator and researcher in many ways overlap, my research role also involves creating a distance from my practice. As Rönnerman (2005) puts it, practitioner research

creates distance from known activities. Through documentation, practice is ‘objectified’. Such knowledge can be related to other knowledge generated in earlier and parallel studies. By such means, existing theories can be challenged (p.308).

The process described by Rönnerman is how I have carried out my research. By creating distance from practice through the research process, I have been able to place known activities in relation to previous research on the implementation of education policy and on the traditions and cultures found in higher education. I have then been able to carry out the kind of dialogic conversations described by Kemmis and by Reid and Green above, where the voice of ‘the other’ gets a new meaning and level of understanding. The utterances of teacher educator colleagues take on a new meaning and can be put into the context of the changes that are signified by the Bologna reforms.

When insider research is carried out by teachers it is often referred to as teacher research. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) argue that teacher research refers to ‘all forms of practitioner enquiry that involve systematic, intentional, and self-critical inquiry’ (p.22) and that the specific form that teacher research takes is less important than the critical reflection it compels, leading to

understanding of practice not possible through conventional in service training focusing primarily on the refinement of technique. Lamb and Simpson (2003) suggest that practitioner research for teachers can encompass a range of learning, such as the development of pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills, the enhancement of sociological, psychological, policy and management awareness, linguistic skills and possibly reflecting on the learning experience. They suggest that the format of practitioner research can also vary, from

whole school CPD seminars; structured courses in higher education; individual or collaborative learning through systematic reflection on teaching and learning; or peer observation (p.56).

The wide scope of practitioner research has value for my own research project, covering as it does the wide range of learning opportunities mentioned by Lamb and Simpson.

Practitioner research is often regarded as a strand of action research. In the next section I will describe some of the characteristics of action research, and following this short overview I will set out my own research position.

## Action research

‘Action research’ is an umbrella term used to describe professionals studying their own practice in order to improve it. Kemmis and McTaggart (2005) describe the ‘family of action research’ as including participatory research; critical action research; classroom action research; action learning; and action science.

According to Cohen et al (2007) there are many different definitions of what action research is. For Kemmis and McTaggart (1992) action research

...is not research done on other people. Action research is research by particular people on their own work, to help them improve what they do, including how they work with and for others (pp. 21-2).

The majority of the definitions of action research mention problem solving, or ‘where some change of feature results in a more desirable

outcome' (Cohen et al 2007, p.297). Cohen and Manion (1994), for example, define action research as 'a small scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention' (p.186).

In the sphere of education, Carr and Kemmis (1986) suggest that action research

is a form of self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants (teachers, students, or principals, for example) in social (including educational) situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of (a) their own social or educational practices, (b) their understanding of these practices, and (c) the situations (and institutions) in which these practices are carried out (p.162).

Given the above, reflexivity is an important part of the action research process. According to Cohen et al (2007)

reflexivity is central to action research, because the researchers are also the participants and practitioners in the action research-they are part of the social world they are studying (p.310).

Cohen et al (2007) argue that

What is required in the notion of reflexivity is a self-conscious awareness of the effects that the participants-as practitioners-and researchers are having on the research process, how their values, attitudes, perceptions, opinions, actions, feelings etc. are feeding into the situation being studied (p.310).

According to many action researchers successful actions involve not only improvement, but involvement. Carr and Kemmis (1986) for example, argue that

Those involved in the practice being considered are to be involved in the action research process in all its phases of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. As an action research project develops, it is expected that a widening circle of those affected by the practice will become involved in the research process (p.165).

In this approach action research is essentially participatory;

it is collaborative when groups of practitioners jointly participate in studying their own individual praxis, and when they study the social

## CHAPTER 6

interactions between them that jointly constitute aspects of the situations in which they work (p.191).

It is also emancipatory;

In emancipatory action research, the practitioner group itself takes responsibility for its own emancipation from the dictates of irrationality, injustice, alienation and unfulfillment. It explores such things as habits, customs, precedents, traditions, control structures and bureaucratic routines in order to identify those aspects of education and schooling which are contradictory and irrational (p.204).

Other researchers have different viewpoints of how action research should be carried out. Some theorists, for example, question the extent to which action research needs to be collaborative. Whitehead (1985) for example, writes about an individualistic form of action research, based on 'the validity of an individual action-researcher's claim to know his or her own educational development' (p.42). To achieve this Whitehead argues that the action-researcher

... has a responsibility to present a claim to knowledge for public criticism in a way which is comprehensible. The researcher must justify the propositional content of what he or she asserts, and justify the values which are used to give a form to the researcher's life in education. The researcher must be authentic in the sense of wanting to express his intentions truthfully (p.44).

The collaborative aspect of action research has also been questioned and challenged by Waters-Adams (1994) who argues that action research is 'concerned primarily with individuals, engaged in a process of constructing understanding about their practice in order that they might improve it' (p.197).

The emancipatory aims of action research have also been questioned. Cohen et al (2007) summarise some of the criticisms made against emancipatory action research. Among those mentioned are that emancipatory action research is 'utopian and unrealizable', 'undermines the significance of the individual teacher-as researcher', 'assumes that rational consensus is achievable' and '...neglects the complexity of power' (p.304).

In the next section I will set out my own research position, and in relation to the definitions of action research described above.

## My research position

In this section I outline how I see this thesis in relation to the wider family of action research and to some of the characteristics of action research as described in the last section.

The introduction of the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process can be seen as an intervention into the normal planning process at the local micro level. In this respect, the aims of this case study reflect the definition of action research by Cohen and Manion (1994), mentioned in the last section, as that of an ‘intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention’ (p.186).

Many of the definitions of action research describe it in terms of problem solving, or a process of improvement and reform. The decision to organise courses around learning outcomes was imposed on the teaching group as a result of the Bologna process, and while it is possibly true that the change was not necessarily seen by the teaching group as a process of improvement and reform, I saw it in this light. I was attracted by the argument in some of the literature on the Bologna process that the introduction of learning outcomes could be seen as part of a ‘paradigm shift’ in education and believed that the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process would provide the opportunity to stimulate an improvement in practice.

My approach generally is very similar to the action research approach described by Whitehead (1985) earlier in this chapter; an individualistic form of action research, expressing my intentions truthfully and comprehensibly. The research is not collaborative in the sense described by Carr and Kemmis (1986). As I describe in more detail in the next section, my original research questions were quantitative in nature; meaning that my position as researcher was in the beginning closely connected to my position as course coordinator. This fact, coupled with my individualistic approach, has restricted the opportunities for the other members of the teaching group to be involved in a traditional collaborative action research



process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. Nevertheless, my engagement with practice has meant that I have increasingly been able to think ‘dialogically’; taking onboard the voices of others and understanding the case data in the larger, longer context.

Reflexivity is described as an important part of the action research process. Reflexivity has played an important part in this thesis; not only in terms of my influence on the research process, but also in terms of influence of the research context and the research participants on my understanding. In this respect I have been guided by the idea of the research participants and researchers as co-constructors of social knowledge (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). This implies that there is a circular cause and effect loop between the researcher and whatever is being researched and that research data is constructed through the interaction of the researcher with the research participants.

During the writing process I have become more aware of how my values, and actions, have fed into the case environment. As I have already explained I saw the Bologna intervention as an opportunity to improve practice, and my active role in the Bologna implementation process has meant that I have been able to influence the process more than the others in the teaching group. However, the process of reflexivity as described above has also meant that my research findings can be seen as becoming increasingly collaborative in nature; a fact reflected in how my research focus has changed over time. My original research questions contained little or no focus on the complexities of educational change. During the research process I have developed a greater understanding of the change context and the importance of problematising the processes of policy implementation. In concrete terms this has meant an appreciation of the Bologna policy context to recode the connections made in policy documents and to see the introduction of learning outcomes as part of wider attempts to make educational programmes more relevant to the perceived needs of globalization and economic interests.

The reflective process has also meant the growing ability to take the inter-subjective perspective described earlier in this chapter. This has meant engaging with other voices in the field as well as reading

policy documents and research literature to gain a greater understanding of my own educational practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. Understanding the data produced in a wider context and insuring that other ‘versions of reality’ are heard has meant that the other voices in the study have participated in the research, both during the time of data collection, but also later at the time of data analysis.

I will elaborate more on these themes and how my research has changed over time in the next section.

### Changes in the research focus

Stake (1995) uses the phrase ‘progressive focusing’, first used, according to Stake by Parlett and Hamilton (1976), to describe the process where the researcher modifies or replaces research questions in mid study. This has been the case in this thesis. The changes in research focus can be seen as a move away from the tradition of trying to look for causes and produce explanation and control, to a position of trying to look for understanding of complex interrelationships and human experience. This inevitably involves a more holistic treatment of phenomena (Schwandt, 1994).

As I have already indicated above, my original research plan was to try to describe, analyse and reflect on the changes made as the result of organising the courses around student learning outcomes and to investigate what affect the changes have had to the learning environment, and in particular student learning. The plan was to investigate whether the quality of student learning had improved by making a comparison between completed course experience questionnaires and interviews with students and teachers both before and after organising the courses around student learning outcomes, and a comparison of levels of understanding of what Ramsden (1992) has described as key concepts (‘what learning and understanding in the discipline consists of’) (p.21) both before and after organising the courses around student learning outcomes.

As time passed and I engaged with the research literature on curriculum change, I concluded that trying to investigate whether student learning had improved as a result of the introduction of

student learning outcomes was likely to be a fruitless task due to the possible influence of the number of unknown variables involved. I was also aware of the difficulties involved in any attempt to create an 'objective' data collection process, both generally and as a result of being a participant researcher. While I had tried to use a variety of methods to collect data so as to improve outcome validity, I also began to realize that there was an inherent risk of viewing events in a simplistic or self-serving way, of trying to prove that I had been 'right'. At the same time I began to realise that the optimism that I had for the Bologna reforms was not shared to the same extent by the others in the teaching group. I started to understand that the learning outcomes process had had failed to bring about any significant curriculum reorganisation and had not changed practice as much as I had hoped for.

The next development in my research plan was to use the concept of 'learning culture' to help investigate what influence the organising of courses around student learning outcomes had had on practice. A learning culture can be described as the social practices through which people learn, and attempting to understand and describe the learning culture involves looking at the particular ways in which the interactions between many different factors shape students' learning opportunities and practice. By looking at the learning culture rather than on teaching or curriculum or student approaches to learning I hoped to achieve a more critical understanding of the teaching and learning environment. This involves trying to understand the complexity of relationships between teachers, teaching, learners, learning, learning situations and the wider contexts of learning. The aim was not to try to show how learning cultures determine learning, but rather to try to understand the learning opportunities available;

... the kinds of learning that are made possible as a result of the configuration of a particular learning culture, and the kinds of learning that become difficult or even impossible as a result of the way in which a particular learning culture operates (James and Biesta 2007, p.4).

This new research focus involved a change in perspective away from looking at the influence of learning outcomes on student learning to a wider focus on the traditional practices within my own field of practice and the influence of the Bologna reforms on that practice. However, while this change to my research focus involved a more critical understanding of the teaching and learning environment, the focus on learning cultures did not sufficiently enable the possibility of a greater understanding of the context of the change process and the complexities of educational change. The implementation of the change process was still not problematized and the translation of policy into action was still assumed to be largely unproblematic.

The final change in research focus involved a more rigorous engagement with the research literature and the appreciation that policy messages are part of a discourse which is open to re-interpretation and recontextualisation at various points of the implementation process. Ball's (1993) distinction between the two conceptualizations of policy; policy as text and policy as discourse implies that there is a gap for 'recontextualisation' and the possibility that local politics and cultures can mediate global and generic solutions. The gap for recontextualisation borrows from Bernstein's theories of education regarding the recontextualisation process that takes place in the official and the pedagogic fields.

## Autoethnography

Self-ethnography or auto ethnography focuses on the researcher's subjective experience of a situation. It is used in settings where the researcher-author has 'natural access'; is an active participant and on more or less on equal terms with other participants. According to Alversson (2003) the intention with self-ethnography is

to draw attention to one's own cultural context, what goes on around oneself rather than putting oneself and one's experiences in the centre (p.174).

Ellis and Bochner (2000) describe the situation where the researcher goes back and forth between

focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations (p.739).

I would argue that practitioner action research is auto-ethnographic in the sense described by Alversson and by Ellis and Bochner. The need to think dialogically is stressed in practitioner research and the importance of recognizing the relationship between the self and the wider setting. Kemmis (2009), for example, highlights the benefits of the inter-subjective perspective and the importance of a real or imagined conversation about how we see others and how others see us.

There are aspects of my research which are auto ethnographic. In my position as researcher I have natural access to the research field; I am an active participant in the change process and am on more or less on equal terms with other participants. I have also taken part in a reflective process, similar to that described by Ellis and Bochner, where my engagement with other voices in the field as well as with policy documents and research literature has led not only to gain a greater understanding of myself and my own educational practice but also to a greater understanding of the assumptions and theories that lie behind this practice.

## The case study approach

The thesis is presented in the form of a case study. According to Cresswell (2007) case study research is the exploration of an issue through one or more cases within a bounded system over time through detailed in depth data collection drawing on multiple sources of information. The case study approach involves trying to explain things as they were; trying to answer the questions ‘what happened?’ as well as how and why it happened as it did. According to Yin (1989) the case study approach is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and where multiple sources of evidence are used.

Stake (1995) argues that case studies allow for the complexity of a particular situation to be taken into account. Kenny and Grotelueschen (1980) suggest that case study research is appropriate where the focus is on humanistic outcomes or cultural difficulties as well as where the aim is to better understand the dynamics of a situation. Bassey (1999) describes an educational case study as

an empirical enquiry which is conducted within a localized boundary of space and time.... into interesting aspects of an educational activity, or programme, or institution, or system; mainly in its natural context (p.66).

As far as curriculum research is concerned, Walker (2003) suggests that case-study research in studies of the curriculum as being

marked by the attempt to get beyond illustrative examples of more general phenomena to the particularities and idiosyncracies of the instance..... to reach across from the experience of those who are the subjects of study to those who are the audience (p.155).

In this thesis the case study approach is used to explore and understand the process of curriculum development made in the local setting in response to the Bologna process reforms. The arguments given by Walker for the use of the case study research mirror what I would like to achieve from my research. In this case study I try to describe how the Bologna process was recontextualised at the local level, and investigate the influence of policy discourses on policy implementation and pedagogic practice. I attempt to describe what happened, as well as how and why, drawing on a number of sources of information. My aim is to better understand the dynamics of the situation and to be able to convey this to the reader.

According to Merriam (1988) there are four essential characteristics of case study research. She argues that case studies are

- Particularistic, focusing on a particular situation, programme or phenomenon and are problem centred and small scale
- Descriptive, providing 'a rich thick' description of the situation
- Heuristic, expanding understanding of real life situations

- Inductive, allowing generalised concepts or hypotheses to emerge from an examination of data that is grounded in the context itself.

Merriam uses the term ‘thick description’, as used by Geertz (1973), to describe a complete and literal description of an event or entity. These descriptions may include interpretations of the meaning of data in terms of cultural norms, values, rules and underlying assumptions in the social structures and events. According to Stake (1995), thick description conveys to the reader ‘... what experience would convey’; an empathetic understanding’ (p.39).

In order to reach understanding, Stake (1995) suggests that qualitative researchers ‘perceive what is happening in key episodes or testimonies, represent happenings with their own direct interpretation and stories...’ (p.40). Stake goes on to suggest that interpretation calls for the person most responsible for interpretations ‘to be in the field, making observations, exercising subjective judgment, analyzing and synthesizing, all the while realizing their own consciousness’ (p.40). This description neatly describes the process involved in reaching my research assertions. At the micro level of analysis, I have produced data based on local documentation and transcriptions of teacher planning meetings, selected key texts based on my judgement of their significance to the aims of the case study, and then interpreted the data produced using the theoretical frameworks developed by Bernstein (1999, 2000) and Ball (1998, 2008).

Stake (1995) differentiates between an intrinsic case study where the aim is to better understand a particular case for its own sake and an instrumental case study where a particular case is examined to provide insight into an issue or to refine a theory. Yin (2003), influenced by the methodology of ‘grounded theory’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), argues that case study research can help in the formation of theory, as well as the development of conceptual categories to illustrate, support or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to data collection. According to Stake (2005), however,

The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization.  
We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to

know how it is different from others but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself (p.8).

The aim of this thesis is to describe the introduction of learning outcomes into curriculum planning in my field of practice and not to compare with other instances where learning outcomes have been introduced into curriculum planning. My aim is to understand my own field and at the same time make conclusions based on that research. Stake calls these conclusions assertions. According to Stake (2005), assertions ‘... draw from understandings deep within us, understandings whose derivation may be some hidden mix of personal experience, scholarship, assertions of other researchers’ (p.12).

I am part of the case study I am researching and the challenge I face is to acknowledge that role and recognise my own influence on the intervention. Part of trying to understand the effects of the intervention into the local learning culture involves reflection on my influence; both on the changes made and on the research process itself; how my values, attitudes, perceptions, opinions, actions, feelings influenced the intervention into the learning culture and my subsequent research.

### Data production

Yin (1989) and Ragin and Becker (1992) point out that case studies allow for a variety of data gathering methods, depending on the purpose of the study. Stake (1995) argues the data collection methods used by the researcher will largely be determined by the researcher’s role in relation to the others involved in the case.

A number of methods have been used to collect data on the implementation of the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process. I have been guided in my choices by Ball’s (1993) distinction between the two ways in which policy can be conceptualized; as discourse and as text. In order to discover the policy discourses connected to the Bologna process and European education I have analysed a number of official policy documents



(such as from the European Commission) as well as research which attempts to put such policies in context. As far as policy as text is concerned, this refers to how policies are recontextualised and mediated at different levels in the policy cycle.

The importance of the ‘insider’ perspective has influenced my choice of methods and data production techniques. In my research the data that I have collected is closely connected to my role as course coordinator. I have tried to use data that is as ‘natural’ as possible. By this I mean that I have chosen to look at local documentation (such as course plans and course descriptions), my field notes, as well as teacher talk in 34 planning meetings which were audio recorded between September 2008 to January 2010 and in written and verbal discussions concerning the organisation of the courses around learning outcomes. I also interviewed the members of the teaching group after the first course was completed. I have also kept a diary throughout the research period to record my own observations and reflections on the data I had collected.

## The data produced

As far as policy as text is concerned, following Stake (2005), I have used the idea of ‘issues’ as a way of engaging with the data produced and trying to reach a greater understanding of how the introduction of learner outcomes was interpreted and recontextualised. Stake suggests that case studies should be organised around the identification and explication of issues pertinent to the case. Stake describes issues as ‘problems about which people disagree, complicated problems within situations and contexts’ (p.133). According to Stake (2005)

Issues are not simple and clean, but intricately wired to political, social, historical and especially personal contexts. All these meanings are important in studying cases. Issues draw us toward observing, even teasing out, the problems of the case, the conflictual outpourings, the complex backgrounds of human concern. Issues help us expand upon the moment, help us see the instance in a more historical light; help us recognize the pervasive problems in human interaction (p.17).

Stake suggests that 'Choosing issues helps us define data sources and data gathering activities' (p.133). I have identified a number of issues in my background reading and literature review which can help me engage with the data produced. In chapter two, criticisms of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning were outlined and other research showing how local discourses and cultures can influence the adaptation of global and generic solutions such as the Bologna process. In chapter three criticisms of the CEFR were discussed, as well as potential problems involved in implementing the CEFR into curriculum planning.

Other potential issues were identified in the literature review in chapter 4. The review highlighted the existence of different cultures within universities and the contested nature of higher educational work. The principle of academic freedom was identified as well as the influence of disciplinary norms on professional behaviour. Different traditions within teacher training programmes have been found and research on language teaching approaches has shown differing views on the aims of language teaching and learning. Finally, research on change processes within the higher education field has found general resistance to change and that universities tend to keep the core values, assumptions and internal structures of a university stable in situations of change. The importance of 'resource dependency' has been identified, as well as the emotional significance of change, and how change can challenge teachers' beliefs about their practice.

Before looking at policy as text I will begin by looking at policy as discourse. I do this in the next chapter where I begin to present my thesis findings. In this chapter I present the policy discourses that I have identified in policy texts connected to the Bologna process and European higher education.

# Chapter 7: Policy discourse connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process

## Introduction

This chapter is the first of three chapters where I attempt to address my research questions. In this chapter I look at the first of my research questions; that of how the Bologna process is presented as a pedagogic discourse. In chapter eight I attempt to investigate my second research question; that of how the Bologna process is recontextualised locally into pedagogic communication. Finally, in chapter nine, I address my third question of how the Bologna process interplays with practice at the micro level.

In order to address my first research question and understand the background to the Bologna reforms, I look at how European policies of Higher Education are presented and disseminated through E.U. and Bologna Process 'policy texts'. My aim is to analyse how policies are presented in official texts and to try to identify policy discourses connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process.

I have identified what I see as the following policy discourses in European Union educational policy documents;

- the need to modernize higher education
- the increased global competition for skills and markets, with an increased need for rapid innovation, flexibility and creativity
- the knowledge based society, together with the concept of lifelong learning
- that educational activities and 'outputs' are measurable
- the more active learner, taking more responsibility for their own learning

Many of the above discourses have also been identified in Swedish educational policy documents, in European policy texts on teacher education and in policy texts on foreign language learning and in relation to The Common European Framework of References for Languages.

## Consideration of the policy context

According to Cornbleth (1990) consideration of the policy context is essential in order to understand education reforms. The consideration of the policy context also involves looking critically at the discourses that lie at the heart of policy documents. According to Simons et al (2009)

Re-reading today's policy agenda is regarded as a critical activity that involves a moment of de-familiarisation. The goal is a de-familiarization with the current way policies pose problems, offer and implement solutions and how problems are framed (p.81).

A greater understanding of the policy context has been crucial in influencing the development of my research questions and in helping me understand the data that I have produced in this thesis. I originally looked at the introduction of student learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process in isolation and did not fully appreciate the policy context of the Bologna education reforms and their implications for local practice. The process of de-familiarisation recommended by Simons et al above has led me to change the focus of my research questions, led to a greater and more critical understanding of the wider context of the learning outcomes reforms and what the changes represent, and to a greater understanding of the reaction to those changes in my own field of practice. As part of this greater and more critical understanding I now understand policy as an exercise of power and control.

To start off this analysis I have surveyed secondary literature on the subject to gain an overview of the discourses in the policy area and as a result of this have looked at the specific texts referred to and cited in the literature. In addition to texts on Higher education and the Bologna process, I also look at texts that concern teacher

education in Europe and the Common European Framework for Languages. I also include criticisms of policy discourses and attempt to discuss the significance of these criticisms to the research questions that I have in this thesis.

## European policy texts on Higher Education

According to Birtwistle (2009) higher education policy has traditionally been based around the idea of the autonomous nation state with its own historical traditions. As far as European policy on Higher Education is concerned, Lawn and Grek (2012) describe how the original focus of policy in the 1970's centred on the intention to create a new cultural identity, and collaboration based on cultural transfer and exchange. According to Lawn and Grek (2012)

This was sustained by numerous projects, networks and thematic networks on cross-institutional collaboration or simple academic collaborations, emanating from the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, and its predecessors, in programmes such as Socrates, Leonardo and Comenius (p.14).

Lawn and Grek (2012) explain that 'Despite the systematic efforts to create a common European education space, education... remained largely a national topic' (p.98). They go on to describe how this collaboration has been replaced since the 1990's and especially since 2000 by a new focus of European policy, a focus on 'learning' and the 'knowledge society'. According to Lawn and Grek (2012) since 2000 'for the EU, rather than being an area at the periphery of policy making, education and learning have now become central in constructing Europe itself' (p.98). Walkenhorst (2008) too describes through an assessment of EU documentation from 1970 to 2006 how EU education policy has shifted from politico-economic to economic-functional goals. According to Walkenhorst (2008)

A strong indicator of the shift is a change in the method of policy-making, which has drifted back from a semi-Community to an inter- or transgovernmental mode of policy-making. In short, there is a paradigmatic shift in policy aims, away from pro-integrationist towards pro-market orientation (p.567).

The new focus of European policy on higher education outlined here represents a change to the traditional relationship that higher education has had with the state. The new focus signifies a loosening of the traditional autonomy that universities had prior to the 1990's. These are points that I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter.

Current European policies on education are promoted through the programme: 'Education and training 2010: Diverse systems, Shared Goals' (referred to as the Lisbon strategy). The Lisbon Strategy is an action and development programme set out by the European Council in 2000, designed to make the EU 'the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion', by 2010.<sup>4</sup> Nóvoa (2002, 2007) suggests that this programme can be seen as an 'umbrella' for the EU's political intervention in the field of education.

The Bologna process is part of the Lisbon strategy and together they share many common basic principles and goals, which are also reflected in other EU policy documents on education. Kwiek (2009) makes the point that 'Increasingly, the goals of the Bologna process are being subsumed under the goals of the Lisbon strategy' (p.196). With its goal to establish the world's most competitive knowledge economy, the Lisbon strategy has a clear influence on higher education policy in Europe. As 'Lisbon' and 'Bologna' increasingly converge, education is seen almost exclusively as an economic commodity. According to Kwiek (2009) higher education in Europe today

is viewed by the European Commission as being of critical importance to the economic future of the EU and in need for intervention...national education policies are under strong globalization (mostly financial) pressures, as in all other social services of the European social model (p.195).

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<sup>4</sup> European Union Parliament Website *Lisbon European Council 23 and 24 March Presidency Conclusion* available at [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/00100-r1.en0.htm)

I will now identify and describe what I see as the various policy discourses connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process.

### **The discourse of the need to modernize higher education**

At the core of the European education policies agenda is the discourse of the *need to modernize higher education*. Olsen and Maassen (2007) have pointed out how the European Commission, in particular, has claimed that a dynamic knowledge-based economy (and society) requires modernization of the European University (Olsen and Maassen, 2007, p.6). According to the European commission documents ‘Mobilising the Brainpower of Europe: Enabling Universities to Make Their Full Contribution to the Lisbon Strategy’ (European Commission, 2005a) and ‘Delivering on the Modernisation Agenda for Universities: Education, Research and Innovation’ (European Commission, 2006a) radical transformations of university governance are expected with societies and governments being urged to establish new partnerships with universities (European Commission, 2005a, p.9). According to the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (May 2006) IP/06/592 (CEC, 2006a):

European universities have enormous potential, much of which unfortunately goes untapped because of various rigidities and hindrances. Freeing up the substantial reservoir of knowledge, talent and energy requires immediate, in-depth and coordinated change: from the ways in which systems are regulated and managed, to the ways in which universities are governed. The Commission’s ideas are presented in a Communication adopted today which covers all activities of Europe’s universities: their delivery of education, their research activities, and their potential as drivers of innovation (CEC, 2006a).

According to the European Commission’s website there are three key areas for reform:

## CHANGING PRACTICE BY REFORM

- Curricular: the three-cycle system (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate), competence-based learning, flexible learning paths, recognition, mobility;
- Governance: university autonomy, strategic partnerships, including with enterprises, quality assurance;
- Funding: diversified sources of university income better linked to performance, promoting equity, access and efficiency, including the possible role of tuition fees, grants and loans.

Critics such as Ball (2003), Olsen and Maassen (2007) and Dale and Robertson (2009) suggest that these changes mean that the traditional relationships between the state and higher educational systems have changed. It is argued that universities have lost their traditional autonomy within the state sector and are instead forced to satisfy externally defined demands in order to survive. As Enders (2001) has shown, universities have been encouraged to become more autonomous, and the competitive environment within higher education has led to universities defining their own niche and adaptation strategies. A greater emphasis on financial efficiency, entrepreneurialism and competitiveness has meant that universities have been forced to merge and take other measures in order to continue to function. An increasing emphasis on auditing and transparency has led to league tables and other forms of benchmarking being introduced to compare research and education internationally.

Dean (2007) has described the change as a shift from 'government to governance'; where state power is based less on top down structures of government and more on diffuse systems of governance, which enables decision making to take place outside of traditional institutions. As Lindensjö (1981) showed in an analysis of the 1977 Swedish higher education reform, commercial pressures on higher education are not new, but according to Dill (2003) what characterizes the recent changes is that they have been given moral legitimacy and the values and implications of commercialization have been taken on board by universities all over the world.

The level of adoption of the values of commercialization by the university college in which this case study is situated is not the



subject of this research. My focus is rather on the curricular area of reform as represented by the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process. However, this reform is a key part of the discourse suggesting the need for the modernization of higher education. The significance of learning outcomes and this discourse is made clear by Lassnigg (2012), who argues that

...learning outcomes are expected at the policy level to play a key role in the solution of a set of persisting basic problems in education and training: making the provided qualifications understandable for both learners and enterprises; bridging the gap between education and the economy; setting a focus for the involvement and improved interaction of the various stakeholders with conflicting interests and making educational programmes more relevant for life and work (p.309).

Some of the issues mentioned by Lassnigg, such as making qualifications more understandable and relevant to the future profession, were issues that provided the backdrop to the creation and implementation of learning outcomes at the local level. What influence these issues had on the changes that were made in my field of practice are issues that I will return to in the next two chapters when I consider the recontextualisation of the Bologna process at the local level and its interplay with practice.

### **The discourse of increased global competition for skills and markets**

A key discourse presented in EU policy documents is that of a Europe in a world of *increased global competition for skills and markets, with an increased need for rapid innovation, flexibility and creativity*. At a meeting of the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000, the Council agreed on a new strategic goal, describing the challenge of ‘a quantum shift resulting from globalization and the challenge of a new knowledge driven economy’, which should be met by the EU becoming

...the most dynamic and competitive knowledge –based economy in the world, capable of sustainable growth with more and better jobs

and greater social cohesion, and respect for the environment (EP 2000).

Education is presented in policy documents as a key factor in making Europe more competitive. From 2003, the Commission set up a number of programme initiatives, aimed at making European universities more competitive. These included the recruitment of worldwide student talent (through the Erasmus Mundus global exchange programme), the marketing of the European Higher Education Area globally and other collaboration and promotion projects within the higher education sector.

### **The discourse of a knowledge based society**

*The discourse of a knowledge based society*, together with *the concept of lifelong learning* dominates European educational policies. Knowledge is seen as a key factor in responding to global economic threats and competitive dangers and in enabling the stable and sustainable development of Europe (EP 2000, Lisbon European Council). In a communication from 2006, the European Commission argued that

rapid progress in other parts of the world shows the importance of innovative, advanced and quality education and training as a key factor of economic competitiveness (CEC, 2006b, p.3).

According to Lawn and Grek (2012):

it is important to recognize that the European Union is an agent as well as a conduit of Europeanization; it is an actor in a new policy area that is also populated by other international organizations and agencies (p.117).

Indeed the discourse of the knowledge based society is not specific to European educational policies. According to Lawn and Grek (2012):

The knowledge society or economy is present in many contemporary policy documents in Europe and beyond, and certainly within the policy frameworks of major international agencies, such as the World Bank and the OECD. It is not specific to the EU (p.101).

The discourse of Lifelong Learning applies to all levels and kinds of education. In 1994 the European Commission issued the ‘White Paper - Growth, Competitiveness, Employment - The challenges and ways forward into the 21st century’ emphasising the importance of promoting the idea of Lifelong Learning as European citizens could no longer expect to stay in the same profession for life. The Commission argued that to achieve this Member States would have to make drastic changes to their education systems (CEC, 1994). According to one European Commission document:

While traditional educational institutions have been (and still are) primarily concerned with transmitting knowledge, modern learning opportunities and the LLL (lifelong learning) approach put the emphasis on the development of individual capabilities and the capacity of the person to learn (European Commission, 2001).

As far as higher education is concerned, EU policy documents convey the message that higher education should be *purposeful and thus lead somewhere* for both the individual and for wider society. Learning is depicted as an inherently *productive activity*, through which students accumulate and generate knowledge for personal and social benefit. In this depiction of learning, knowledge has become a commodity and education commodified (Ball 2005). According to this logic, education functions

to empower citizens to move freely between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries, making the most of their knowledge and competences, and to meet the goals and ambitions of the European Union . . . to be more prosperous, inclusive, tolerant and democratic (European Commission, 2004, p.4).

Higher education is represented as *economically beneficial* for both individuals and society (European Commission, 2005b) and the Bologna reforms are represented as essential mechanisms for increasing the employability of university graduates (European Commission, 2003).

The discourse of Lifelong Learning is also reflected in the fact that from around the mid-1980s and onwards there has been an increase in the number of people taking part in higher education in many countries, which the Organisation for Economic Co-operation

and Development (OECD) has referred to as the massification of higher education (Teichler, 1998, p.536).

Nóvoa (2002) has shown how since the mid-1990s the EU policies on lifelong learning have led to an emphasis on employability, flexibility, and generic competences. According to Fejes (2008a), who has studied Swedish and EU Bologna policies on higher education, the ideal European citizen is portrayed as flexible and self-regulating. The importance of employability is taken up in many European policy documents, for example that the European Higher Education Area should be ‘a key way to promote the citizens’ mobility and employability and the Continent’s overall development’ (Bologna Declaration, 1999); and that measures should be taken ‘so that students may achieve their full potential for European identity, citizenship and employability’ (Berlin Communiqué, 2003). Kwiek (2009a) makes the point that

one of the key concepts in the Bologna process for the integration of European higher education systems is no longer employment but employability, a transfer of meanings through which it is the individual’s responsibility to be employed, rather than the traditional responsibility of the state, as in the Keynesian ‘full employment’ welfare model (p.198).

Critics of recent reforms in higher education argue that they have been strongly influenced by dominant neoliberal, and new public management discourses regarding the ‘knowledge economy’, the ‘market’ and ‘globalisation’ (Hardt and Negri, 2000; Henry et al, 2001). These discourses are characterized by their endorsement of flexibility, freedom of choice, and a move towards decentralisation and steering by aims. According Van Heertum and Torres (2009) neoliberal policy

involves the infusion of business models and logic at all levels of education and the stressing of training and sorting as the primary function of schooling. Lost is the more holistic notion of education that involves the formation of good citizens that can contribute not only to the economy but the public good (p.152).

The emphasis in policy discourses on a more instrumental approach to higher education are issues which I will return to in the next two

chapters when I look at the implementation of learning outcomes at the local level.

### **The discourse that educational activities and ‘outputs’ are measurable**

As part of the trend to regard knowledge as a commodity, EU policy texts propagate the discourse that educational activities and ‘outputs’ are *measurable*. The European Commission, for example, in its assessments of the Bologna Process and European research, measures educational achievements both at the level of the individual (in terms of ECTS credits and research output), and also in its ‘stocktaking’ procedures analyzing the ‘performance’ of participating countries. EU policy documents claim that the development of outcomes-based National Qualification Frameworks will enable countries to compare their qualifications more easily with those in other countries, as well as provide clearer information to employers as to what qualifying learners are in fact competent to do (Cedefop, 2008).

An increasing emphasis on auditing and transparency has led to league tables and other forms of bench marking being introduced to compare research and education internationally. The European Union uses education data provided by Eurostat (The Statistical Office of the European Communities) and Eurydice (The Information Network on Education in Europe). According to Lawn and Grek (2012) Eurostat provides

a high-quality statistical information service at European level that enables comparisons between countries and regions, and which uses a common statistical ‘language’ (embracing concepts, methods, structures and technical standards) developed over time (p.103).

#### Eurydice

is a cross-European institutional network for gathering, monitoring, processing and circulating reliable and readily comparable qualitative information on education systems and policies throughout Europe (Lawn and Grek 2012, p.106).

The idea that educational outputs are measurable is a key idea behind the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning. As was shown in chapter two when looking at the background to the Bologna reforms, the learning outcomes approach is based on the behaviouristic idea that it is possible to identify and measure learning through observable and measurable outcomes. The chapter also showed that this assumption is challenged by critics such as Knight (2001) and O'Brien and Brancalone (2011) who question whether complex learning can be reduced to learning outcome statements. According to these critics, a concentration on learning outcomes can lead to unintended and critical learning not being recognized. These are issues that I will return to when I consider the recontextualisation of the Bologna process at the local level and its influence on practice.

### **The discourse of the more active learner**

Policy discourses promote the idea of the politically active, autonomous and responsible citizen 'through the free exercise of personal choice among a variety of options' (Rose, 1992, p.159). As far as education is concerned, Bagnall (2000) speaks of the individualisation of educational responsibility, with the dominant discourse celebrating *the idea of the learner taking more responsibility for their own learning process*. This is a key discourse found in Bologna policy documents which argue for the need to move towards a more student centred approach to learning. Adams (2004), for example, in a working document of the Bologna Process suggests that

The traditional input-related curriculum has proved to be too focused on the teacher instead of the learner. Consequently there is what has been described as a paradigm shift underway, moving the emphasis from teaching to learning and to embrace student-centred learning. This change has been associated with a need for more precision in curriculum design, and an acknowledgement that more effective and varied learning styles can benefit the learner (p.28).

The 2007 London Communiqué included the first mention of 'more student-centred, outcome-based learning' and a move away from 'teacher driven provision'. (London Communiqué, 2007, p.2) and

indeed Adam (2008) argues that this pedagogical trend ‘is at the heart of the Bologna agenda that emphasises the need for dramatic reform to modernise Europe’s antiquated education systems’ (p.12). The discourse makes clear the connection between learning outcomes and improved student learning. According to Adam (2008)

Learning outcomes are key tools in the shift towards student-centred learning as they focus attention on explicit and detailed statements of what students learn – the skills, understanding and abilities we seek to develop and then test. The adoption of a learning outcomes approach focuses activity on the learner and away from the teacher. It promotes the idea of the teacher as a facilitator or manager of the learning process and recognises that much learning takes place outside the classroom without a teacher present. It suggests that students should be actively involved in the planning and management of their own learning, progressively taking more responsibility as he/she develops as an independent learner (p.13).

Policy discourses also present *learning outcomes as the basis for curricular re-organisation*, reiterating the idea of curriculum alignment outlined in chapter three. According to Adam, learning outcomes produce

...an automatic focus on how learners learn and the design of effective learning environments. There is a cascade effect that links the use of learning outcomes, the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and the development of suitable assessment techniques (Adam, 2008, p.13).

The idea of curriculum alignment was a key influence on the changes that were made locally in response to the Bologna reforms. The claim that there could be a ‘cascade effect’ between the various parts of the curriculum was uncritically accepted and based on a technical/rational model of policy implementation assuming that the translation of policy into action is largely unproblematic. However, the claims made in policy documents are not based on research on teaching and learning in general or in higher education in particular, and ignore the findings of previous research outlined in chapter four which showed that disciplinary traditions can have strong influences on how policy reforms are interpreted and recontextualised in

higher education. As such the claims in policy documents can be seen as a 'hollowing out' of teaching and learning.

As far as the influence on individual teachers is concerned, policy documents suggest that

Teaching and training professionals are at the heart of learning-outcomes led reform, even though shifting to learning outcomes moves away from the dominance of what schools and teachers can provide, to an emphasis on learner needs and the requirements of working life and the wider community. The emphasis is placed on changing and optimising professional practice and teachers and trainers need to be properly prepared for the move away from traditional curricula and assessment (Cedefop, 2009, p.152).

The policy discourses promoting *the idea of the teacher as a facilitator or manager of the learning process* and students as actively involved in the planning and management of their own learning represent values and visions that are said to challenge the traditions in higher education. Once again these ideas represent a 'hollowing out' of teaching and learning, with recommendations for professional practice that are not reflected in theories of professions or professional action. As was shown in chapter four, teachers' practice concerning teaching and learning is influenced by their views of teaching, learning, knowledge as well as the roles of both the student and the teacher. The influence of the Bologna reforms on these traditions of practice is a key aspect of this thesis and will be looked at in the next two chapters.

As far as higher education is concerned, Power (1997) has suggested that global trends have led to the decline of trust and the disempowerment and demoralization of academics. Ball (2005) has argued that as a result of these changes teaching is too often

emptied of all substantive content. Increasingly, we choose and judge our actions in terms of effectivity and appearance. Beliefs and values are no longer important - it is output that counts. Beliefs and values are part of an older, increasingly displaced discourse of public service (p.20).

According to Ball, teachers, researchers and lecturers find themselves 'struggling for authenticity' (p.20) and 'The notion of



‘doing a good job’ in these terms is reduced to a ‘thin’ version of professionalism in terms of accounting for measurable outcomes’ (p.21).

Young (2006) has used Bernstein’s concept of classification to describe how those working in activities such as education, research and professional work, which traditionally have had significant autonomy from state intervention, ‘increasingly have to comply with goals specified by government or its regulatory bodies’ (p.26). According to Young

The balance is being shifted from strong classification associated with internal criteria defined by specialists to weak classification expressed in external criteria defined by regulatory bodies (and indirectly by government) (p.26).

Young suggests that such changes turn universities into ‘delivery agencies’, where the priority is delivering targets (such as research results and exam passes) and not what the targets are or how they are achieved.

The influence of policy discourses on academic freedom, and on feelings of professionalism and notions of doing a good job at the local level are issues that I will return to in the next two chapters. Before doing so I will look at Swedish policy discourses in connection with the Bologna process, discourses in European policy texts on Teacher education, and finally policy discourses on foreign language learning and in relation to The Common European Framework of References for Languages.

## Swedish policy discourse in connection with the Bologna process

The Swedish government bill (Ministry of Education, 2005) which proposed the alignment of Swedish higher education with the Bologna process shares the optimism of European Union policy documents as far as the goals for European higher education are concerned. According to the 2005 bill, a joint European approach to higher education would not only help meet the demands of international competition but also lead to a more qualified and

attractive education system in Sweden too. Fejes (2008a) points out that the reason given for the adaptation of the Bologna process in policy documents is

...the need for the Swedish students to be able to compete with students from other countries for jobs etc. Another threat of the future is that the degrees from Sweden will be undervalued, if not accommodating to the Bologna process (p.217).

Fejes (2008b, 2009) has also shown that the European educational policy discourses of a knowledge based society, lifelong learning, and the politically active, autonomous and responsible citizen found in European policy documents can also be found in Swedish educational policy discourses.

Unemar Öst (2010) in an analysis of Swedish higher education policy texts produced between 1992-2007 shows an increasing trend towards policy discourses that support ‘.... a further economic globalization and a European marketization/ bureaucratization of higher education’(p.255). Unemar Öst identifies four discourses in policy texts concerning the aims and purposes of higher education in Sweden. The four discourses are: (1) the classical academic discourse, (2) the discourse of identity, (3) the discourse of democracy, and (4) the discourse of economic globalization. According to Unemar Öst

Each discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the discursive field by providing a definition of the purposes and aims of higher education, and a subject position for the student, that are opposite those provided by the other discourses (p.254).

Unemar Öst found that the discourse of economic globalization has gained increased ground over the 15 year period of her study. She concludes that

On the closer level of the analysis a variation concerning the different discourses legitimacy and strength within the Swedish political struggle thus can be found. Two of the discourses – the democratic discourse and the discourse of identity –possess a weaker legitimacy, and are (re)articulated during limited time periods, within the political struggle. While the two others – the classical academic discourse and the discourse of globalization – possess a stronger legitimacy and are

(re)articulated throughout the whole time period. The discourse of globalization has strong hegemonic tendencies since it tends to impose its specific European and market oriented definitions of the purposes and aims of higher education on the other discourses – causing a stop in the occurrence of the (re)articulation of the discourse of democracy after the year of 2004 and posing a future threat to stop the occurrence of the (re)articulation of the classical academic discourse (p.255).

The existence of alternative discourses within Swedish policy documents is significant to this thesis; confirming as it does the possibilities for other interpretations as to the purposes and aims of higher education and which of course can have an influence on local pedagogic practice. It also reflects the arguments put forward in chapter two that the relationship between policy making and policy implementation is complex and involves a complex interaction between structures and agency.

The impact of policy discourses on practice within Swedish institutions of higher education is not a matter addressed by Unemar Öst in her study. However, she refers to earlier research which ‘points to the fact that there are counter-powers within the institutions of higher education’ and that ‘... there are, in the language use of individual students, teachers, researchers and institutions, a wider range of definitions concerning the purposes and aims of higher education’ (p.256). She concludes that ‘the language use on the institutional level could be a possible and interesting topic for future research on the purposes and aims of higher education’ (p.256). The counter powers referred to by Unemar Öst and the language use expressing alternative discourses on the purposes and aims of higher education than those in discourse of globalization are some of the issues that I attempt to address and analyse in this thesis.

## Discourses in European policy texts on Teacher education

As my research concerns the introduction of the Bologna process into teacher education, I specifically here look at policy discourse in that area.

Åstrand (2006) argues that ‘The Bologna process is not a teacher education reform but a university reform and as such it has implications for teacher education’ (p.83). He argues that

As teacher education is a unique and strategic link between higher education and research on the one hand and prior school system on the other; the Bologna process is of great importance for teacher education (p.83).

Policy documents at both national and European levels increasingly stress the importance of compulsory and secondary education in implementing the goals of Lifelong Learning and contributing to the building of the so-called Knowledge Society. For example, according to the 2007 ‘Improving the Quality of Teacher Education’ communication, teachers should help young people develop into autonomous learners by acquiring skills that are needed by society. It is also stressed that teachers should use pedagogical approaches that encourage co-operation and the active learner instead of the transmission of knowledge to passive recipients (European Commission, 2007).

As pointed out in chapter four, teacher education in Europe has traditionally been characterized by diversity. Despite this tradition of divergence, Hudson et al refer to the European co-operation programmes (e.g. Erasmus, Tempus, etc.) which since the late 1980’s have made a substantial impact on building convergence between different teacher training systems. The Bologna process can be seen as part of this larger process. According to the Tuning project (Tuning, 2008) ‘Teacher Education is now at the heart of the European project’ and teaching and teacher education are a key element in ‘delivering ...European aims’ (p.19).

The European Network of Teacher Education Policies (ENTEP), launched in 2000, is an advisory/reference group for the European Commission and individual EU Member States. In its publication – *The first ten years after Bologna* – recent developments in teacher education policy are put in the context of the Bologna Process and the European Higher Education Area, with the report arguing that ‘teacher education must have a special place in this newly-created European landscape’ (Gassner et al, 2010).

The European Commission has argued that Teacher Education is in need of reform in order to achieve the ambitions of the Lisbon agenda (Eurydice, 2004). According to the communication, teachers should be lifelong learners, able to understand the factors that create social cohesion and exclusion in society and be aware of the ethical dimensions of the knowledge society. The Commission has adopted a broadly-based competence approach to teaching and Teacher Education. In its 'Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications' (European Commission, 2005c) it suggests that

teachers' ability to reflect on the processes of learning and teaching should include their subject knowledge, curriculum content, pedagogy innovation, research, and cultural and social dimensions of teaching (p.2).

According to Snoek, Swennen and van der Klink (2011) European policy documents pay limited attention to teacher educators, their professionalism and its further development. Where references were found they emphasised the need for teachers to increase their professionalism. They found that these concerns were expressed quite frequently in both a European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) policy paper from 2008 (ETUCE 2008) and in an official journal of the European Union from 2009 (European Council, 2009).

The latter document invites the European Commission to prepare a study on the existing arrangements in Member States for selecting, recruiting and training teacher educators. The ETUCE policy paper emphasises that all teachers should be educated to Master's level in higher education and, of course, teacher educators must have the qualifications required to be able to teach at that level (ETUCE 2008, p.34). Similar concerns are found in the priorities for improving Teacher Education that were defined by Ministers of Education in the Council Conclusions of November 2007;2008 and 2009 (Council of the European Union, 2007,2008,2009).

As far as language teacher education is concerned, a report to the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture in 2004 proposed a European Profile for language teacher

education, and offered a frame of reference for language education policy makers and language teacher educators in Europe. The report makes specific reference to the Bologna process and the importance of language teacher education in ‘turning Europe into the world’s most competitive knowledge-based economy’ (European Commission, 2004, p.8)

The report states that ‘the Profile is not designed as a mandatory set of rules and regulations for language teacher education’ (p19), but suggests that courses to improve the language proficiency of trainee teachers their language proficiency as part of their initial teacher education should be carried out ‘in correspondence with the learning scales outlined in the Common European Framework (CEF)’ (p.49) and that

Such a course is closely linked, if not integrated, with teaching about the CEF and ways of assessing learners’ progress. The course also refers to the European Language Portfolio and other types of self-evaluation (p.49).

The report suggests that

The course begins with an extensive language competence Needs Analysis questionnaire to determine the trainee teacher’s existing language levels based on the CEF (p.49).

As far as language learning is concerned, the report suggests that trainee teachers should

develop independent language learning strategies to improve their language competence and to be able to transfer these skills to their own learners (p.67).

Finally, the report argues that ‘Independent language learning strategies help foster the practice of life-long language learning’ (p.67).

As has been shown, European policy documents suggest that courses to improve the language proficiency of trainee teachers should be carried out in correspondence with the learning scales outlined in the Common European Framework (CEF). The ideas behind the CEF are of key interest to this case study because as part

of the process of creating student learning outcomes at the local level, it was decided that the Framework should be used as the starting point for organising teaching and assessing the teacher trainer students' language proficiency in English. In the next section I look at European policy discourse connected with language learning, and in particular as expressed through policy texts on the CEF.

## Discourses in policy texts on foreign language learning and in relation to the CEFR

As far as foreign language learning is concerned, the importance of language skills is continuously stressed in the official European Union discourse. For example, the Barcelona European Council in March 2002 'called for action to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age' (European Council 2006, p.45). European policy as far as foreign language learning is concerned is promoted by the Council of Europe and in particular through its support for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

A number of discourses can be found in the policy documents promoting the CEFR, and many of these are similar discourses to those found in official texts connected to European Union educational policy and the Bologna process. In common with the Bologna process, the CEFR project aims to promote international cooperation and the mobility of European citizens. According to McNamara (2011)

The wording of the framework inevitably reflects the policies and values of its original sponsor, the Council of Europe, and its current users, governments and educational institutions throughout the world (p.501).

McNamara suggests that the formation and adoption of the CEFR reflects the goals of the Council of Europe, where education is seen as '...centrally concerned with economic development', and that the

curriculum frameworks determining the shape of the accompanying assessment regimes for educational achievement, including that for languages, are central to the fulfillment of the goals (p.502).

McNamara argues that

language assessment, like language education more generally, is increasingly serving the goals of policy, and specifically of policies supporting a view of education as primarily preparing learners for participation in a globalized workforce (p.510).

McNamara argues that ‘the policy goals of the CEFR are now dominating language education policy at every level in Europe, in a striking example of policy-driven assessment’ (p.503). The

functionalist orientation of communicative language teaching and curriculum and assessment frameworks that go with it are a reflection of the values of the Council—broadly, European integration (p.502).

A related discourse in policy texts is the need for the mutual recognition of the qualifications and degrees of the citizens of the country members. McNamara suggests that the formulations of the CEFR, including the way in which they lend themselves to a reduction to simple numbers—A1, A2, etc.—are ‘designed to meet the needs of those responsible for the accountability of educational systems’ (p.502).

As far as language learning is concerned, one discourse found in policy documents connected to the CEFR is the objectives of plurilingual and pluricultural competence, which support the diversity of languages and cultures. According to the Council of Europe

Plurilingual and pluricultural competence refers to the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures (CEF, p.168).

This discourse has successful communication rather than native like language proficiency as its goal, as the policy documents makes clear



## CHAPTER 7

the aim of language education is profoundly modified. It is no longer seen as simply to achieve ‘mastery’ of one or two, or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the ‘ideal native speaker’ as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place (CEF, p. 5).

The aim of language teaching and learning is that the language learner develops a range of language and cultural skills to be used in different (inter)cultural situations and where successful communication is what matters most.

Another discourse related to language learning and found in policy documents related to the CEFR is that of learner-centredness. According to the CEFR Guide for Users, language teaching should

depend entirely upon a full appreciation of the learning/teaching situation and above all upon the needs, motivations, characteristics and resources of the learners and other parties concerned (Council of Europe 2002, p. 20).

The discourse of learner-centeredness is also reflected in the goal of self-assessment, which is taken up in different parts of policy documents connected to the CEFR. The European language portfolio (CEF, p.20) and the self-assessment grid, which includes ‘Can Do’ statements for different areas of language competence (CEF, pp.26-27) are both presented as ways for language learners to assess their own language proficiency. Self-assessment is presented as part of a more general goal of guiding students towards responsibility and independence in their language learning. According to the CEF

the main potential for self-assessment...is in its use as a tool for motivation and awareness raising: helping learners to appreciate their strengths, recognise their weaknesses and orient their learning more effectively (CEF, p.192).

The discourses of language proficiency associated with the CEFR mirror the policy discourses connected with the Bologna process, arguing as they do for a move towards more emphasis being placed on employability, flexibility, and generic competences. The discourse of learner-centeredness found in policy documents related to the CEFR also mirrors the policy discourses found in Bologna policy

documents which argue for a need to move towards a more student centred approach to learning, the development of individual capabilities and the capacity of the person to learn. The similarities between the discourses found in policy documents connected to the CEFR and the Bologna process is significant in framing and understanding the changes made as a result of organising courses around learning outcomes at the local micro level.

Discourses found in the policy documents promoting the CEFR, such as those describing language proficiency as being associated with successful communication rather than native like language proficiency, represent a move away from the liberal tradition of scholarly analysis of language content and structure that were outlined in chapter four when looking at research on language teaching approaches. As Quick (1999) has shown, the liberal tradition is typical of modern language teaching at university, characterized by a strong focus on grammar and the development of written proficiency.

The influence of the adoption of the CEFR on teacher practice is one of the issues that I will address in the next two chapters. As I have indicated, these changes represent a new way of thinking as far as language teaching and assessment are concerned, and a potential change in practice for teachers

## Summary

My aim in this chapter has been to analyse how policies are presented in official texts and to try to identify policy discourses connected with European Union educational policy and the Bologna process. Many of the discourses found were also present in Swedish educational policy discourses, European policy documents on teacher education and in policy texts on foreign language learning and in relation to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR).

The first discourse identified was the discourse suggesting a *need to modernize higher education*. This discourse is presented within the context of a second discourse; the discourse of *increased global competition for skills and markets, with an increased need for rapid innovation,*

*flexibility and creativity*. Related discourses are that of the *knowledge based society* and that of *lifelong learning*.

According to policy discourse the modernization of higher education is necessary because of supposed various rigidities and hindrances in European universities. Policy documents distinguish between a *traditional disciplinary discourse* which is portrayed as negative and introjective and a *modern credit exchange discourse*. The disciplinary discourse is portrayed as 'primarily concerned with transmitting knowledge' while the credit exchange discourse is portrayed as putting emphasis 'on the development of individual capabilities and the capacity of the person to learn' (European Commission, 2001a).

The lifetime learning discourse promotes what Bagnall (2000, p.23) speaks of the individualisation of educational responsibility, with the dominant discourse celebrating *the idea of the more active learner*, taking more responsibility for their own learning process. The discourse suggests the *need for students to achieve a deeper level of learning* in their studies. The discourse suggests that more emphasis should be placed on *employability, flexibility, and generic competences*. According to this discourse there is *a need to move towards a more student centred approach to learning*.

As far as the Bologna process is concerned, the review of policy texts shows that EU policy texts propagate the discourse that educational activities and 'outputs' are *measurable* and that this measurability can be achieved through learning outcomes. Policy discourse also suggests that a shift to learning outcomes is a move away from the dominance of what schools and teachers can provide, to an *emphasis on learner needs and the requirements of working life and the wider community*. The emphasis is placed on changing and optimising professional practice, with teachers and trainers needing to be properly prepared for the *move away from traditional curricula and assessment*. The discourse presents the idea of the *teacher as a facilitator or manager* of the learning process, suggesting that *students should be actively involved in the planning and management of their own learning, progressively taking more responsibility* as he/she develops as an independent learner.

The review of policy texts shows that Bologna policy discourses presents learning outcomes as encapsulating *a learner-centred approach*

and a shift in the focus in higher education away from the traditional teacher-centred or institution-centred perspective. The discourses make clear the connection between learning outcomes and improved student learning as well as arguing that *learning outcomes are a basis for curricular re-organisation*. The discourses suggests that there is an *automatic link between the use of learning outcomes, the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and the development of suitable assessment techniques*.

The identification of policy discourses and literature critical of those discourses has enabled me to develop a greater understanding of the policy context. The change in EU education policy from politico-economic to economic-functional goals has changed the traditional relationship that higher education has had with the state, with universities losing their traditional autonomy within the state sector. Critics argue that reforms in higher education have been strongly influenced by dominant neoliberal, and new public management discourses regarding the ‘knowledge economy’, the ‘market’ and ‘globalisation’. The reforms represent the commodification of education and have led to the decline of trust and the disempowerment and demoralization of academics. This great understanding of the policy context is the starting point for understanding how the Bologna reforms were implemented at the local level. These are the issues that I address in the next two chapters.

# Chapter 8: The implementation and recontextualisation of Bologna policy at the local level

## Introduction

In the last chapter I analysed how European policies of Higher Education are presented through E.U. and Bologna Process policy texts. In this chapter I attempt to describe policy as ‘text’; how discourses connected to the Bologna process were implemented, recontextualised and mediated at the local level. By doing so I address the second of my research questions; that of how the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process was recontextualised into pedagogic communication.

According to the Bologna policy discourses identified in the previous chapter, the Bologna process represents a means of moving away from teacher led provision to a more student centred approach. This desired change in the pedagogic relations between teachers and learners is central to the Bologna discourses, and therefore the main focus of this chapter is on the influence of the learning outcomes approach on local pedagogic relations. Theoretical concepts developed by Bernstein are used to help my analysis, with the concept of the pedagogic device used to analyse the pedagogic relations within the new local learning outcomes curriculum.

Within the pedagogic device, local pedagogic discourses (in terms of regulative and instructional discourses) help to define pedagogic identities for both teachers and students at the local level, and which can act to mediate the influence that the introduction of learning outcomes had on educational practice. The concept of pedagogic discourse allows the analysis of the contents and competences in the new learning outcomes, how they were transmitted and evaluated,

and the consequences that these factors had for both teachers and students.

As part of this analysis I expand Ball's (1993) concept of policy as text to include not only local written documentation, but also teacher talk in planning meetings that were recorded during the research period. In this teacher talk, teacher educators discuss their ideas around designing courses, planning students' learning tasks and assessment, methods of teaching and attitudes towards students. By doing so the teacher educators expose the professional theories and the pedagogic discourses which underlie them. I believe that both local documentation and teacher talk can give an indication of the local discourses and practice architectures that guide practice at the local level. These practice architectures enable and constrain particular kinds of sayings, doings and relatings among people within them, and in relation to others outside them. These practice architectures and local discourses have the potential to mediate and recontextualise the discourses connected to the Bologna and other European policy documents on education.

## Policy as text

When conceptualizing policy as text, policy is interpreted in different ways by the actors at various points of the implementation process. The focus of this thesis is on how the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process was re-interpreted and recontextualised by the actors at the local micro level. That interpretation can of course change over time, and part of my changing research focus has reflected my own changing understanding of the policy context.

Schmidt (2008) suggests that policy discourses help generally to 'persuade others of the necessity and/or appropriateness of a given course of action' (p.312). In this respect, many of the changes that were made in connection with the organization of the courses around student learning outcomes were influenced by some of the discourses contained in policy documents and highlighted in the last chapter. I bought into the policy rhetoric and at the time rather uncritically interpreted the organization of courses around student

learning outcomes as a way of creating an environment more conducive to a more student centred approach to learning. I believed in the policy discourse that the shift to learning outcomes represented a move away from the dominance of what teachers can provide, to an emphasis on learner needs and the requirements of working life and the wider community. I also saw the learning outcomes approach as a way of allowing students to be more active and take more responsibility for their own learning process. More generally, the changes made also represented a belief in the discourse that learning outcomes were a basis for curricular re-organisation, and that the introduction of learning outcomes would have a cascade affect on the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and the development of suitable assessment techniques.

However, as shown in chapter two, the relationship between policy making and policy implementation is complex, with the implementation of policy rarely being straightforward. There are limitations on actor agency, and as Taylor et al (1997) suggest, not all policy players are able to influence the policy implementation process equally. Often there is conflict and contradiction between the perspectives or interests of those involved (Beach 1995, 2000).

During the research process I have increasingly understood policy implementation as a process of recontextualisation, where policy is transformed at different levels. The concept refers to the process where certain rules 'select and delocate' (Bernstein, 1990, p.185) what counts as knowledge from the field of knowledge production. The concept has been used by Ball (1993) to describe the influence of the context of practice on policy implementation.

Research using the concept of recontextualisation to look at the implementation of policy has shown that education policies are reconstructed and implemented within different national and cultural contexts. As Seddon (2009) notes, the take up of educational policy discourses occurs in local spaces, where they '...confront local discourses that have already constructed structures and cultures of place, and localised work and learning imperatives' (p.271).

In this case study, the changes made as a result of the introduction of learning outcomes were introduced and

implemented into an existing field of reproduction (i.e. the teaching practice and other practices within the existing courses), which in itself is a representation of earlier processes of recontextualisation, containing existing and other contesting discourses concerning curriculum knowledge and practice. Within this field of reproduction, practice is shaped by the practice architectures of teacher education, and of language teaching and learning approaches which act to either enable or constrain the possibilities of change to practice. The changes that were made were carried out in a field of practice containing its own discourses about how education should be carried out.

### The contents and competences to be transmitted in the new learning outcomes

According to the policy discourses identified in the last chapter, the Bologna process was motivated and presented as a way of moving away from traditional curricula. Policy discourses suggest higher education should place more emphasis on the development of individual student capabilities and an increased focus on employability, flexibility and generic competencies.

In this section I will describe the contents to be transmitted to students within the learning outcomes that were produced and then assess the extent that they represent a move away from traditional curricula. Bernstein's concept of instructional discourse is used here to analyse the contents and competences to be transmitted in the new learning outcomes. The concept of instructional discourse comprises the selection of subject content and rules for transmission and acquisition that regulate pedagogic practice. The instructional discourse is part of the regulative discourse and contains within itself a model of the teacher educator and the learner and the relation between them.

The starting point for my analysis is the recommendations from the meetings of the discipline specific group which met between June and October 2006 to start the process of introducing learning outcomes into the courses concerned. The group's recommendations (written in Swedish) can be found at appendix one.



My field notes show that I presented the group's task as being that of carrying out a needs assessment; that is determining the gap between an existing condition and a desired condition. In practical terms this meant that the group was asked to describe the knowledge, competencies and skills needed to be a teacher of English in a Swedish secondary school today. My field notes show that during the brainstorming task the group looked at the existing Swedish secondary school curriculum and syllabus so as I put it 'to ensure that everything that should be covered is covered'.

Because of how the task was presented, the group saw its goal from the beginning as that of producing standard learning outcomes for all students. The focus was on the behaviour of learners that is to be changed and which could later be used as a guide for content, instruction, and evaluation. The significance of this process was that the learning outcomes were based on a specific pedagogic identity for the student and a pedagogic relation with the teacher educator. The learning outcomes reflect a disciplinary discourse, characterized by vertical relations between the teacher educator and student, with the rules of curriculum content in the hands of the teacher educators. The discourse promotes the idea of the teacher educator as role model and expert, with students needing to be inducted into the knowledge of the discipline. I will expand on this discourse and the pedagogic identities for both teacher educators and learners later on in this chapter.

Not surprisingly, in view of the remit it was given, the group presented proposals that represent content areas that mirror the current daily concerns of teachers of English in Swedish schools.

The proposals covered issues such as

- Planning and implementing lessons
- How to “connect” with students
- Practice in assessment and grading
- Knowledge of methods of teaching and learning
- Student development
- Awareness of the curriculum
- Awareness of learning strategies /styles

- Awareness of the laws governing schools

My field notes show that the group felt that it was important for teacher training students to be able to ‘discuss, evaluate and reflect on the curriculum and the laws governing schools and to connect these requirements to teaching and the teacher’s role.’ It was further felt that teacher training students ‘needed to be aware of the goals for pupils in years 5 to 9’ and to ‘practice carrying out assessment and grading based on those goals.’ Students ‘needed to be able to produce an individual development plan for pupils and to evaluate a plan from the perspective of the pupil, parent and teacher’. As far as learning strategies and styles are concerned, the group felt that teacher training students ‘should be able to use and evaluate media and other tools as teaching aids’ and to ‘demonstrate the ability to use different didactic strategies and methods for achieving knowledge’. Finally teacher training students ‘should be able to demonstrate knowledge of different kinds of learning styles by planning, carrying out and commenting on lessons tailored to different individuals and situations.’

As far as knowledge of English is concerned, the group felt that the students’ education should cover knowledge of

- Realia
- History
- Differences between Swedish and English
- Language variations in terms of accents and vocabulary

The group felt that the teacher training students needed to be able ‘to demonstrate the ability to communicate knowledge of the subject’, for example by ‘highlighting the role of English in the world’, ‘explaining language-related problem areas’ and ‘adapting level and content to the target audience’.

Apart from the recommendation that students should critically analyse and reflect on the curriculum and the values attached to it, very few of the recommendations of the group suggest any critical input from students. The suggestions cover knowledge, competencies and skills that can be found in similar teacher training courses in Sweden.

As far as the teacher training students' own language skills are concerned, the group recommended that the courses should aim to improve the students' language proficiency and that the definition of proficiency should be widened to cover not just accuracy but also questions of style, formality, organisation and content. It was further recommended that the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) should be used as the starting point for organising teaching, and assessing the teacher students language proficiency in English. According to my field notes, the CEFR descriptors were seen by the group as being 'expressed in positive terms that focus on progress rather than failure' and as such 'encourage students with enducements to succeed against a standard'.

The recommendation to use the CEFR represents the significant way in which the Bologna process was recontextualised at the local level. It was here that policy discourse suggesting that learning outcomes are a basis for curricular re-organisation and a move away from traditional curricula and assessment found expression; with the belief that the adoption of the descriptors could influence teaching strategies and assessment techniques. Using Bernstein's theories on the structures of knowledge described in chapter five, the adoption of the CEFR descriptors can be understood as an attempt to force a horizontal curriculum reform; by moving away from the liberal tradition of university language teaching and learning towards the instrumental paradigm, represented by the CEFR descriptors and its focus on successful communication and 'real-world' skills.

I will return to the significance of this change and its influence on practice in the next chapter. First I will describe the learning outcomes that were produced as a result of the recommendations made by the group, and analyse the extent that the outcomes represented changes to the contents and competences required of students in courses given before the Bologna process intervention.

### The learning outcomes that were produced

In this section I attempt to compare the contents of the teacher training students' education prior to and after the production of

student learning outcomes to see what influence the process of organizing the courses around student learning outcomes had. The starting point for my analysis is a comparison of the new learning outcomes with the contents and competencies required by students in course documentation for the courses offered in 2007.

The learning outcomes were written by teacher C and me between May and June 2007 and were based on the recommendations from the discipline specific group. Students were not involved in this process as it was felt to be the responsibility of the teaching group. My field notes show that the task of writing the learning outcomes was again seen as primarily about specifying the knowledge, competencies and skills needed to be a teacher of English in a Swedish secondary school today. In an interview after the first course Teacher C confirmed this by saying that

I have some experience from teaching in an elementary school and I can see that those learning outcomes are things that you need to know ... the learning outcomes match the needs of the students because they have been worked out in co-operation with active and experienced teachers

Translations of the learning outcomes that were produced and included in the 'course plan' document are listed in appendix two. The learner outcomes for the teacher training students own language proficiency and based on the descriptors in the CEFR are those listed in appendix three. I will discuss the significance of these outcomes in the next chapter.

By looking at course documentation for the courses that were given the year before the implementation of the Bologna process, it is possible to appreciate the extent to which the new learning outcomes represent changes to the existing contents and competences required of students. A list of the contents and competencies required by students in course documentation for the courses given in 2007 can be found in appendix four. A comparison of the contents and competences to be transmitted in the new learning outcomes with those found in documentation for courses given in 2007 can be found at appendix five.

A direct comparison between the contents and competences to be transmitted in the new learning outcomes and with those found in course documentation from 2007 is difficult because of the problems in knowing what some of the content descriptions in the 2007 documentation actually covered. For example, the 2007 content of ‘The language teachers’ professional role’ could have covered a wide range of activities. However, what the comparison shows generally is that very few of the new learning outcomes cover content or goals that did not already exist already in 2007. Of the twenty learning outcomes produced only the following five covered content not present in the courses given in 2007:

1. Demonstrating that I can reflect on my own learning , language development and development in the role as a teacher
2. Comparing and critically evaluating the English language parts of the Swedish syllabus and the foreign language parts of the syllabus from an English speaking country
3. Explaining the reasons behind the status that English has in the world today
4. Applying the fundamental values and task of the school to realistic case studies from the school environment
5. Arguing for the selection of media and other materials to be used in the classroom

The other 14 learning outcomes covered content already present in the courses given in 2007. Most of the contents and competencies that were listed in the documentation for the 2007 courses were also included in the new learning outcomes that were produced. Others, such as the ‘practical application of the process-oriented writing instruction’, and the outcomes that students should ‘express themselves in writing in different genres / text types’ and ‘integrate the English concept of culture in thematic working’, were subsequently added as learning outcomes in the courses that form the background to this thesis, but after the time period that the thesis covers. At the same time, four of the five learning outcomes covering content not present in the courses given in 2007 were removed from the courses after the time period that the thesis

covers, with only the last learning outcome ('Arguing for the selection of media and other materials to be used in the classroom') remaining.

The comparison of the students' education prior to and after the production of student learning outcomes shows that the process of organizing the content of the courses around student learning outcomes had very little influence as far as the overall contents to be transmitted to students are concerned. The contents to be attained by the students are largely those which existed in courses before the introduction of learning outcomes, and after the time period that the thesis covers most of the new contents that had been added were removed. The overall tendency was to reproduce what had taken place in previous courses, and where there were changes to the overall contents these were in most cases removed at a later date.

The lack of change in contents can be explained by the way the task of producing learning outcomes was interpreted. As I have already shown, the task was presented as that of producing standard learning outcomes for all students and based on a need assessment of the knowledge, competencies and skills needed to be a teacher of English in a Swedish secondary school today. The recommendations of the discipline specific group matched in many ways the existing content in the courses concerned and the new learning outcomes that were written as a result reflected this fact.

While the local implementation of learning outcomes did little to change course contents, the implementation process had no positive influence in making courses more student centred either. My field notes suggest that the main aim of the learning outcomes changes made locally was framed in terms of trying to achieve curriculum alignment. At the same time, curriculum alignment was recontextualised as being a process of ensuring that the teacher educators did all they could to help the students reach the learning outcomes. In one of the planning meetings I told the other teacher educators that 'we need to make sure that we do what we say we are going to do'. In my role as course coordinator I frequently reminded the other teacher educators of the requirement to describe courses and organise them in terms of learning outcomes. The focus was as

much if not more on what the teacher educators would do rather than what the students would do. For example, in one meeting whilst discussing contributions to the course handbook, the other teacher educators were asked to explain

what the form of examination is, the criteria for a pass which of course should match the learning outcome....together they should tell the student everything they need to know ...and also how your lectures, classes will be organized to help the students reach the outcomes

Instead of making the courses more 'student centred', the focus put on 'curriculum alignment' was primarily on the teacher's role and acted as a way of cementing traditional pedagogic roles for teachers and students. I will return to this point later in this chapter but first in the next section I will look at the forms of assessment and the assessment criteria that accompanied the new learning outcomes.

### The evaluative rules contained within the learning outcomes

Policy discourses around the Bologna process describe the need to move away from traditional curricula and assessment, with focus being put on the active learner and the attainment of generic competences and the requirements of working life. The discourse suggests the need for students to achieve a deeper level of learning in their studies. In this section I analyse the forms of assessment and the assessment criteria that accompanied the new learning outcomes.

To help me in this analysis I have used Bernstein's concept of instructional discourse to analyse the rules for transmission and acquisition that regulate pedagogic practice in the new learning outcomes curriculum. For Bernstein evaluative rules condense the meaning of the whole pedagogic device; not only do they define what counts as legitimate knowledge, but they also act selectively on pedagogic practice; both the content and form of transmission as well as on the subjectivity and agency of learners. The criteria for success in examination tasks reflect the pedagogic identities ascribed

to students and the possibilities for students to problematize course content.

As part of writing the learning outcomes, teacher C and I also wrote the standards that were to be reached by students in the assessment tasks that were designed to measure whether students had reached the various learning outcomes. In order to analyse the evaluative rules in the new learning outcomes I have looked at the descriptions given in course handbooks distributed to students at the beginning of the two courses given in both 2008 and 2009 and which give details of examination tasks, method of examination and the criteria required for a pass. These details are shown in appendix six.

An analysis of the assessment criteria specified in course documentation for the content learning outcomes suggests that the organization of the courses around student learning outcomes resulted in the implementation of mostly traditional assessment forms and criteria. The assessment criteria reflect how the process of developing the learning outcomes was framed by the practice architectures of teacher education and higher education generally. The evaluative rules focus on the behaviour of learners that is to be changed, reflecting the disciplinary discourse that students need to be inducted into the knowledge of the discipline. They reflect a belief in the ability of the traditional disciplinary practices of higher education to be able to deliver the education and assess the competencies and skills required by the students.

An analysis of the assessment criteria listed in appendix five shows that very few of the examination tasks require any critical input from students. Learning is conceived in terms of reaching the learning outcomes, and not in terms of the distance travelled in the learning process by the individual student. Students, for example, are asked to show knowledge of the theories behind the current syllabus for English as well as didactic theories and methods. Motivations given by students in examination tasks should be based on the criteria in the syllabus for English. Students are also required to acquire and follow other laws and requirements regulating their future profession. Other assessment criteria listed in appendix five require students to show that they have acquired skills and methods



deemed to be relevant to their future profession. Students are, for example, required to show that they can vary their language and teaching practice to fit the target group, use literature and other media in the classroom, plan a short curriculum and show awareness of ways of encouraging pupils to become more responsible for their own learning.

Two new examination forms were introduced; with a student run lesson included as part of testing the student's grammar knowledge for the first time, and an assessment and grading examination where students were asked to discuss and assess examples of pupils' written and oral ability in English.

Regardless of the form of examination, the facts, skills, and methods that are to be retained and used by the student in examinations and in their future career are largely given and uncontested within the learning culture itself. Very few tasks within these particular courses require the students to analyse, evaluate or create. Content is seen largely as unproblematic and criteria for success primarily involves having acquired knowledge of content, reaching a prescribed level of language proficiency and meeting other criteria such as those describing the form and layout of written documents. Even in the final two assessment tasks requiring students to reflect on their own learning, language development and development in the role as a teacher, the students were asked to reflect on their progress towards reaching the course learning outcomes, suggesting that student learning was seen as synonymous with reaching the learning outcomes.

An analysis of the contents of the new learning outcomes and the assessment criteria specified in course documentation suggests that the organization of the courses around student learning outcomes did little to change the contents and assessment forms that existed in previous courses. The contents of the learning outcomes and the forms of assessment cover knowledge, competencies and/or skills that can be found in similar teacher training courses in Sweden, reflecting generally the practice architectures that influence how teacher education is carried out. Other possible learning outcomes proposed by the discipline specific group in its discussions, such as 'passion' and 'love of the language', were not included in the new

learning outcomes. In subsequent discussions between teacher educators it was felt that it would be difficult to measure whether the students had met these learning outcomes. It was also felt that it was the duty of teacher educators to be a role model in respect of these issues. According to teacher B

you can transmit that kind of feeling yourself as a teacher I think...I think we have a responsibility ourselves to inspire the students... then it will turn into something positive and they will want to learn more about it

This quote epitomizes the local regulative discourse which framed the implementation of the Bologna process at the local level. In the next section I will describe this discourse in more detail.

### The regulative discourse which framed the implementation of the Bologna process locally

So far in this chapter I have showed that the process of organizing the content of the courses around student learning outcomes had very little influence as far as the overall contents to be transmitted to students are concerned or on how student work was evaluated. The contents and forms of assessment were largely the same as those that existed in courses that were held prior to the implementation of the learning outcomes.

The local implementation process was not influenced by policy discourses suggesting that an emphasis on learner needs and the requirements of working life entails a move away from the dominance of what schools and teachers can provide. Instead, the learning outcomes represent a belief in the ability of the traditional practices in higher education to be able to deliver the education required by the students. These traditional practices contain within them a specific pedagogic relationship between teacher educators and students. To help illustrate this relationship I will use Bernstein's concepts of regulative discourse and 'pedagogic identities'.

Bernstein's concept of regulative discourse is a discourse of social order which comprises the power relations between teachers and

students. Bernstein argued that all forms of pedagogy contain a power relation between teachers and learners, because all forms involved the social formation and regulation of individual identities. The local regulative discourse emphasizes the induction of students into the knowledge of the discipline and rests primarily on explicit, vertical relations between the teacher and student, with the rules of curriculum content in the hands of the teachers. This discourse promotes the idea of the teacher as role model and expert, and the student as novice and needing knowledge that is an essential prerequisite to entering the profession. This traditional approach to subject teacher education has dominated Swedish teacher education for decades. Teacher education as a means for the development of the individual student plays a lesser role (Beach 1995, 2000; Player-Koro, 2012)

This local discourse is similar to the *disciplinary discourse* described by Ensor (2004a), in which students enter the university with sets of experiences that are different to the knowledge forms into which they are to be inducted. These differences in experience results in

vertical pedagogic relations between teachers and students, and the ...foregrounding of disciplinary content and the backgrounding, relatively speaking, of individual student needs and experiences (p.343).

The influence of this disciplinary discourse on the roles ascribed to students and teachers is made clear in the data produced from teacher talk during planning meetings. Students were described as ‘not yet being mature in the discipline’ (Teacher B) ‘or the profession’ (Teacher A). Teacher B argued that

Many of these students are very young....not everyone has the right perspective... if students are not sufficiently mature; they do need us to guide them. They can be quite young... and they will think I can become a teacher I just need to do this and this and they don't quite know what it's all about.... they don't quite know the subject, they don't really know what it's like to study at this level....they think that you can go straight from school and start teaching, learn how to teach, the didactics but not really having acquired more knowledge about grammar and other key aspects relating to the subject itself

Teacher A stressed how important the teacher educator was in helping the students; arguing that the students

are going to teach English ...they need to know what to do, how to do it, why to do it..... they need to know what kinds of norms and expectations there are... they have to study the national curriculum and the school system ...they need to get information about that. We must keep the fundamental values in the curriculum really high..we need to be role models there

Similar messages were conveyed by the other teachers in the group. As far as language learning is concerned, teacher B felt it was important for the students to ‘enter a language’, and that that students should ‘get the opportunity to improve their knowledge: their feeling of being immersed in the language.’ Teacher C stressed why students should acquire information about the history and culture of English speaking countries. The teacher suggested that it was ‘knowledge that everybody needs and should have if they are going to be English teachers’. Teacher D too claimed that students need to be aware of literary analysis:

all teachers should know basic literary analysis... you don't have to have the ambition of turning students into literary critics...If you are using literature in the classroom these are the basics you need to be aware of

As quotes like these demonstrate, at the local level individual teachers are committed and feel responsible for helping students acquire the knowledge required to be able to work as language teachers in the future. The quotes represent a commitment to an old and seemingly very stable discourse in subject teacher education (Beach, 1995; Player-Koro, 2012). As Beach et al (2011) have shown it has survived at least thirty years of policies from the official recontextualising field of teacher educators that were intended to help change its hegemonic relation to teacher education practices.

In the next section I will look further at the roles ascribed to teachers and learners in the local regulative discourse and suggest that the learning outcomes that were produced locally can be as an expression of particular ‘pedagogic identities’.

## The learning outcomes as an expression of particular ‘pedagogic identities’

As I have already shown in this chapter, the local regulative discourse acted to mediate the influence of policy discourses on the implementation of the new learning outcomes curriculum. Bologna policy documents suggest the need for a change in the pedagogic relations between teachers and learners. They present the teacher as a facilitator or manager of the learning process, and the student as actively involved in the planning and management of their own learning. However, as indicated, these discourses were mediated by a local disciplinary discourse, which at its core has another relationship between teachers and learners and which stood in opposition to the idealisation of the Bologna texts. To help explain this further I will use Bernstein’s concept of ‘pedagogic identities.’

According to Bernstein (2000), the concept of pedagogic identity can be used to describe an identity position constructed and projected in the larger discourses shaping pedagogic practice. These larger discourses project distinct ‘pedagogic identities’ for both teachers and students. Viewed in this light, educational reforms are regarded by Bernstein as the outcome of the struggle to project and institutionalize particular identities (Bernstein, 1999). The official pedagogic discourse around educational reform sets up different categories of learners, different definitions of learner needs, and leads to a different set of prescriptions for practice.

As outlined in chapter five, Bernstein (2000) describes four curricular orientations that create and distribute pedagogic identities; retrospective, prospective, therapeutic, and market orientations. According to Bernstein these curricula orientations attempt ‘to construct in teachers and students a particular moral disposition, motivation and aspiration, embedded in particular performances and practices.’ The market orientation identity outlined by Bernstein appears to correspond to the student identity that is portrayed in the lifelong discourse found in European policy documents on education, stressing as it does the importance of employability, flexibility, and generic competences. The ‘market’ identity is competitive and responsive to the market and market values. Its

focus is on the exploration of vocational applications rather than upon exploration of knowledge.

By presenting learning outcomes as 'new' and 'positive' and being in contrast to the 'old' and restrictive' practices of academic traditions, Bologna discourses are able to present learning outcomes as being student centred. This persuasive policy discourse resulted in my initial policy optimism; believing as I did that learning outcomes could lead to a more student centred curriculum. However, an appreciation of the policy context and the use of Bernstein's concepts of regulative discourses and 'pedagogic identities' has allowed me to recode the connections made in Bologna policy documents and see the concept of learning outcomes in a different light.

Instead of being learner centred, learning outcomes are part of an attempt to introduce convergence and uniformity; they are more at home in the collection code curriculum described by Bernstein (1996); characterized by explicit hierarchy, explicit sequencing and explicit evaluation criteria. As such, learning outcomes are based on a rather different pedagogic identity for students than the market identity projected in Bologna policy documents. This identity is more in line with the retrospective and the prospective orientations described by Bernstein.

Bernstein suggests that both the retrospective and prospective student identity orientations can be regarded as 'centred' because they are driven by top-down policy and aim for convergence and uniform outputs for students. This is what the learning outcomes approach attempts to achieve and this corresponds with how the process of creating the learning outcomes was interpreted locally; as one of creating uniform learning outcomes for all students, focusing on a measurable product.

As Moore and Quintrell (2001) indicate, the retrospective pedagogic identity orientation provides little or no support for radical changes of content within the individual curricula and supports tight teacher control over the introduction and elaboration of subject knowledge or curricularised skills. The prospective identity orientation links current practice and philosophy to the future needs of society and the individual citizen, and is

characterized by its selective recontextualisation of certain features of past practice. Seen in this light it is hardly surprising that the local process of implementing learning outcomes had little influence on curriculum content and the pedagogic relations between teachers and students.

Rather than being about creating a more student centred approach, the Bologna reforms can be seen as part of the attempt to undermine academic authority and make educational programmes more relevant to economic interests. These attempts are driven by neoliberal and new public management discourses regarding the 'knowledge economy', the 'market' and 'globalisation'.

Using Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing, the Bologna process reforms can be seen as an attempt to bring about a shift from strong classification and framing associated with internal criteria defined by specialists and teacher led visible pedagogy to weak classification based on the needs of the knowledge economy and a student based model, based on less visible pedagogy. The need to move away from 'teacher driven provision' is stressed and the intrinsic values and integrity of academic disciplines come to signify rigid obsolescence and a range of dysfunctional if not pathological characteristics (Sjöberg, 2011).

As Bernstein argues all forms of pedagogy contain a power relation between teachers and learners. Learning outcomes do not fundamentally change this relation and as a result the implementation of learning outcomes locally did not and could not change the traditional pedagogic identities found at the local level. The Bologna reforms are formulated outside and away from academic practices; they do not address these practices or have the potential to effect material change. The consequence of this was that learning outcomes process was easily absorbed into the existing regulative discourse and the pedagogic identities already ascribed to teacher educators and learners

As I have shown, the learning outcomes that were produced in my field of practice represent the values of a local regulative discourse and a belief in continuity and an affirmation that educational practitioners are those best placed to decide on what is required by students. The learning outcomes produced were guided

and framed by traditions of the past, built upon the practice architectures of teacher education and higher education generally, which have guided pedagogic practice within universities for decennia.

In the next section I will focus on how the local regulative discourse influenced planning in the new learning outcomes curriculum.

## The local disciplinary discourse and curriculum planning

As has been shown already in this chapter, the implementation of new learning outcomes locally was framed by a regulative discourse promoting the idea of the teacher as role model and expert, and the student as novice and needing knowledge that is an essential prerequisite to entering the profession. This reflects a dominant local discourse of teacher centrism and teacher expert knowledge. It is a historical power discourse that supports teacher educators' rights to control the teacher education curriculum based on subject matter expertise. It dominates but is not without resistance or opposition. In this section I will show how this regulative discourse influenced curriculum planning within the teaching group, with curriculum planning decisions being carried out primarily by individual teachers.

The role of novice ascribed to students in this discourse and their perceived lack of knowledge was presented by teachers as a reason for restricting the influence of students over decision making. Although students had influence on course planning via course counsel meetings and course evaluations, their direct influence on decision making was minimal. During the case study period students took part in only one planning meeting. Teacher A expressed reservations about the influence the students could have on joint planning meetings.

We will meet them and we will talk about our ideas and of course they don't know what will happen during the term so I think it's very difficult to for them to have some ideas... there are a lot of rules and regulations for the teacher education...there are theories our



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curriculum and syllabus are based on and as a teacher you are forced to work according to these theories

Teacher B also argued against too much student influence

because if you bring it down to a certain level we can be doing practically anything and it takes away their respect for the teacher, and there has to be a degree of respect for what we are doing, otherwise why come, why bother ?

Time constraints were another factor mentioned in the argument against joint meetings. According to teacher D

we do tend to discuss things which are a little bit problematic and have to do with individuals..we would probably end up having double meetings to get things discussed

These discussions show that in this local discourse curriculum planning is still generally seen as the responsibility of teacher educators. Planning meeting discussions show the existence of vertical relations between the teacher and student, with the rules of curriculum content in the hands of the teachers. Students are portrayed as perhaps not mature enough, or not having sufficient knowledge of the discipline and the professional, to be able to take part in course planning. Rules and regulations that guide teacher education are used as a motivation for the limits that students could have in the influencing the contents of their studies. Time constraints are also mentioned as a reason for limiting student influence.

Within this disciplinary discourse teachers are used to carrying out most aspects of course planning in private and the individual teacher's responsibility for teaching and assessment is taken as given. As part of the new learning outcomes curriculum the design, delivery and assessment of individual course units continued to be generally the responsibility of individual teachers.

Resources, and in particular the allocated course budget, play a key role in planning and act to reinforce the role of the teacher in the regulative discourse. Rather than planning from student learning outcomes as recommended in policy documents, the course planning process for each course actually started with an allocation

of teachers to each course with a suggested number of hours work for each teacher (i.e. it was managerially and economically bureaucratically led). The total numbers of hours initially allocated to a course is also formed in these economic, managerialist and bureaucratic terms. It is based on the number of students, rather the hours needed to ensure that the learning outcomes are achieved. Whilst the course coordinator has in theory the right to dispute the allocation, in practice the allocation is difficult to significantly change. Teachers usually need their hours and once they have been given a certain number of hours they are reluctant to lose them. Teachers who have a PhD are seen as those who add extra quality to a course.

As described in field notes and transcripts from meetings during the planning process for each course, the teaching group started by agreeing on the learning outcomes for the course concerned. However, instead of following the learning outcomes approach of trying to align the curriculum, learning strategies, learning opportunities and assessment processes with the learning outcomes, the next stage in the planning process was to decide who would be responsible for each course part. My field notes show that during this process, teachers often made it clear that they wanted to be responsible for teaching areas which they are familiar with, and that they had done before.

What happened in the classroom was still largely a private matter and teachers rarely discussed their individual practice with each other or gave advice or comment on each others' work. According to teacher B

I think you have to have different competencies and then you have to stick within your area of competence and not pretend that you can do what the others do

Giving advice to other teachers was not done; 'you don't go in and do that ... you can't go in and teach an old dog to sit' (Teacher B). Teachers are reluctant to suggest how other teachers should organize their work. In one discussion on the details of a course unit where the teacher responsible for the unit was not present at the meeting, Teacher D said that

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I'm not the one who is going to teach this so maybe I shouldn't be so specific. Maybe (teacher B) should because she is going to teach this course

These results reflect the research carried out by Becher and Trowler (2001). They claimed that higher education teachers are reluctant towards engaging in critical conversations with colleagues. Handal (1999) also suggested that university teachers felt it was not 'culturally accepted' to talk to colleagues about their teaching. Thus, and in line with this, although there were a lot of discussion between teachers on the connection between learning outcomes, teaching, examination, criteria, assessment and feedback, the data suggests that this did not mean that teachers knew more about what the other teachers were doing in their lessons than before. According to teacher A,

We know a little bit of what the rest of us are doing but no deep knowledge....I don't know what you are doing so I can't criticize what you are doing but at our meetings I can say what I feel after a lecture and so on and you can help me to go on ... We need to know more about what we are doing

A lack of time resources generally meant that little time was available for reflection and joint planning. In one planning meeting the teachers went through a sample paper of student work to discuss the level and the assessment and feedback that should be given. In another meeting the teacher group discussed the European Association for Language Testing and assessment's guidelines for good language testing and assessment, which resulted in a discussion of the need for feedback to students to be clear, detailed sensitive and constructive. Otherwise, the assessment of student work was done by teachers individually.

The sole responsibility that teachers had for planning reflects the pedagogic identities that teachers and learners have in the local discourse. Curriculum planning is more akin to what Bernstein has called the 'collection' code model of curriculum. Within this 'collection' code curriculum framing is strong and teachers have full control over planning matters. The student is required to follow the organization of the course, rather than having their own individual

study program. Students have little influence over aspects of assessment either, with evaluation firmly in the hands of the teachers. Although students received five opportunities to take each examination the dates were decided by the teacher concerned. Pedagogy is “visible”, meaning that it is characterized by an explicit hierarchy, explicit sequencing and explicit evaluation criteria. Subject areas are clearly and explicitly defined and classified, as are the skills and procedures to be taught to students. Framing is strong, meaning that the rules of the regulative and instructional discourse are explicit to the student and the teacher. Outcomes and criteria are clearly specified and are the same for all students.

This look at curriculum planning shows that the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna reforms did not alter the traditional power relations between teachers and learners and the mainly ‘collection’ code model of curriculum already in place. The reforms did not have any significant effect on the ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’ of local practice. It did not change the ‘sayings’ of practice (the relationship between hearers and speakers), the ‘doings’ of work practices (the relationships between educators and learners) or the ‘relating’ of practice (the relations between formal leading and teachers which influence leading practice). The reforms did not change the way teacher educators talked about their work or what they defined as important for students to learn. It did not change the choice of content, assessment or the practices of communication. It did not change the relationship between teacher educators and teachers in school, between teacher educators themselves or teacher educators and their students.

Teacher talk in planning meetings revolved primarily around the practicalities of doing the job and the influence that the changes made had had on their own teacher practice. There was little if not any discussion or questioning of the traditional roles of the teacher and learner, of accepted pedagogic practice and assessment procedures. The discussions between teachers reflect the failure of the learning outcomes approach to inspire significant pedagogic change and the limited scope of the changes made at the micro level as a result of organizing the courses around student learning outcomes. The discussions can be interpreted as an internal

discussion between cultural conservatives and progressives, but with no critical analysis and interpretation of the curriculum or discussion of broader societal issues and the issues of democratic schooling.

## Summary

Some supporters of the Bologna process present the Bologna initiative as representing ‘a paradigm shift’ in education. The policy discourses identified in chapter seven suggest that there should be a change in the traditional relationship between teacher and learner in higher education; with policy documents suggesting that there is a need to move towards a more student centred approach to learning and that more emphasis should be placed on employability, flexibility, and generic competences. The overall impression gained from reading policy documents is the suggestion that there should be a change in the pedagogic relations between teachers and learners, with a move away from a traditional disciplinary discourse which is portrayed as negative and introjective.

This chapter uses the idea of policy recontextualisation to describe the influence of the context of practice on policy implementation. In this case study, the changes made as a result of the introduction of learning outcomes were introduced and implemented into a field of reproduction shaped by the practice architectures of teacher education, and of language teaching and learning approaches.

The findings in this chapter suggest that one should be cautious about the arguments made in policy discourses on the Bologna process and the learning outcomes approach to planning which suggest that learning outcomes are based on a more student centred approach. The findings suggest that Bologna learning outcomes had little influence on the vertical power relations between teachers and learners, but rather acted to cement them.

The implementation of learning outcomes into local curriculum planning was guided by a local disciplinary discourse based on explicit, vertical relations between the teacher and student. Using Bernstein’s concepts of regulative discourses and pedagogic identities enables the recoding of the connections made in Bologna

policy documents. In contrast to the policy rhetoric of student centred, the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning can be seen as representing a more traditional pedagogic identity for students, containing the goal of convergence and uniform outputs. As such, learning outcomes do not challenge the fundamental power relations between teachers and students. Indeed, the introduction of learning outcomes into the local environment acted to strengthen rather than challenge the vertical relations between teachers and students, cementing and confirming the level of control that teachers had over planning and all other aspects of the curriculum.

Rather than representing a move away from a traditional disciplinary discourse, the learning outcomes produced locally represent a continued faith in the ability of the traditional practices in higher education to be able to deliver the education required by the students. The learning outcomes that were produced at the local level did not represent any significant change to the contents and competences required of students that existed in the courses prior to the introduction of learning outcomes. The professional concerns of the teacher educators and their expert knowledge as teachers and teacher educators mediated the influence of the Bologna policy discourses, which offered no new substance to how the teacher educators believed that they should carry out their work.

This is a constant outcome in analyses of (teacher) education change at the level of the pedagogic recontextualising field. Changes in formulations of aims and intentions at the level of the official recontextualising field do not result in changes to practice (Beach, 1995; Eriksson, 2009, Player-Koro, 2012).

The new learning outcomes curriculum represents not only traditional roles for teachers and learners (transmitter and receivers) but gives very little opportunity for students to engage in critical enquiry. This lack of opportunity for critical enquiry by students is made even clearer by an analysis of the assessment tasks and the standards that are to be reached by learners. The evaluative rules contained within the student learning outcomes shows that while some new examination forms were introduced, very few tasks required the students to critically examine the knowledge of the discipline.

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While the content learning outcomes produced as a result of the Bologna process did little to change the existing characteristics of the curriculum, the adoption of the descriptors connected to the CEFR to measure the students' language proficiency was based on the belief that the adoption of the descriptors could influence teaching strategies and assessment techniques. In the next chapter I will analyse the influence of this change on teacher practice.





## Chapter 9: The interplay of the Bologna process on practice

### Introduction

In the previous chapter it was shown that discourses found in Bologna policy documents were recontextualised and mediated by a local disciplinary discourse based on explicit, vertical relations between the teacher and student. In this discourse teachers are seen as role models who have the task of passing on knowledge that is regarded as essential for the students to obtain before entering the profession. The nature of the learner outcomes approach to curriculum planning and the discourses shaping pedagogic practice led to a situation where the process of writing the learner outcomes legitimised the traditional roles for both teachers and students in teacher education. The learning outcomes that were produced at the local level did not represent any significant change to the contents and competences required of students that existed in the courses prior to the introduction of learning outcomes.

According to policy discourses connected to the Bologna process learning outcomes are presented as a basis for curricular re-organisation. With this in mind, the aim of this chapter is to analyse the influence that the organization of the courses around learning outcomes had on practice. The focus is in particular on the learning outcomes adopted from the descriptors connected to the Common European Framework for languages (CEFR) and intended to be used as the starting point for organising teaching and assessing the teacher trainer students' language proficiency in English.

Before discussing the question of curricular re-organisation, I will discuss the potential significance of the adoption of the CEFR descriptors on teacher practice.

## The adoption of the descriptors connected to the CEFR

As part of the process of creating new learning outcomes for the courses that are the focus of this thesis it was decided to adopt the descriptors connected to the Common European Framework for languages (CEFR) as the starting point for organising teaching and assessing the teacher trainer students' language proficiency in English. More specifically the C1 level language descriptors contained in the European Confederation of University Language Centres in Higher Education portfolio 29.2002 were suggested as the language proficiency learning outcomes for the students' education. Descriptors contained within the *National Language Standards* published in 2005 by CILT, the National Centre for Languages, were also adapted for this purpose. According to the National Centre's website at the time, the standards set out the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use language competently in work settings and are primarily intended to be applied to those using and/or learning a language which is not their first language ([ww.cilt.org.uk/standards](http://www.cilt.org.uk/standards)).

The adoption of the CEFR descriptors can be seen as the main way in which policy discourses suggesting that learning outcomes are a basis for curricular re-organisation and a move away from traditional curricula and assessment found expression. Using Bernstein's theories on the structures of knowledge, this change can be understood as an attempt to force a horizontal curriculum reform; by attempting to move language teaching and learning practice away from the liberal tradition of university studies towards the more instrumental paradigm as represented by the CEFR descriptors and its focus on successful communication and 'real-world' skills. Advocates of the CEFR, such as Little (2009), suggest that the communicative orientation of the CEFR favours a task based approach to teaching and learning as well as the development of learner autonomy. Little suggests too that the 'can do' descriptors of the CEFR offer to bring curriculum, pedagogy and assessment closer to one another than has traditionally been the case,

challenging us to rethink each from the perspective of the other two.

I believed initially that the adoption of the Framework descriptors had the potential to significantly change teacher practice. Efforts to achieve change focused primarily on attempts to change assessment practice within the courses concerned and to connect assessment and feedback to the wording of the CEFR descriptors. The efforts were inspired by the official policy discourse that learning outcomes were a basis for curricular re-organisation and the idea that this could be achieved through curriculum alignment. The changes that were made can be seen as an attempt to achieve alignment between the language proficiency learning outcomes, learning opportunities and assessment processes.

Later in this chapter I will analyse the influence that these attempts to move towards the more instrumental paradigm of language teaching and learning had on practice. First, however, I will discuss the policy discourse that learning outcomes as a basis for curricular re-organisation.

## Learning outcomes as a basis for curricular re-organisation

In policy discourses connected to the Bologna process learning outcomes are presented as a basis for curricular re-organisation. The discourse suggests that there is an automatic link between the use of learning outcomes, the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and the development of suitable assessment techniques. Policy discourses suggest that learning outcomes should be aligned with learning opportunities and assessment processes to ensure that students achieve the outcomes.

However, as mentioned in chapter two, the idea of alignment has been criticized. Daugherty et al (2008), for example, question the idea of curriculum alignment, suggesting that in practice learning outcomes are often strongly contested. The whole idea of alignment, they claim, rests on the idea that ‘the constructs of interest are already established, agreed and expressed in unambiguous terms’ (p.244).

In this chapter I will show that the learning outcomes that were introduced into the courses were far from established and agreed by the teaching group. In my analysis I have identified two main areas in which the learning outcomes were contested. The first area concerns the extent that the learning outcomes cover learners' needs. The second area concerns the idea that learning can be measured through learning outcomes (and through the CEFR descriptors in particular). I will next look at these two areas of contestation in more detail.

## The contested nature of the learning outcomes

### **The extent that the learning outcomes covered learners' needs**

Although very few of the new learning outcomes that were produced cover content or goals that did not already exist in courses that were held the year before, teacher planning meeting discussions show that there were differences of opinion about the extent that the learning outcomes covered the learners' needs. Many discussions centred on the extent that the new learning outcomes curriculum should cover knowledge about the target discipline, the English language, or knowledge about the teaching of the English language. Teacher C expressed the view that the course was

more oriented towards their future teacher careers ...it is more oriented towards what they will actually be doing in school...compared to what an English course traditionally should include

Teacher B, on the other hand, felt that the mixture between knowledge about the English language and knowledge about the teaching of the English language

has to be successful and it has to be comparable to what is being offered in other places... you can't just be here and say this is our way of doing it...we are not placing the same demands...the learning outcomes are not at university level really.....I mean they are definitely basic requirements, but I feel that some of the things they

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have been doing have been a little bit sort of childish, a little bit simplistic

Teacher B's comments here reflect investment in an academic career and identity. As a highly qualified and experienced subject expert she felt that the changes had meant that the courses were too oriented towards the school and that it was more important for the students to learn more about the language subject itself;

They should learn more about the English language when they are here ....with this distribution of time ...There should be more focus on linguistic progress; there is a misunderstanding... there is something missing, there is a gap; you have to focus more on language acquisition...They spent too much time learning about the English syllabus that applies in Swedish schools, when in a couple of years it might change anyway, obviously they should know what a syllabus is and it's something you have to follow but...it's given a big place really....Much of this is taken up elsewhere in the students' education....how relevant is it to do it twice ? I mean there are so many things they need to learn about English speaking countries.....for me it seems like a great waste of time ...this could be used for more input I mean like you had before when you had culture studies when they gave talks and found out things ...and that's gone now

Teacher C expressed concern that there was not enough focus on the students' language progress;

We need even harder focus on their language acquisition ...sometimes you might get the feeling that we tend to take it for granted that they have a certain language level , which they obviously in some cases don't ...perhaps we didn't think about that they have to ...develop their language skills from a lower level than we thought

The comments reflect the existence of the local disciplinary discourse identified in the previous chapter. They also demonstrate concern from the teacher educators that the learning outcomes that were produced meant that vital aspects of the discipline were not being covered.

Teacher educators thought it was important to integrate knowledge about the English language, and knowledge about the teaching of the English language. Teacher A, for example said that

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We need to integrate; when you talk about Grammar why not talk about how to teach Grammar at school? You can do that at the same time

However, the inclusion of new examinations where students were to be assessed on their English language proficiency and knowledge about the teaching of the English language led to concerns that aspects of the discipline were not being covered. Teacher A suggested that the English language requirement meant that it was mostly language ability and not knowledge about the teaching of the English language which was being examined and given feedback on by teachers. According to teacher A

all the exams we have here, it's not about teaching it's about the language in most of them; in all the papers and all the discussions it's about their language...Maybe we should separate the two parts of the examination; I feel that we have to separate it; sometimes they could develop their teaching skills in Swedish and sometimes it's the language proficiency in English.....it is important to speak as much English as possible ...but for instance when they come back from their AVT (the practicum) they are full of new impressions: then I think they need to sit down and talk in Swedish...We could have the seminar in Swedish.....because their identity as a teacher and the language... they are so connected....they feel more free to express themselves

Concerns were also expressed that knowledge about the English language would not be covered adequately in one of the new examinations. The discussion concerned the examination of the student learning outcome where the students were asked to analyse a literary work as an expression of culture. Students were also required to give examples of how they would use the literature in their own lessons. Teacher B felt that

It wasn't a very good thing to mix up two things at once, it would have been better for them to do just a literary exam and bring up cultural aspects and not worry about the future pupils for this particular task. The students should have just written about the books; it was just confusing to bring this didactic business in the same task...its muddled things up

Again teacher B expresses concern about ‘watering down effects’ on disciplinary knowledge through the implementation of the CEFR inspired policies in action. As further exemplification of her concern, in another discussion, teacher B expressed the view that the learning outcome for knowledge about English grammar (that the student should be able to explain grammatical issues that are common problem areas for learners of English), meant that the students were not getting enough grammar study in the course. She argued that

the course is not being carried out as it ought to be carried out ...in other places much more is demanded you have real language tests and so on...the students haven't had a lot of grammar compared to other places. There is a risk that you end up doing a grammar exam that is suitable for grade 9 yourself and that your knowledge stops there ...the (exam) didn't cover you know the more advanced issues and I just feel that that teachers should try to be a sort of a role model and they must be at a higher level than the pupils. Our students need to have more input, they need to have tougher grammar tests

The expression of suspicion and concern expressed here reflect on the curriculum content of academic subject teacher education being challenged by a horizontal professional knowledge.

Other disagreements concerned the inclusion of new forms of examination for traditional English language subject areas. One discussion concerned the new Phonetics examination which required students to record the English pronunciation of a young second language learner of English and write a report comparing the pronunciation of the individual concerned with the standard British (RP) or American (GA) model of pronunciation. Knowledge of Phonetics had in previous courses been examined by a sit down examination. Teacher B felt that the form of examination meant that not everything that ‘should’ be covered was covered, and that the students were missing out as a result;

you need the tools ...it has to do with entering a language ...a theoretical aspect and if you take it away then you have taken away a piece of theory . I'm not saying you should overdo it but you should be able to pick up a dictionary and use it as a help... It is about mastery; becoming aware of how to speak...The new examination

would mean that students focus on one difficulty rather than the various difficulties that you need to know about. The student will just do one thing and so they don't bother about the rest ...they tend not to worry about the whole package....today's students don't sit and read the whole book because it's an interesting book, the odd student might... traditional sit down examinations are more reliable methods of assessing student work..... sit down examinations ....expose weaknesses which other forms of examination don't in the same way

The other teacher educators agreed and as a result of discussions between us a written examination was re-added to the course at a later date, in addition to the problem solving task.

There is a broad agreement within the teaching group that the teacher education subject curriculum should cover both knowledge about the English language, and knowledge about the teaching of the English language. However, the data produced from planning meeting discussions show that some of the new learning outcomes were seen as threatening that balance and the extent that the learning outcomes covered learner's needs was contested. Some new examinations were seen as not allowing for the adequate coverage of content, and references were made to what is traditionally done within their discipline, and at other universities in Sweden. Individual teachers are keen to make sure that the balance between the two knowledge areas is maintained, and as such they are keen to protect and promote their respective terrains.

### **Measuring learning through learning outcomes**

According to policy discourses on the Bologna process educational activities and 'outputs' are measurable and that this can be achieved through learning outcomes. At times this discourse was also challenged in the teaching group. Teacher B, for example, questioned whether it was possible to specify what students need to learn in terms of learning outcomes. She questioned whether it was possible to specify students' language proficiency in terms of learning outcomes, arguing that it wasn't possible to explain what students should be able to do in a few lines. According to this teacher there was a risk of putting too much focus on learning outcomes. She questioned



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...how you would characterize the learning outcome for a teacher...it is very difficult to pinpoint actually...the outcome is going into the classroom ...and coping with the situation...with language...you can't say this and this only...you can't have one little piece, it is like saying I know how to open a bottle, never mind the contents. I mean that's what happens if you focus too sharply on the learning outcome and it's the road towards the learning outcome that might be more interesting...the learning outcomes project has made things very formal and reductionist...it is very difficult to give detailed descriptions in advance. I cannot give descriptions of the kind offered for putting furniture together.....It is supposed to be at some level of abstraction

Teacher B was not alone in offering critique of the reform process and its local consequences. During one planning discussion teacher D explained why she also felt it was difficult to give a contribution to the course handbook:

My problem is I have got two weeks before this starts ...I have been trying to get this together but I couldn't say exactly at this point how my lecture or seminar will be organised...there's no way. I'll need more time for that ....I'll revise it, I'll add more

Other discussions suggested that it was felt that organizing around learning outcomes was restrictive and might exclude forms of learning that are harder to specify and create criteria for. This point was made frequently in discussions concerning the student learning outcomes connected to the reading of literature, where these discussions centred around the difficulties of writing a learning outcome which expressed what the students should be able to achieve. For teacher B, reading literature was

about students improving their knowledge, their feeling of being immersed in the language....it enables students to understand more about English speaking countries, differences in culture, because it goes with the package.....it is an individual experience.....it's a way of becoming a better person

Teacher D agreed, arguing that literature

is very enriching for development... It's important ...to talk about literature, to write about literature..all of that is so fruitful

These discussions around learning outcomes for literature reflect what Degerman (2010) has described as the

tension between the goals of critical academic discourse and the pragmatics of vocational teacher education, as presented in learning outcomes (p.257).

The reactions of teachers B and D are against what Degerman (2010) describes as a ‘simplification of the interpersonal, contextual aspects of knowledge production’ in literary studies (p.254). The teacher educators are clearly questioning the instrumental orientation of the learning outcomes approach and in doing so express some of the concerns about learning outcomes which were outlined in chapter three. Critics such as Hussey and Smith (2002), for example, have suggested that a rigid focus on learning outcomes can restrict student learning. The comments by the teacher educators also represent the Humboldtian tradition of trying to cultivate citizens, and a notion of education that involves the formation of good citizens that can contribute not only to the economy but also to the public good on the basis of their own enlightenment and personal development. The learning outcomes way of curriculum planning was seen as a threat to that tradition.

The question as to whether educational activities and ‘outputs’ are measurable primarily concerned discussions as to whether the CEFR descriptors were the appropriate basis for measuring the students’ language proficiency. The contested nature of the learning outcomes based on the CEFR descriptors is discussed in the next section.

### **Measuring language proficiency through the CEFR descriptors**

There were mixed opinions in the teacher group about using the CEFR descriptors to help assess the students’ language proficiency. Teacher A felt that the use of the descriptors was positive because

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The Swedish students have gone to school where we have a communicative view (of language) ...where the teacher is more of a guide

Teacher E, who works part time as a teacher of English in a Swedish school, said that she did not think using the Framework was a problem because the students

...are quite aware of this when I talk to them and some of them they already know it from secondary school. You have to explain and give them examples...that's very important

Teacher B felt that 'the good thing about it is that you have something that everybody can look at.' Despite these positive comments, generally my field notes and the data produced from planning meetings show that the teaching team expressed concern that students would have problems understanding the CEFR descriptors, as they 'were vague', 'saying the same thing' (Teacher B) and 'at times hard to understand'(Teacher D). Teacher B felt that

.... it's very difficult to specify exactly what the language proficiency is...the way they have tried to do it ...to bring them together and say this is a certain level ...it has to be a little hazy ..you have fuzzy edges. The Framework is a lot about communicating ...it's more about performing and experiencing from a subjective point of view...with insufficient focus on grammatical accuracy in the language learning outcomes for students....the CEFR is very good at avoiding grammar; they sort of lump it together in one line ... it would be better to use another method to judge the students' language proficiency.....there should have been some kind of key, procedure, where everything anticipated is visible and measurable and you could have said so and so many percent, this that or the other; you know a sort of objective, quantifiable method

Many of the arguments made against the use of CEFR in planning meeting discussions reflect the criticisms of the CEFR that were outlined in chapter three. The CEFR has been criticised by Alderson (2007), for example, for using vague and imprecise language, while Weir (2005) has pointed to the difficulties in using the CEFR for test development or comparability. The arguments made against the use of CEFR can also be seen as an expression of the liberal tradition of language teaching and learning outlined in

chapter four, and a reaction against the attempt to move towards the instrumental paradigm represented by the CEFR descriptors.

The contested nature of the learning outcomes reflects the influence of the local pedagogic discourse, referred to in chapter eight, emphasizing the induction of students into the knowledge of the discipline as well as the commitments and methods of a profession. Within this discourse teachers are keen to preserve and promote their own areas of interest within the discipline. This helps both to preserve their power base within the curriculum and to induct students into the knowledge that is seen as essential for them to acquire.

The findings here are similar to some of those discussed in the review of the research literature in chapter four. Margolis (2001), for example, describes the influence of the ‘hidden curriculum’; the process where university teachers feel that they have the task of participating in the socialization of students into the community that they themselves have once been socialized into. This task involves not only that of selecting and teaching the skills of the discipline but of socializing their students into the cultural discourse. The findings also reflect research carried out on Swedish teacher education by Beach (1995, 2000) and Linde (2003), which showed that different groups within teacher education can have different views on what is important in the teacher education curriculum.

The contested nature of the learning outcomes themselves is not only a consequence of the local disciplinary discourse, but as I will show in the next section, it acted to mediate the influence that the changes had on practice.

### The influence of the attempted changes on practice

In this section of the chapter I will attempt to analyse the influence that the changes that were made in connection with organising courses around learning outcomes had on practice. The main focus of this analysis is on attempts to move language teaching and learning practice away from the liberal tradition of university studies towards the more instrumental paradigm as represented by the CEFR descriptors: i.e. from a vertical to more horizontal discourse

(Beach and Bagley, 2012) Before I analyse the influence that using the CEFR descriptors had on teaching practice, I will discuss attempts that were made to make students more responsible for their learning, and in particular in terms of their language proficiency.

### **Attempts that were made to make students more responsible for their learning**

As was shown in chapter seven, policy documents relating to the Bologna process and to the CEFR present the idea of the more active learner, taking more responsibility for their own learning process. Policy documents argue for the need to move towards a more student centred approach to learning. Connected to this discourse is the idea of the teacher as a facilitator or manager of the learning process.

As part of the new learning outcomes curriculum, a number of changes were made in an attempt to make students more responsible for their learning. The first change made was that for the first time each student was allocated a supervisor (one of the course teachers) who over the term was responsible for helping students to reflect on their progress towards reaching the learning outcomes for the course. The students were also required to keep an electronic teaching /language portfolio as well as an on-line log book where they could raise issues with teachers and reflect on their own progress. Teacher A felt the change was a positive one;

It is a focus in both the syllabus and the curriculum for the compulsory school that the pupils how to take responsibility for their own learning and to be aware of how they learn ...so I think it could be useful for the students too to think in that way....I think it is necessary for them to practice by themselves

In the courses that are the focus of this thesis the students received credits for their reflections. My field notes show that the teachers were not in agreement as to whether the students should receive credits for this task and the learning outcomes and credits were subsequently removed from the courses after the time period that the thesis covers.

The second change made was that for examinations based on hand in papers, a new system of teacher feedback was introduced with the intention of encouraging students to reflect on their work rather than simply rewriting their papers based on teacher's corrections. The system was based on the notification of errors and mistakes, and not inspired by the 'can do' approach of the CEFR descriptors.

The new system involved using a colour code to indicate what kind of mistakes and errors the students had made in their papers. Five colour codes were used and according to the guide made available to students, the colours corresponded with the following areas

1. Spelling or punctuation (including capitalization) (Blue)
2. Grammar mistake (ie use of tenses, subject- word agreement, word order) (Yellow)
3. Incorrect word choice. (Red)
4. Stylistic errors. Register not appropriate. (Green)
5. Lack of coherence/cohesion. Incomplete or "run on" sentences (Grey)

My field notes show that the teacher educators involved in marking student written papers agreed that the method was not comprehensive or perfect, and after the period of this case study it was replaced by the comments function in the Microsoft Word program. Teacher C, however, felt that the new feedback system was positive, suggesting that

it makes...the student's weak sides , or the parts of the language where he or she needs to focus , rather clear ... you can see ..... whether its vocabulary or grammar...that needs to be improved and you can see it rather clearly

Discussions amongst teacher educators also concerned whether the students had understood the method used. Teacher B was concerned that the system was not going to help the weaker students and whether using the system was going to help the students in their future careers. She also questioned the idea that the teacher educators had to use the same system of giving feedback.

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This is not a highly professional tool ...I'm getting back these papers and they haven't understood or known what to do...so they submit it with the same mistakes...they have not understood the feedback ...I don't know how much you learn on your own if you don't know what the colours are about...the students have problems conceptualising...many of them have haven't understood that yellow is a more grave mistake then say red...the process is too long winded, too tedious...and there is too much for students to remember. How much will (using colours) help them in the future when they have to access student writing and perhaps use 6 or 7 scales ...it is important for students to become aware of the mistake and the nuances of the language

Teacher B has a clear point from the perspective of the vertical academic discourse and others in the team accepted this critique. Teacher D felt that

we need to be clearer about what kind of grammar mistake it is...it will teach the students... For us to distinguish between the types of mistake is crucial actually

The views expressed concern how the new method of feedback made it difficult for teacher educators to be able to carry out their responsibilities of passing on knowledge that is academically felt to be essential for the students to obtain before entering the profession. The teacher educators are guided by the traditional role of the teacher in the liberal tradition of language teaching at university level and outlined in the review of the research literature in chapter four. This is not to be seen only as a reactionary or conservative tendency. Academic disciplines have developed a complex system of syntax and grammar relating to sacred forms of knowledge over centuries. In this tradition there is a strong emphasis placed on grammar and the development of written skills and the task of the teacher is to expose the student to and help him/her analyse and understand 'good' language use.

The use of the feedback method led to discussions in planning meetings about the role of the teacher. Teacher B questioned again the amount of responsibility students could take for their own learning, suggesting that it meant that the teacher was not able to carry out their work in the way they should;

If you are representing a pathway into a profession -can you really leave it up to (them)? Is that how you learn a language by sitting looking at a grammar book in your study groups? Should you not be communicating with your teacher? There comes a point where I feel that I haven't been doing my job, because these students have been in the system and I'm sitting here reading this stuff they keep handing in, and they are not getting help. I've felt inhibited by not being able to remind in the margins saying this is wrong... or even sometimes you need to suggest another phrasing ...you need to comment.... I want to give them a bit more and I think I have .. I can't help scribbling down a few things, because you feel this is not getting anywhere if you are not allowed to guide them

Teacher E agreed;

I feel sometimes that I would like to use a pen as well...I think it's a good system but very often I want to write things as well

The planning meetings discussions suggest that the new feedback method was perceived as a challenge to existing pedagogic practice and the roles that it presents for both teacher educator and learner. The new method of working led to feelings that the group was not able to carry out its role as wished, with this leading to feelings of frustration. The ability of students to take onboard the feedback given was questioned and the lack of help given by teacher educators was felt to be part of the reason why students were not succeeding as well as they might.

In the next section I will look at the influence that using the CEFR descriptors had on teaching practice.

### **The influence of the adoption of the CEFR on teaching practice**

Bologna policy discourses promote the idea of the teacher as a facilitator or manager of the learning process. This idea was the inspiration behind the introduction of a number of language and didactic workshops into the courses, which had the aim of giving the students general and individualised help needed to tackle the new learning outcomes. The inspiration behind the introduction of the workshops was also connected to the idea that students should take more responsibility for their learning. The idea was that the



workshops should be interactive and that it was not just the teacher educators' responsibility to decide what happened in the workshops.

It is difficult to assess the influence of the adoption of the CEFR based learning outcomes on teaching practice generally as no data was produced from classroom interactions. However, course evaluations from students suggest that the workshop teachers did not always have the CEFR range of 'action-oriented' descriptors in mind during the workshops and that the focus was primarily on grammar and writing, with less focus given to oral production and oral interaction. In course evaluations students expressed the opinion that many of these workshops were continuations of the grammar lectures and that they wanted more workshops to help them reach the language proficiency goals for the course. In response the teacher educator responsible for the workshops explained that they felt that the students needed more grammar practice and that the focus on grammar had been justified as most students had passed the sit down grammar examination.

In contrast to the ideas behind the workshops and the Bologna policy discourse presenting the idea of the teacher as a facilitator or manager of the learning process, student evaluations and interviews suggest the continuation of the more traditional role for the teacher educator in the language workshops. The teacher educators on the programme are all highly trained professionals and although the teachers' role appears to have followed the traditional one found in the local pedagogic discourse and the liberal tradition of modern language teaching outlined in chapter four, there are good professional reasons connected to valued knowledge practices and commitments behind this. We are not only looking at a group of conservative academics carrying on business as usual. We are looking at forms of academic resistance to the hollowing out of academic knowledge and the professional academic role in practice.

In the next section I will look at the influence that using the CEFR descriptors had on the feedback and assessment of student work.

## **The influence of the CEFR descriptors on teacher feedback and assessment**

The main change made in connection with the adoption of the CEFR descriptors concerns attempts to connect feedback and assessment with the CEFR's 'can do' focus. Standard assessment forms were introduced which attempted to connect assessment to the language used in the descriptors. Rather than using the CEFR descriptors on the assessment form, adapted and selective versions of the descriptors were used instead. For example, the CEFR descriptors for the C1 level in writing were used on the assessment form in the following way:

<b>CEFR Descriptor</b>	<b>Assessment form term</b>
I can express myself fluently and accurately in writing on a range of general, academic or professional topics, varying my vocabulary and style according to the context.	Fluent and accurate. Varies vocabulary and style according to the context.
I can write a well-structured critical review of a paper, project or proposal relating to my academic field, giving reasons for my opinion.	Clear, well-structured.
I can write clear, well-structured texts on complex subjects in my field, underlining the relevant salient points, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion	Mentions relevant points, reasons and examples. Appropriate conclusion.
I can write using all tenses, aspects and moods of verbs.	Uses tenses, aspects and moods of verbs correctly.
I can use most sentence structures.	Uses sentence structures correctly.

The ambition was also to provide feedback of a formative nature. The importance of achieving curriculum alignment and providing assessment of a formative nature reflects arguments made in policy discourses and by supporters of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning. This connection was made in one of the planning meetings where I suggested that:

If Bologna is about switching focus from teaching to learning, the focus is on what the students do, so that would mean they need to know how well they are doing. We need to give them more feedback and also because we are using this scale we have the situation where we need to place students; not just say if they have passed or failed. We have to show them how to get to the next stage if possible

Teacher A suggested that

Formative assessment is what we are talking about when we talk about how one is supposed to grade and assess when the students will work when they are out in the compulsory school. It was introduced for the first time when we started to work with individual development plans

Using standard assessment forms and placing them where all the teachers could access them was presented as a way of checking that teachers were more consistent in the language feedback they gave to students. I suggested that this was about

checking if we are following the same criteria, because you could be following any criteria you wanted .....I think having things out there in public so we can see how we are doing is a good way of ensuring that we do the same thing

Teacher E said that she liked the form 'because I think it is very clear (and) easy to understand'. Teacher B, however, felt that the form was

a bit piecemeal..in that it picks things from the European Framework and was vague and disorganised.....it avoids anything to do with grammatical terminology and any form of exactness

Teacher B reacted towards the assumption that teacher educators had not been explicit and consistent in their assessment and grading of student work in the past:

the assumption is that people like me have been swimming around without having a clue of what we are going on about....we had a system...telling (students) how they could improve their structure...and a system for the marking of grammar...based on knowledge of what was being studied at previous levels

The changes made locally to assessment procedures echo the assumptions in the Bologna reforms that changes need to be made to professional practice and traditional curricula and assessment. The changes made to assessment procedures were seen as a threat to existing practices and the ability of teachers to make decisions about their practice based on their experience. The implementation of Bologna inspired changes into the local arena were seen to challenge and undermine traditional practices and the values, skills and knowledge they are founded on. The changes were seen as unnecessary and an insult to those values, skills and knowledge.

Towards the end of the case study research period, and as a result of teacher discussions, the assessment checklists used to give feedback on oral and written examination tasks were modified away from closely following the wording of the language descriptors in the CEFR towards more simplified descriptions and with more focus on grammatical accuracy.

As part of the new assessment and feedback arrangements students met their supervisor to reflect on their progress towards reaching the learning outcomes for the course. However, this new system was felt to be time consuming and field notes show that it was generally felt that it was better if the teacher who had assessed written work gave the students feedback informally and face to face with the student. The teaching team felt, as expressed by Teacher B ‘it is better that whoever has done the marking does the supervising ...you would definitely save time’.

Lack of time resources meant that some teachers had to examine papers in terms of both pedagogic content and language competence. This merger of competencies moves teacher education

back in time according to Beach and Bagley (2012), in line with Bernstein's notion of the development of teacher education historically (Bernstein, 2000). Generally the teacher educators felt that they did not have the competence to examine each other's area of expertise. This was a cause of concern in some discussions. Teacher B felt that

If you are going to do marking you should have given the task yourself, it should be your stuff .... you don't go in and mark other people's stuff ...its better that you examine in areas where you feel quite secure...it's not professional ... and it gives the students the wrong signals

The changes made to assessment and feedback procedures were seen again as a challenge to existing practice. They were a threat to the discipline based education principles that guide local practice and were therefore seen as preventing the teacher from carrying out their job in accordance with their professional beliefs and established praxis. The findings mirror those of Clark (1987), who found that only those who are schooled in the field were seen as competent to review academic work. The changes were not seen as an improvement to existing practice. They were rather regarded as 'unprofessional', unnecessary and as undermining academic values and academic knowledge.

All the course teachers felt that it was difficult to apply the framework descriptors when assessing examples of student work. According to teacher C;

since we've been so focused on the C1 level it has been in some cases hard to define whether someone who doesn't reach the C1 level is at the B1 or the B2 level because you are so focused on the C1 level so if someone is below you tend to think of him or her as below that level...However, the descriptors did help the assessment of students.....if you study them for a while you would find them

Teacher B was perhaps the team member who most often voiced open critique of the new reform. In an interview that took place at the end of the first term of basing assessment on the descriptors, she said that she felt that

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It's impossible to follow requirements for B1 and C1 when you sit there with a piece of writing and then say that this is exactly this or that, when they are doing individual pieces of work..... The descriptors had made assessment harder. That is the difficulty about introducing something which seems to be a real criterion instead of leaving it up to the teacher to mark according to norms and expectations

The new grade levels of the CEFR did not have any added value according to teacher B. Indeed she argued, that C1, the pass grade, was

...really another name for what we understand by a (pass), that we are sort of giving it a sort of hocus pocus name so that it sounds like we had really penetrated into the differences between a B2 and a C1 .....I think both you and I will say this is C1 when we feel sort of happy about it and that there are not too many obvious mistakes...C1 is to me if it is acceptable at this level, which means there are some mistakes which you can accept... We have all been in the job for years; we have done a lot of studying. You can recognise when something is poor

I agreed with teacher B saying that:

I have a gut feeling if it's a pass or not and if it is then it is probably is at the C1 level... but if it is not a pass saying where it is that very difficult

The teacher team did not on the whole feel that the new assessment forms based on the CEFR descriptors had helped them carry out their work. Despite this, and despite filling in the assessment forms, they had adapted to the change by continuing to use their professional wisdom, experience and knowledge to judge the students language proficiency. By doing so they had found a way of resisting the change and continuing to work according to academic values and principles, despite attempts to standardise and control these externally through the CEFR descriptors.

As far as the actual assessment of student work is concerned, as mentioned earlier in this chapter the main reason for connecting assessment to the CEFR descriptors was an attempt to provide feedback of a formative nature on student work. As far as language proficiency is concerned formative assessment would be

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demonstrated by teachers using assessment feedback which focused on what students know and are able to do using the language rather than what they don't know.

In order to see whether this change led to teachers using more positive formative assessment I have analysed the kind of feedback given by teachers on students' language proficiency. I have carried out a random survey of 20 assessment forms used to assess five different written examinations by three different teachers. The results of the analysis are shown in the table below. The table shows the positive and negative comments given by teachers in response to the terms used on the assessment form. Where a number in brackets is given it refers to the total amount of times that this word or phrase was used in the assessment forms looked at.

<b>Assessment form term</b>	<b>Positive feedback given</b>	<b>Negative feedback given</b>
<b>Fluent and accurate</b>	Mainly	Spoilt by grammar errors-i.e. subject –verb agreement ( i.e. has/have) use of definite article(the)
	Yes(2)	
	Yes-no errors	A number of subject-verb agreement errors, article misuse (the)
	Very well written	
	Yes: very few errors	Some errors-i.e. subject verb agreement errors, adjective/adverb errors
		Some errors but OK. Be careful in the use of the definite article(the)
		A number of word choice errors, incorrect prepositions, use of articles. Some sentences do not make sense.
		A number of subject- verb agreement errors
	Problems with word order(3)	

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		Grammar mistakes with the article and adverb forms.
		A number of grammar errors; use of adjectives instead of adverbs, omission of articles, incorrect prepositions
		A few errors, i.e. use of adjectives ( good) and adverbs(well)
		A few adjective/adverb errors
		A few errors-i.e. use of articles
		A number of errors- i.e. word choice, use of articles
		A few minor errors
		A number of basic grammar errors
<b>Varies vocabulary and style according to the context.</b>	OK (10) Yes(8) Very professional sounding text	Be careful not to use words like "dodgy" in an academic paper  Be careful not to use imprecise language like "in an American style" Be more specific( ie use the vocabulary of the text book)
		problems with spelling
<b>Clear,well-structured</b>	Yes (10) OK (2) Generally OK Yes-well described Yes- a well written paper Very well organised and presented	Spoilt by grammar errors Spoilt by errors Spoilt by number of errors (2) Difficult to read at times due to number of errors Clarity spoilt by grammar errors



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<b>Uses tenses, aspects and moods of verbs correctly</b>	Yes (6)	A number of mistakes ( i.e. 'are mention' ) overuse of progressive form.
	Generally Ok	Overuse of the progressive form (2)  Some misuse of progressive form  Some problems with word order Problems with verb endings and spelling  Overuse of progressive form at times, verb- subject agreement errors  A few errors  A number of verb-subject agreement errors Slight overuse of the progressive form  Problems with verb endings and spelling
<b>Uses sentence structures correctly</b>	Generally OK (4)	Incorrect word order at times. A number of sentence fragments and sentences that just don't make sense
	Yes (8)	Some word order errors (2)  A number of verb tense errors.  Problems with subject verb agreement (2)  A few word order errors. One run on sentences  No  Some sentence fragments

A number of run on sentences at sentences that do not make sense.

Too many incomplete and "run on" sentences

The survey of assessment forms shows that teacher feedback was far more expansive when focusing on deficits in students' knowledge. Mistakes and errors were explained in more detail than positive examples of language use, which were not only mentioned much less frequently, but in a non expansive way (i.e. by using words like 'yes' or 'ok'). Very little if any of the feedback given focused on the extent to which learners had mastered the behaviour in question, with no connection made to the various levels on the CEFR.

Despite the intention of connecting assessment to the descriptors in the CEFR, and to give feedback of a more formative nature, course documentation suggests that the focus of teacher assessment was more likely to focus on grammatical errors rather than other aspects of language proficiency, such as sociolinguistic and strategic language competence and the general 'can do' approach of the learning outcomes connected to the CEFR. The main focus of assessment was on what is missing; what the learner doesn't know or cannot do. The teaching team seems thus to be maintaining an old tradition as the gate-keepers, guardians and custodians of an academic discipline.

The 'can do' approach of the CEFR did not introduce much of a greater focus on student progress in teacher feedback and assessment either. In contrast to the ideas behind formative assessment, most feedback and assessment was given at end point and in connection with examination tasks. The result of this suggests that feedback became instrumental in nature, a situation similar to what Torrence (2007) has described as *assessment as learning*; "with assessment procedures and practices coming completely to dominate the learning experience and 'criteria compliance' replacing 'learning' (p.281).

That the adoption of the descriptors connected to the CEFR had little influence on practice is not surprising. As was shown in chapter three, there are many potential problems involved in implementing the CEFR into language teaching and assessment. As McNamara (2011) has argued, the use of the CEFR reduces local variation and ignores other accounting systems, or sets of cultural values, or formulations of the goals of language education, which cannot be directly translated into the language of the CEFR. McNamara suggests that by doing so the CEFR erases the

historical and cultural complexity and specificity of language learning in particular settings, and the meaning of language learning in the lives of individuals (p.39).

## Summary

This chapter has shown that the reality of policy implementation is more complex than suggested in policy discourses, where learning outcomes are presented as a basis for curricular re-organisation. In this case study the new learning outcomes that were introduced were contested in several different ways. The whole idea that learning could be measured through learning outcomes was questioned, doubts were expressed by teachers as to whether the new learning outcomes covered the learners' needs, and concerns were expressed about using the CEFR descriptors to assess the students' language proficiency. These are ways that reflect resistance to the Bologna process and CEFR as identified in previous research.

The contested nature of the learning outcomes mediated attempts to achieve curriculum alignment and to change teaching and assessment practice. The attempts to make students more responsible for their learning by changing the way feedback was given on student work challenged existing pedagogic practice. This led some teachers to feel that they were being disempowered and were not able to carry out their work as they were used to doing. These reactions reflect what critics have described as a general attempt in European education reforms to reduce the influence of academic freedom and the idea that teachers should determine the content and pedagogy of a course programme. As was shown in

chapter seven, critics such as Power (1997) have suggested that education reforms in higher education have led to the decline of trust and the disempowerment and demoralization of academics.

The findings in this chapter show that the adoption of the CEFR descriptors had a minimal influence on teaching and assessment practice. Assessment was more likely to focus on grammatical errors rather than the general 'can do' approach of the learning outcomes connected to the CEFR. Feedback and assessment of the students' language proficiency continued to reflect the liberal tradition typical of modern language teaching at university, where the focus has traditionally been on written, rather than oral production, and where the main focus has been on language content and structure.

The findings of this chapter reflect earlier research showing that policy implementation is never a straightforward task. That the learning outcomes that were introduced were contested, confirms the argument put forward by Daugherty et al (2008) that in practice learning outcomes are often strongly contested. Apple (1999) too has pointed out that the curriculum is always the result of conflicts and compromises which are a product of power and other forces from both within and outside of the educational context.

More generally, the contested nature of the learning outcomes and the limited influence of the changes made on teaching and assessment practice reflect the local pedagogic discourse and the pedagogic identities for teachers and students contained within it. Within this discourse teachers prefer to have a strong degree of control over the selection and assessment of course content. Individual teachers attempt to preserve and promote their own areas of interest and induct students into the curriculum knowledge that is seen as essential for them to acquire. The local pedagogic discourse mediated attempts to move language teaching and learning practice away from the liberal tradition of university studies towards the more instrumental paradigm as represented by the CEFR descriptors.

# Chapter 10: Discussion

## Introduction

In this discussion chapter I begin by summarising the purpose of the research and the main results in relation to my research questions. I then discuss previous research in relation to the thesis findings before going on to present my interpretations of the findings that I have made. Issues of validity and ethical issues related to the research are discussed. Finally, I discuss the significance of the thesis and the implications of the findings; in particular the question of whether it is possible to achieve change in higher education through learning outcomes.

## Purpose of the research

The thesis is an example of a practitioner research case study and its purpose has been to investigate a specific case of curriculum change; that of organizing teacher training courses around learner outcomes in line with the Bologna process. The introduction of learner outcomes into course planning is a key aspect of the Bologna process. The learning outcomes approach to curriculum planning is presented in policy documents as means for achieving change within higher education; represented as a move away from teacher led transmission towards a more student centred approach to learning and improved student learning. Many of the changes made locally in connection with the implementation of learning outcomes were inspired by these official Bologna policy messages. There was a real attempt made to follow the learning outcomes way of curriculum planning as carefully as possible; from the setting up a discipline specific group to discuss and identify the general areas of knowledge

needed by students, to efforts to use the CEFR descriptors to move away from traditional language teaching and assessment and a greater focus on the communicative aspects of language use. The logic of the learning outcomes approach inspired the changes that were made locally.

During the research process I began to realize that the changes introduced had had only a limited influence on practice. As I engaged with the research literature I came to appreciate that the implementation of policy reforms is a complex process and that policy messages are re-interpreted and recontextualised at various points of the implementation process. With this in mind, the aim of the thesis has been to examine how discourses in Bologna policy documents were re-interpreted and recontextualised in my own field of practice. I have attempted to answer the following research questions:

- How is the Bologna process presented as a pedagogic discourse?
- How is the Bologna process recontextualised locally into pedagogic communication?
- How does the Bologna process interplay with practice at the micro level?

## Research findings

### **The Bologna process as a pedagogic discourse**

My first research question was motivated by an attempt to understand the context of the Bologna reforms. This attempt has involved looking critically at the discourses that lie at the heart of policy documents. In order to identify the discourses behind the Bologna reforms, I have used a form of discourse analysis, as well as a survey of research literature, to look at how European policies of Higher Education are presented and disseminated through E.U. and Bologna Process policy texts.

A number of discourses were found; the first being the discourse suggesting a need to modernize higher education; presented within the context of a discourse of increased global competition for skills and markets, with an increased need for rapid innovation, flexibility and creativity.

Other discourses found were discourses of the knowledge based society and lifelong learning; which put forward the idea of the more active learner, taking more responsibility for their own learning process. The discourses suggest the need for students to achieve a deeper level of learning in their studies and that more emphasis should be placed on employability, flexibility, and generic competences. According to these discourses there is a need to move towards a more student centred approach to learning.

Policy discourses distinguish between a traditional disciplinary discourse, portrayed as negative and introjective, and a modern credit exchange discourse. The disciplinary discourse is presented as being concerned with the transmission of knowledge while the credit exchange discourse is portrayed as putting the development of individual capabilities and the capacity of the person to learn in focus.

Bologna policy discourses suggest that educational activities and 'outputs' are measurable and that this can be achieved through learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are presented as enabling a move away from the dominance of what schools and teachers can provide; to an emphasis on learner needs and the requirements of working life and the wider community. They are portrayed as being learner-centred and enabling a shift in the focus in higher education away from the traditional teacher-centred or institution-centred perspective. Policy discourses connect learning outcomes with curricular re-organisation; it is suggested that there is an automatic link between the use of learning outcomes, the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and the development of suitable assessment techniques.

Many of the discourses found in E.U. and Bologna Process 'policy texts' were found to be reinscribed in Swedish educational policy discourses, in European policy documents on teacher education and in policy texts on foreign language learning and in relation to the

Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR). Within these documents one can also find the discourses of a knowledge based society, lifelong learning, and the active and autonomous learner.

### **The recontextualisation of the Bologna process into pedagogic communication**

My second research question reflects my understanding that the implementation of policy reforms is a complex process and that policy messages are re-interpreted and recontextualised during the implementation process. In order to address this research question; that of how the Bologna process was recontextualised into pedagogic communication, I have analysed data produced from course documentation, field notes, as well as teacher talk in planning meetings and correspondence. I have used concepts developed by Basil Bernstein, such as recontextualisation, regulative and evaluative rules and pedagogic identities, to analyse and describe how the introduction of the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process was perceived at the micro level of policy implementation. I have looked in particular at the influence of the Bologna reforms on the power relations between teacher educators and students.

The policy discourses suggesting a need to modernize higher education and the need move towards a more student centred approach had little influence on how the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process was interpreted locally. The task was interpreted as being one of producing standard learning outcomes for all students, guided by a specific pedagogic identity for the student. This student identity is part of a traditional, powerful disciplinary discourse, characterized by vertical relations between the teacher educator and student, and where the rules of curriculum content are in the hands of the teacher educators.

Crucially, the learning outcomes process could not and did not change this fundamental pedagogic relationship between teacher educators and students. While Bologna discourses present learning



outcomes as being student centred, the use of Bernstein's concepts of regulative discourse and 'pedagogic identities' allows the recoding of the connections made in Bologna policy documents. Rather than being learner centred, learning outcomes are part of an attempt to introduce convergence and uniformity in higher education. More generally they can be seen as part of an attempt to undermine academic authority and make educational programmes more relevant to economic interests.

The Bologna reforms are formulated outside and away from academic practices; they do not address these practices or have the potential to effect material change. The consequence of this was that the learning outcomes process was easily absorbed into the structures of the existing regulative discourse and the pedagogic identities already ascribed to teacher educators and learners

Despite an extensive process of implementation, the learning outcomes produced did not represent any significant change to the contents and competences required of students. While some new examination forms were introduced, very few tasks required the students to critically examine the knowledge of the discipline.

Planning around learning outcomes did not lead to a greater focus being put on student activity. The main focus in planning was on the idea of curriculum alignment. At the same time, curriculum alignment was primarily interpreted as a process of ensuring that the teacher educators did all they could to help the students reach the learning outcomes. Rather than focusing on student activity, the introduction of learning outcomes into the local environment led to focus being put primarily on the activities of the teacher educators.

### **The interplay between the Bologna process and practice at the micro level**

My third research question attempts to investigate the claim made in policy documents that learning outcomes can lead to curriculum reorganization. According to policy documents there is an automatic link between the use of learning outcomes, the selection of appropriate teaching strategies and the development of suitable assessment techniques.

In order to consider this research question; that of how the Bologna process interplayed with practice at the micro level, I have analysed course documentation, as well as teacher talk in response to the practical changes made as a consequence of organizing the courses around student learning outcomes. I have attempted to understand the data by putting it in the context of the regulative and evaluative rules found in local pedagogic discourses and previous research findings on traditions of practice within higher education and within language teaching and learning.

The analysis shows that the new learning outcomes that were introduced locally were contested in the teaching group in several different ways. The whole idea that learning could be measured through learning outcomes was questioned and doubts were expressed as to whether the new learning outcomes covered the learners' needs.

The main focus of the analysis was on the adoption of the descriptors in the CEFR as a basis for organizing language proficiency teaching and learning. The adoption of the descriptors was based on the belief that they could force a curriculum reform by influencing teaching strategies and assessment techniques.

The contested nature of the learning outcomes mediated attempts to change practice. The adoption of the CEFR descriptors had a minimal influence on teaching and assessment practice; practice continued to follow disciplinary traditions and there was subtle, but nevertheless effective, resistance to the changes made. Assessment was more likely to focus on grammatical errors rather than the general 'can do' approach of the learning outcomes connected to the CEFR. Feedback and assessment of the students' language proficiency continued to reflect the liberal tradition typical of modern language teaching at university; where the focus has traditionally been on written, rather than oral production, and where the main focus has been on language content and structure.

Changes made to assessment and feedback procedures were contested. The new methods of feedback made teacher educators feel that it was difficult for them to be able to carry out their responsibilities of passing on knowledge that was felt to be essential for the students to obtain. The changes were not seen as an

improvement to existing practice, but rather regarded as 'unprofessional' and unnecessary. The ability of students to take onboard the feedback given was questioned and the lack of help given by teacher educators was felt to be part of the reason why students were not succeeding. Rather than using the CEFR descriptors to carry out their work, teacher educators resisted and mediated the change by continuing to use their professional wisdom, experience and knowledge to judge the students language proficiency.

### **Summary of the research findings**

A number of discourses were found in my analysis of E.U. and Bologna process policy texts. The main discourse suggests the need to modernize higher education, which is framed within the context of a discourse of increased global competition. Policy discourses also suggest a need to move away from traditional teacher centred methods towards a more student centred approach to learning. Learning outcomes are presented as a way of achieving a more learner centred approach and a means for achieving curricular reorganization. Policy discourses emphasise learner needs which are strongly connected with the requirements of working life.

An analysis of the influence of the Bologna reforms locally shows that the reforms offered little to bring about significant pedagogic change. The outcomes produced at the micro level did not represent any significant change to the contents and competences required of students. Few examination tasks required students to critically examine the knowledge of the discipline. The learning outcomes did nothing to challenge the vertical relations between teacher educators and students; the focus put on curriculum alignment meant that focus was primarily put on the activities of the teacher educators. This focus cemented and confirmed the level of control that teacher educators had over the local curriculum.

The new learning outcomes that were introduced locally were contested in several different ways. The idea that learning could be

measured through learning outcomes was questioned and doubts were expressed as to whether the new learning outcomes covered the learners' needs. The adoption of the CEFR descriptors as the starting point for organising the students' language teaching and assessment was also questioned and had a minimal influence on practice. The changes made were contested and teacher educators felt that the changes made it difficult for them to be able to carry out their responsibilities of passing on knowledge that was seen to be essential for the students to obtain before entering the profession.

### Research findings and previous research in the field

The thesis shows that even though the changes that were made locally were inspired by the discourses in Bologna policy documents, the changes made in response to the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna reforms had very little influence on local practice. The findings are similar to those of previous research on the relationship between policy making and educational policy implementation. Goodlad (1988), for example, showed that curriculum developments rarely follow the rhetoric of change proposed in policy documents and rarely worked as they were intended. In the area of teacher education, Beach (1995, 1997) has shown that reform in Sweden had little influence on practice, and that this seemed to be in part due to the gap that existed between policy makers and practitioners. The gap is important because it prevents policy writers from grasping the complexities of change.

At the local level the gap between policy and practice meant that the Bologna process offered no new substance to how the teacher educators believed that they should carry out their work. As a consequence, the reforms could not connect with, or alter, local practice. Instead of challenging the traditional power relations and the pedagogic identities found in the local pedagogic discourse, the learning outcomes curriculum strengthened and confirmed the level of control that teacher educators had over curriculum matters.

The thesis also points to the limitations of actor agency and Taylor et al's (1997) suggestion that not all policy players are able to influence the policy implementation process equally. Despite my initial enthusiasm for the Bologna reforms, the gap between policy rhetoric and existing practice meant that this enthusiasm was not shared by the teaching group. The Bologna process reforms did not connect with the local concerns of practitioners and as a result they were absorbed instead into an existing field of practice containing discourses concerning appropriate curriculum knowledge and teacher and student identities. The Bologna reforms offered nothing to challenge these strong local pedagogic discourses.

The thesis illustrates the strong role of disciplinary discourses in resisting change in education; a conclusion found in previous research by Clark (1987) and Ehn (2001). The significance of disciplinary discourses on educational practice has been found in previous research by Clark (1987) and Becher and Trowler (2001) which showed that academics identify strongly with their discipline and that it is the norms of the discipline which guide their professional behaviour. Dressel and Marucs (1982), and Stark and Lattuca, (1997, 2000) have shown that course planning is closely related to the assumptions that university teachers have and that these are embedded in the disciplinary conceptions and educational beliefs into which the teachers have been socialised. In this case study the learning outcomes implementation process was framed by a local disciplinary discourse, promoting the idea of the teacher educator as role model and expert, with students needing to be inducted into the knowledge of the discipline. The recontextualisation of the Bologna reforms can be seen as representing a continued faith in the ability of the traditional practices in higher education to be able to deliver the education required by the students.

The Bologna reforms had little influence on local curriculum planning and teacher educators continued to work as before. This reflects research by Boyce (2003), which showed that many universities when adding, eliminating and revising courses and programmes, tend to keep the core values, assumptions and internal structures of a university stable. Attempted changes made locally

were seen as inconsistent with usual practice, and the fact that they made little impact reflects the conclusions of research by Cerych (1987) which found that the implementation of higher education reforms depends on the extent that the reforms correspond with the rules and values already in the system.

Looking at the interplay between the Bologna process and local practice in chapter nine, I discovered that resource allocation strengthened the teacher centred approach to planning and the subsequent vertical relations between the teacher and student. The significance of resources to how planning is carried out has been found in previous research. Gornitzka (1999), for example, has drawn attention to 'resource dependency', emphasising the influence of the wider higher education environment and the fact that resources can counter notions of self-directed and autonomous academic organisations.

The Bologna policy discourses had a limited influence on disciplinary guided practice. The changes that were made were seen instead as preventing teacher educators from carrying out their work as they thought they should. The rhetoric of the Bologna reforms was resisted and teacher educators continued to use the methods and judgement that they had used in the past. These findings are reflected in other research looking at the influence of policy changes on academic identities and beliefs. Winter and O'Donohue (2012), for example, found that academics express a preference for professional beliefs and goals in higher education over managerial beliefs and goals and experience identity conflicts when learning and knowledge creation is subordinated to economic principles and narrow efficiency criteria. Beach (1995, 1997) found that the cultural beliefs and assumptions of teachers mediated educational policy change. Similar findings were found by Shaw, Chapman, and Rumyantseva (2011) looking at the influence of new educational innovations introduced since Bologna. Teaching was central to the instructors' professional identity and this affected the process of implementing the Bologna process at the institutional level.

The mediating influence of a local regulative discourse on policy reforms is also reflected in research by Ensor (2004a), which looked at the responses of universities to policy changes which were

designed to reshape higher education curricula in South Africa in the mid 1990's. Ensor contrasted the disciplinary discourse with the credit accumulation and transfer discourse and found that the credit accumulation and transfer discourse had not taken root in the university sector in South Africa to any significant degree and that curricula were still organised largely on a disciplinary basis.

Many of the learning outcomes that were introduced locally were contested. Doubts were expressed by teachers as to whether the new learning outcomes covered the learners' needs, and whether it was possible to use the CEFR descriptors to assess the students' language proficiency. Changes made to assessment procedures were seen as a threat to existing practices and the ability of teacher educators to make decisions about their practice based on their experience. The changes were seen as unnecessary and an insult to the traditional values, skills and knowledge that assessment is founded on. These findings reflect research by Daugherty et al (2008) on the relationship between curriculum and assessment, which found that learning outcomes are often strongly contested and that the relationship between curriculum and assessment is a complex and multi-layered process rather than one of alignment.

Teacher educators expressed concern about using the CEFR descriptors as the starting point to assess the students' language proficiency. The descriptors were described as being vague, hard to understand and with insufficient focus on grammatical accuracy. Previous research by Alderson (2007) has also pointed to similar criticisms of the CEFR, whilst Weir (2005) has referred to a number of studies pointing out the difficulty in attempting to use the CEFR for test development or comparability. McNamara (2011) has argued that the use of the CEFR reduces local variation and ignores other accounting systems, or sets of cultural values, or formulations of the goals of language education, which cannot be directly translated into the language of the CEFR. The reaction to using the CEFR descriptors locally can also be seen as an expression of the cultural values and goals of the traditional liberal approach to language teaching and learning at university level, which as Quist (1999) has shown are in strong contrast to those represented by the CEFR's communicative approach.

The adoption of the CEFR descriptors had a minimal influence on teaching and assessment practice, with assessment more likely to focus on grammatical errors rather than the general ‘can do’ approach of the CEFR. The findings reflect research by Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith, and Crowley (2011) on CEFR-informed instruction which found that teachers viewed the CEFR as an ‘add-on’ rather than as an approach that could be used to cover various aspects of the curriculum.

Rather than using the CEFR descriptors to carry out their work, teacher educators worked round the new requirements by continuing to use their professional experience and knowledge. Hoyle and Wallace (2005) have used the concept of mediation to describe such responses by individual staff to change, where professionals work round externally imposed requirements, not fully adhering to expectations and attempting to sustain their professional values instead of embracing the alternative values under-girding reforms.

Finally, the changes made locally also made some of the teacher educators feel frustrated and that it was difficult for them to be able to carry out their responsibilities of passing on knowledge that was felt essential for the students to receive. The emotional aspects of curriculum reform in higher education has been shown by King (2006) who found that teachers experienced a disparity between their former understandings of their educators’ role and their new practice, causing them to feel displaced.

### Understanding the thesis findings

Through the identification of policy discourses and by reading literature critical of those discourses, I have gained a greater understanding of the Bologna policy context. I have been able to look more critically at the discourses that lie at the heart of the policy. At the same time, my more critical understanding of the wider context of the learning outcomes reforms and what the



changes represent has in turn made it easier to understand the local process of implementation and reaction to the attempted changes made.

The changes made locally were part of a concerted effort to follow the rhetoric of policy documents in an attempt to achieve curriculum change. Despite the attempt to follow the Bologna logic, the changes made had little influence on local practice. The learning outcomes were unable to change the basic fabric of the existing curriculum and the power relations that lie behind them.

That fact that learning outcomes did not lead to any significant change is not surprising. The recoding of the connections made in Bologna policy documents has led me to see the policy discourses on learning outcomes in a new light. Rather than representing a more student centred approach, the learning outcomes curriculum can be seen as representing a more traditional pedagogic identity for students, containing the goal of convergence and uniform outputs. Seen as such, the new learning outcomes curriculum did not or could not trouble existing pedagogic relations. Indeed, the introduction of learning outcomes into the local environment acted to strengthen, rather than challenge, the vertical relations between teacher educators and students, cementing and confirming the level of control that teacher educators had over planning and all other aspects of the curriculum.

Instead of a pedagogic reform the Bologna process can be seen as an exercise of power and control; part of an attempt to reduce academic autonomy over aspects of the curriculum and to make higher education more beneficial to the needs of working life. The reforms are part of the changes made in European education policy over the last 20 years or more; where the goals of policy have changed from politico-economic to economic-functional ones (Walkenhorst, 2008). The reforms are strongly influenced by dominant neoliberal, and new public management discourses regarding the 'knowledge economy', the 'market' and 'globalisation' (Hardt and Negri, 2000).

Crucially, the Bologna reforms offered no new substance to how the teacher educators believed that they should carry out their work. The Bologna policy reforms are written above and away from

academic practice and therefore they do not address these practices or provide the impetus to effect material change. They were not able to connect with local practitioners and the conditions and needs and interests of practice. These needs and interests were seen to be provided by a local disciplinary discourse where individual teachers are committed to helping students gain knowledge for their future careers.

Despite being inspired by policy rhetoric, policy discourses had no real influence on how the implementation process was framed. The learning outcomes that were produced suggest a commitment to academic values and culture and a continued faith in the ability of the traditional practices in higher education to be able to deliver the education required by the students. The learning outcomes produced were guided and framed by traditions of the past, built upon the practice architectures of teacher education and higher education generally, which have guided pedagogic practice within universities for decennia.

The changes to practice that were attempted to bring about curriculum reorganization reflect the empty rhetoric of policy documents and were guided by the suggestion that learning outcomes could have a 'cascade effect' on other elements of the curriculum. The result of this was that many of the changes that were made were symbolic only and did little to alter existing praxis. Fullan and Miles (1992) have described such a process as the adoption of symbols over substance. In looking at the reasons for why many change processes fail, Fullan and Miles suggest that in many cases, educational institutions will adopt external innovations with only symbolic benefit and that while 'symbols are essential for success' (p.4), they will often fail if there is not enough grassroots support for change. A further reason given is the adoption of solutions that are introduced with too little thought, and then implemented too quickly.

Many of the changes that were made to the courses as a result of organising them around learning outcomes had not only a symbolic benefit, but were also introduced with little thought of the practical consequences. For example, no measures were discussed within the teaching group as to how the CEFR should be used as the starting

point for organising teaching and assessing student work. Attempts were made to move away from summative assessment to assessment for learning, but very little discussion took place within the teaching group as to how to use assessment diagnostically to guide learning and future lesson planning.

Not surprisingly, many of the changes that were introduced were resisted. The changes challenged traditional professional practice and teacher educators felt that the changes made it difficult for them to be able to carry out their responsibilities of passing on knowledge to students. The teacher educators were reluctant to give up on the academic values and knowledge required in terms of student knowledge; they continued to work in their usual way; showing loyalty to the discipline as well as to others who work in the field.

## My understanding of the process of policy implementation

The changes that were made locally in response to the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process were inspired by policy discourses and a technical/rational model of policy implementation which assumes that the translation of policy into action is largely unproblematic. During the research process, however, I have changed my position in regard to the Bologna discourses as well as my understanding of policy implementation. As I have engaged with the data produced and previous research in the field I have gained a more critical understanding of curriculum control and educational change.

The first stage in reaching a more critical understanding of curriculum control and educational change was to develop an appreciation of the background to the Bologna reforms. I have carried out what Simons et al (2009) describe as a moment of de-familiarisation, where I have de-familiarised myself with the way the Bologna policy documents pose problems, offer and implement solutions and how problems are framed. As Ball (2008) has noted, the discourses in the policy documents act to translate ideas like

globalisation and the knowledge economy into prescribed roles and relationships and practices within institutions. Seen in this light, the Bologna reforms can be seen as presenting a picture of universities in need of reform. Framed within the context of globalization, learning outcomes planning is presented as part of the solution to these problems. Learning outcomes are presented as part of the discourse describing the need for a change in teacher practice and a move towards more student centred learning. According to these discourses there is a limit to what traditional practices of higher education can provide; given the need in the globalised world for more individual student responsibility, generic competences and increased levels of employability.

The second stage in reaching a more critical understanding of curriculum control and educational change has been the development of a greater understanding of the local context and my part in it. Through the use of Ball's ideas of policy recontextualisation and Bernstein's theoretical concepts, I have been able to better understand the processes of implementing the Bologna reforms and the influence of changes made locally on power relations as well as pedagogic practice.

Despite their persuasive appeal, the policy discourses behind the Bologna process were unable to make any real connection with local practice and provide any impetus for change. The discourses were unable to connect with the sayings, doings and relatings of practice and challenge the practice architectures that they represent. As a result the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna reforms was easily absorbed to fit into the existing regulative discourse and where changes to local practice were attempted, these attempts were resisted. Most of the changes made were symbolic in nature and teacher educators worked around the reforms by continuing to use their normal ways of working.

By completing this thesis I have gained a better understanding of the processes of policy implementation and the discourses that influence local practice. I now understand that the technical/rational model of policy implementation ignores the influence of local cultures and traditions on how policies are perceived. I understand the constraints on agency that stem from the practice architectures

of teacher education and higher education, based on hundreds of years of practice and experience, which in this case study constrained the ‘sayings’, ‘doings’ and ‘relatings’ of work practices, including the attempts to achieve change.

## Validity

One of the criticisms traditionally levelled towards participant enquiry and case studies is that the measures of reliability and repeatability that apply to quantitative research are difficult to apply to these types of research. Supporters of qualitative research reject this criticism, arguing that instead of the measures of reliability and repeatability usually applied to quantitative research, other forms of rigour should be used to test the validity of their research. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), for example, claim that validity is

concerned with the extent to which descriptions of events accurately capture these events, for example, the extent to which the material being collected by the researcher presents a true and accurate picture of what it is claimed is being described (p.105).

Merriam (1988) uses the term of inner validity to describe how well the research results correspond with ‘reality’ and whether the findings of the research relate to and are caused by the phenomena under investigation. Merriam suggests a number of strategies to improve internal validity in case studies, including asking respondents to confirm the plausibility of the data, the use of long term observation, ‘peer examination’, involving participants in all the stages of the research and checking researcher bias and clarifying the researcher’s assumptions and theoretical orientations at the beginning of the research.

In this research I have of course tried to present as credible and plausible picture of the events that I have described. In the analysis of policy discourses in European Union educational policy documents I have attempted to connect the claims made with those found in other research and to give examples of the language used in the specific policy texts that I have analysed. In the rest of the

case study I have tried to use more than one method of data collection; by looking at course documentation and field notes, as well as the data produced through the interviews with teachers and the recordings of teacher planning meetings. I have also shown the research findings to the others involved in the teacher discussions that form part of the data produced to help check the accuracy and quality of the research data, its methodology, evidence and the claims that are made.

Howe and Eisenhardt (1990) suggest that five standards should be applied to research. The first standard is whether the data collection and analysis is driven by the research questions. The second is how competently the data collection and analysis techniques are applied in a technical sense, whilst the third is whether the researcher's assumptions are made explicit. The fourth standard is whether the study is robust or uses respected theoretical explanations, while the fifth and last standard is whether the study has 'value' in informing and improving practice.

As far as the standards suggested by Howe and Eisenhardt apply to my own research, I believe that the data that I have produced and the analysis I have applied is well driven by my research questions, which as I have noted elsewhere have been continually questioned and re-evaluated during the research process. I have gone beyond the standards suggested by Howe and Eisenhardt by recognising the backward dialectic influence of data and analysis on my research questions; producing new and modifying old ones as the research has progressed. I also believe that the data collection and analysis techniques have been applied well in a technical sense.

As far as assumptions are concerned, Cohen et al (2007) warn of the risk of bias in observation studies. The first risk is what Cohen et al describe as the selective attention of the observer.

What we see is a function of where we look, what we look at, how we look, when we look, what is in our minds at the time of observation; what are our own interests and experiences (p.410).

As far as my own assumptions are concerned, I have tried to make them explicit. As I have explained elsewhere, I was a policy optimist

in the beginning and because of this there was a real risk of bias in terms of selective attention and selective data entry. My original plan was to investigate what effect the changes had had on the learning environment and to carry out the investigation in a situation where I had accepted the logic of the learning outcomes approach as given. Teacher educator resistance to change could have been seen as representing the rigidities and hindrances in the traditional disciplinary discourse, as stated in the policy rhetoric. In such a situation there is a real risk of viewing events in a simplistic or self-serving way.

The next risk is that of reactivity; participants may change their behaviour if they know that they are being observed, while selective data entry means that what we record is sometimes affected by our personal judgement rather than the phenomenon itself. Interpersonal matters and counter-transference implies that our interpretations

are affected by our judgements and preferences – what we like and what we don't like-what we don't like about people and their behaviour, together with the relationships that we may have developed with those being observed and the context of the situation (Cohen et al 2007, pp. 410-411).

As far as reactivity is concerned the fact that I was course coordinator and the main person behind the implementation of the learning outcomes meant that I had a different position to the other participants in the case study, and have been more able to set the agenda for discussion. My position as course coordinator/researcher meant that I was more able to influence the kinds of issues that were discussed in course evaluations and in planning meetings and in other discussions. These discussions took place against a background where I initially regarded the logic of the learning outcomes approach to course planning as given and because of this one can question whether the discussions were completely open and democratic.

Despite these problems, I believe that the risk of bias in my own research has reduced as I have re-evaluated my research questions over time. I have distanced myself from the situation under analysis

and become more reflexive. Reflexivity has dialogic process; engaging with other voices in the field as well as reading policy documents and research literature to gain a greater understanding of my own educational practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out. In this process I have been guided by the idea of the research participants and researchers as co-constructors of social knowledge (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). My research findings have been constructed through my interaction with the research participants; both during the time of data collection, but also later at the time of data analysis. I have attempted to do this by reflecting on the sayings, doings and relating that I have found in the data produced and using the concepts developed by Bernstein to analyse local pedagogic practices and the relationships of power and control that lie behind them. Local responses to the Bologna reforms have also been analysed in relation to the discourses found in policy documents and the alternative local pedagogic discourses which promote certain ideas and voices at the expense of others.

During this dialogic process I have been able to step back from the data produced and gain a greater understanding of the change context and the importance of problematising the processes of policy implementation. As a result my research questions have changed from that of trying to investigate the influence of learning outcomes on student learning, to that of describing how the process of policy implementation unfolded locally and putting these findings into the context of other research on policy implementation. The increased distancing from the situation has been crucial in my more critical understanding of the process of policy implementation and the deeper analysis of the data produced in this case study.

Kezar and Eckel (2002) argue that most conventional notions about change processes are not aware of the influence of organizational cultures on the process and suggest the need for practitioners 'to become cultural outsiders in order to observe their institutional patterns' (p.437). This is what I feel I have achieved through my research. Because my study is an example of practitioner research, I have held a position of insider-outsider in relation to the area of practice, having both the spectator and participant perspective. This double perspective has been crucial to



my greater understanding of the data produced and by occupying the grey zone I have been increasingly able to understand the particularities of the case in relation to the larger and longer context. I have worked to see the taken for granted aspects of my practice and the change processes from an outsider's perspective (Anderson, Herr and Nihlen, 1994, p. 27).

Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) suggest that being the participant researcher is not necessarily detrimental to the results obtained. They claim that the participant researcher is able to understand more fully the reality of what is happening within the particular situation. Likewise I would argue that as course coordinator I am in a good position to understand the complexity and history of the local learning culture. Furthermore, although my interpretations and assertions are only one of many other possible interpretations; the thesis does not only give one version of events, my own. It is also built on and fully respects the views, positions, values and voices of other participants, including students and staff, and I have gone to great lengths to consider and integrate other research. Thus, although I make no claim to be presenting 'the truth' my contention is that my account is a valid one.

As to the fourth standard of whether the study is robust or uses respected theoretical explanations, the research uses concepts developed by Bernstein which have been used by a number of other researchers who have used them to analyse the field of education, including teacher education. As stated elsewhere, these theories have allowed the possibility of building a bridge between theory and the data that has been produced, and in particular to make the connection between macro level power relations and the micro level practices in local teacher education.

The fifth standard suggested by Howe and Eisnerhardt is whether the study has 'value' in informing and improving practice. I will return to this question after I have discussed the test of external validity, outlined by Merriam (1988) as the other test of validity in connection with qualitative research.

External validity refers to the extent that the results of a piece of research area generalisable to other settings. Stake (1995) distinguishes between two types of case study; an intrinsic case study

where the purpose is to better understand a particular case for its own sake and an instrumental case study where the case is carried out to provide an insight into an issue or to refine a theory. Bassey (1999) uses the concept of 'fuzzy generalization' to describe theory stemming from case studies. A fuzzy generalization is a statement that makes no absolute claim to knowledge but instead suggests that if something has happened in one place it could happen elsewhere. Bassey suggests that

the fuzzy generalization arises from studies of singularities and typically claims that it is possible, or likely, or unlikely that what was found in the singularity will be found in similar situations elsewhere: it is a qualitative measure (p.12).

Merriam argues that external validity can be strengthened by providing 'thick' description; providing enough information about the situation so that comparisons can be made with other situations. According to Stake (2005), thick description conveys to the reader 'what experience would convey'; an empathetic understanding (p.39).

As far as my own research is concerned, my initial concern was primarily to conduct research so as to better understand and improve my educational practice. However as the research process has progressed the focus of my research has widened. I now hope that the results of the research will be of interest to others interested in policy writing and implementation; the processes of change in higher education; as well as for those involved in introducing learner outcomes into higher education, a task required or already undertaken by most universities in Western Europe. I have attempted as far as possible to include 'thick' description so that others might recognise aspects of the situation and that some of the insights gained can contribute to the debate about the nature of learning outcomes and their appropriateness for higher education.

While each case is unique, the results of this thesis are consistent with others done on change process in education, as well as a number of other reports looking at the influence of the Bologna process on higher education. What I believe is generalisable from this thesis is the recognition of the existence of local discourses

within local practices which in the case of the Bologna process can either facilitate or more likely hinder educational change. It also questions many of the policy discourses behind the Bologna process; in particular the policy discourse that learning outcomes are a basis for curricular re-organisation.

Howe and Eisnehart (1990) suggest that the question of the quality of a piece of research rests within its contribution to our understanding of important educational questions. As a lot of previous research into academic cultures has shown, universities are resistant to change. I believe that there are good reasons to believe that the results described in this thesis are, in general terms, informative for actors in different settings. I believe that the results have general relevance to the discussion of university teachers' curriculum decisions and that the research procedures and methods I have used will lead to greater insight and understanding of curriculum development within higher education and in relation to the Bologna process and the introduction of learning outcomes into curriculum planning. I believe that the results of this case study reflect issues of curriculum development that are applicable to other institutions in higher education and provide aspects of understanding that will be worthwhile and useful.

## Ethical issues related to the research

Research ethics concern taking into account the effects of research on participants and acting in such a way as to preserve their dignity as human beings (Cohen et al 2007, p.58). Research ethics require researchers to

Strike a balance between the demands placed on them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research (Cohen et al, p.51).

There are a number of ethical dilemmas connected with qualitative research, and some of these are relevant to my research. According to Cohen et al (2007)

Ethical issues may stem from the kinds of problems investigated by social scientists and the methods they use to obtain valid and reliable data. This means that each stage in the research sequence raises ethical issues (p.51).

The authors suggest that these issues may arise from the nature of the research project itself; the context for the research; the procedures to be adopted; methods of data collection; the nature of the participants; the type of data collected; and what is to be done with the data. Problems of objectivity and ethical problems are particularly acute for research being undertaken by employees in their own place of work as Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) have shown.

The data that I have produced includes extracts from transcriptions of recordings of planning meetings between teachers. In doing so, I have made public things that are usually private. In producing my data I have been careful not to transcribe parts of the planning meeting that involve sensitive issues; such as discussions that involved the performance of individual students.

It is ethically important in all research that the researcher has received the participants' permission for participation and provided a clear description of the nature of the research and the consequences of participation (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, p.43). This has been difficult in my research as the research focus has changed over time. I have subsequently had to negotiate with participants over the use of data produced as a result of recording teacher planning meetings. This has been an ongoing process; with participants being informed of the purpose of the study and having full access to the research findings as they have been produced. As the teacher group concerned is small, a lack of participation of one or more involved would of course influence the amount of data available.

Another consideration is the welfare of participants. This means promising confidentiality and anonymity if participants want this,

and at the same time respecting the fact that if participants wish to be named. As far as the impact on relationships is concerned, the fact that the teaching group is small in numbers makes my research sensitive as it is difficult to hide the identities of those involved. However, my main aim has been to organize the thesis around the issues pertinent to the case, and ultimately to share the perspective of the 'other'. My task is to analyse the educational discourses and other issues that exist, but not to name or criticise any individuals concerned.

Another potential problem concerns gathering data from within the educational department. According to Elliot (1991)

Insider researchers must expect the hierarchy to resist giving up control over its access to certain kinds of data. They may find it extremely difficult to exercise their right of access, in spite of numerous attempts to justify this right professionally in terms of the reflective development of practice. Insider researchers will often need to adopt a developmental perspective, develop patience and avoid the kind of confrontation which musters the forces of reaction within the professional culture (p.60).

Another potential problem area involves sharing data with professional peers, both inside and outside the educational area. As Elliot (1991) points out

it carries the risk of bringing latent conflicts and tensions out into the open. Problematic areas of practice become exposed, and the practitioners operating in them become vulnerable to punitive attitudes expressed by self-styled experts who promote this image of themselves by pointing the finger at others (p.61).

## Final reflections

### **The significance of the study and the implications of the findings**

Very little research has focused on how the policy discourses behind the Bologna process reforms have been interpreted at the micro level. This case study addresses this issue and is part of the response to what Marginson (2007) has called the need for detailed 'situated

case studies' to better understand the dynamics of globalisation in higher education.

In this thesis I have followed the local implementation and reaction to the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna process over an extended period of time. As the thesis is an example of a participant enquiry case study, I believe that it allows for the complexity of the particular situation to be taken into account. While this is only one account of Bologna policy implementation, the case study points to the failure of the learning outcomes approach to inspire curriculum change. It also points to the mediating influence of local discourses which can either facilitate or more likely hinder the implementation of the Bologna reforms.

A significant finding in this thesis is that despite attempts to follow the learning outcomes way of curriculum planning as carefully as possible, the changes made locally in response to the Bologna reforms had little effect on existing practice. The new learning outcomes curriculum did not change the contents and competences required of students, or create the need for more critical student thinking. It is also significant that instead of creating a more student centred environment, the new learning outcomes helped to cement the control that teacher educators had over the local curriculum.

The introduction of learning outcomes into higher education is a key aspect of the Bologna process. In policy discourses on the Bologna process, learning outcomes are presented as part of the solution to persistent problems in higher education. The Bologna process is presented as being about making higher education more accessible and attractive; with learning outcomes being part of a move towards a more student centred approach to learning. These discourses were the inspiration behind the changes made in my field of practice.

A recoding of the policy discourses on learning outcomes enables one to see things differently. Instead of being learner centred, learning outcomes are part of an attempt to introduce convergence and uniformity; providing little or no support for radical changes of content within the individual curricula and supporting tight teacher control over the curriculum. With this in mind it is hardly surprising

that the local process of implementing learning outcomes had little influence on curriculum content and the existing pedagogic relations between teachers and students.

A critical analysis of the policy context enables the Bologna reforms to be seen instead as an exercise of power and control and an attempt to undermine academic autonomy. Using Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing, the reforms represent a shift from strong classification and framing, associated with internal criteria defined by specialists, to weak classification based on the needs of the knowledge economy.

The need to move away from teacher driven provision is stressed in policy documents. Teachers and teaching are implicitly blamed for the perceived problems in higher education, and the Bologna reforms represent an attempt to regulate academics; curtail their academic freedom and their ability to exercise their professional judgement. The consequences of these attempts can be seen in action in this case study. Many of the changes made locally in response to the Bologna reforms were felt by teacher educators to be impeding practice and preventing them from carrying out their work in ways in which were seen as best for students.

What is also significant is that attempts to undermine academic autonomy are resisted. The reforms put in place locally offered little to practitioners in terms of improving their existing work procedures. Resistance was at its strongest in regard to the adoption of the CEFR descriptors as the starting point for assessing the students' language proficiency. Teacher educators continued to work according to the liberal traditions typical of modern language teaching at university, rather than adopting the 'can do' approach of the CEFR.

Official reports recognize the slow progress in implementing the Bologna reforms and the fact that the learning outcomes aspect of the process has had little influence on higher education curricula. The lack of change is explained in terms of a lack of understanding and commitment, suggesting that progress can be made through better communication between the experts at the European level and responsible actors. This thesis questions the dominant discourse that the lack of progress in the implementation of the aims of the

Bologna process can be explained in terms of a lack of understanding and commitment. Policy discourses do not question the logic of the learning outcomes approach to curriculum change, which as I have showed, is persuasively presented as being student centred. Policy discourses also ignore the complexity of policy recontextualisation and implementation and how educational change enters existing power relations and cultural practices.

The thesis suggests an alternative explanation that recognizes the existence of alternative pedagogic discourses at the micro level which guide practice. These local discourses have a long history and are based on the practice architectures which act structure academic work. These practice architectures mediate the possibilities for change and allowed the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna reforms to be absorbed into the existing local regulative discourse; based as they both are on traditional vertical relations between teachers and students.

The importance of disciplinary traditions and cultures appears to have been underplayed in Bologna policy documents. This thesis draws attention to the significance of these matters and as far as future research is concerned, I feel there is need for more institutional level case studies looking at the implementation of the Bologna process and its influence at the micro level. I agree with Gleeson (2011) and O'Brien and Brancalone (2011) who have argued there is a need for a debate about the nature of learning outcomes and their appropriateness for higher education, including research looking at the beliefs and attitudes of the academic community in relation to curriculum design and learning outcomes.

### **Achieving change in higher education through learning outcomes**

As an initial policy optimist I saw the introduction of learning outcomes as an opportunity to bring about change in my field of practice. I was inspired by the persuasive appeal of Bologna policy discourses that suggested that learning outcomes were a way of achieving curricular re-organisation and represented a shift towards a more student centred educational process. The changes that were



introduced locally were inspired by these discourses and there was a real attempt to do Bologna 'by the book'. However, as a result of carrying out this research I am no longer enticed by the claims made about learning outcomes or attracted to the argument that learning outcomes can lead to curriculum change in higher education. The claims are far too simplistic and seem to function mainly as rhetoric.

The changes made locally as a result of the introduction of learning outcomes into course planning had little influence on practice or on the pedagogic relations between the teaching group and students. Indeed, instead of resulting in curricula re-organization and a more student centred approach, the new learning outcomes curricula had the opposite effect and cemented the existing vertical pedagogic relationship. The introduction of learning outcomes into local planning strengthened the level of control that teacher educators had over the curriculum.

The lack of change achieved by the learning outcomes approach can be understood by recoding the discourses behind the learning outcomes approach. By doing so learning outcomes can be seen as aiming for convergence and uniform outputs for students and are far from being learner centred.

Learning outcomes can be better understood by evaluating policy discourses more critically and putting them within their political context. By doing so, the Bologna reforms can be seen as the introduction of old ideas in the face of new perceived problems. They represent an exercise of power and control and an attempt to exert more external influence on higher education pedagogy. Learning outcomes represent a challenge to the traditional role of practitioners in higher education; with the values and integrity of academic disciplines being questioned in policy discourses and at the same time presented as impeding change.

Rather than representing a shift towards a more student centred approach, learning outcomes can be seen as an accountability mechanism and an attempt to standardize higher education. As such, the learning outcomes represent an attempt to undermine academic authority and make educational programmes more relevant to economic interests. These attempts are driven by

neoliberal and new public management discourses regarding the 'knowledge economy', the 'market' and 'globalisation'.

The Bologna reforms do not represent, as claimed, a paradigm shift in higher education. They instead represent and encourage rigidity and a 'hollowing out' of teaching and learning. The shift to a focus on the outcomes of learning is motivated in policy documents as an attempt to take away ambiguity and make the learning process more transparent. In doing so, however, learning outcomes take out the unintended consequences of learning. The shift leads to the situation where the ends take on more significance than the means; with less focus being put on the processes and experience of learning. This point was made by the teacher educators in this case study, particularly in relation to the reading of literature, where learning outcomes were seen as being restrictive and excluding forms of learning that are harder to specify and create criteria for.

Policy discourses stress the importance of students taking individual responsibility for their studies. At its core the learning outcomes approach assumes a level playing field; blind to the structural inequalities that influence educational success and the potential need for teacher educators to treat different students differently. This criticism of the learning outcomes approach found expression in this case study, with teacher educators expressing concern that the changes made locally would not help the weaker students. Teacher educators questioned the amount of responsibility that students could take for their own learning and felt frustrated that the changes made meant that they could not help the students who needed it.

Learning outcomes can be seen as devaluing the art of teaching and the exercise of teacher judgement. The changes that were made locally in connection with language teaching and assessment were designed to bring about more consistency from teacher educators. The consequence of this change was that the new ways of working were experienced as an insult; a threat to existing practices and the ability of teacher educators to make decisions about their practice based on their values, skills and professional experience.

More generally, learning outcomes are presented in policy documents as a quick fix for curriculum change. However, these

policy discourses choose to ignore the rigidity of the learning outcomes approach. They also ignore the complexities of curriculum change and the research findings which show that teacher planning is not rational or linear (Knight, 2001) and that teacher practice is organized primarily in accordance with loyalty to the subject as well as to others who work in their field of study (Becher and Trowler, 2001). The recommendations for professional practice in the reforms are not reflected in theories of professions or professional action. They are not based on research on teaching and learning in general or in higher education in particular, and ignore the findings of previous research which shows that disciplinary traditions can have strong influences on how policy reforms are interpreted and recontextualised in higher education.

Representing as they do a challenge to academic traditions of autonomy, the Bologna reforms are inevitably resisted. In this case study local pedagogic discourses acted to resist the changes made and the gap between policy and teacher educator practice meant that the policy discourses offered little to practitioners. As a consequence, the learning outcomes aspect of the Bologna reforms became largely a bureaucratic exercise, with little influence on practice or the curriculum. The reforms were absorbed into an existing regulative discourse of practice and where changes were attempted they were resisted in several different ways. Teacher educators continued to use the professional wisdom and practice that had guided them well in the past.

Learning outcomes play a key part in the Bologna reforms, and despite the huge amounts of energy and time spent on the implementation process in higher education in Europe they have failed to achieve significant change at the local level. Official evaluation reports acknowledge the slow progress of the reforms, but the logic of the learning outcomes approach is not questioned. This thesis questions that logic and the benefits of learning outcomes planning. The introduction of learning outcomes into my field of practice did little change to change the local curriculum and the contents and competences required of students. Nor did it encourage critical or unintended learning in students. It had little

influence on teacher practice and left teacher educators feeling devalued and frustrated as a result of their introduction.

This thesis points to how policy documents and discourses present a persuasive, if not misleading, picture of the benefits of learning outcomes. Policy discourses also underplay the complexity of policy implementation and the processes involved when policy proposals enter local pedagogic and cultural practices. This thesis recodes the policy messages on learning outcomes and recognizes the existence of alternative pedagogic discourses at the micro level which guide practice and resist educational change. As previous research has shown, universities do not change easily and disciplinary norms can play a key role in how change processes are perceived.

As a result of carrying out this thesis I am sceptical as to the possibilities of achieving significant change in higher education through learning outcomes. The thesis questions the policy claims made about learning outcomes and suggests that they are destined to be regarded as an irrelevance by most teachers in higher education; unable to connect with their day to day professional concerns. To achieve real change one must try to change the academic architectures that guide academic practice and that also act to mediate and prevent local curriculum change.

# Sammanfattning på svenska (summary in Swedish)

## Syftet och metod

Syftet med avhandlingen är att undersöka hur de politiska diskurserna bakom Bologna-processreformer har tolkats på mikronivå inom inom högre utbildning.

I studien undersöker jag hur Bologna-processen reproduceras som en pedagogisk diskurs i policydokument rörande högre utbildning i Europa och sedan hur dessa diskurser är rekontextualiserade till pedagogisk kommunikation inom mitt eget praxisområde. Forskningsområdet handlar om Bolognaimplementeringen vid en institution vid en högskola i Sverige och gäller kursplanearbete och organisering av läradstörd undervisning i två 30-poängskurser i engelska med didaktisk inriktning. Den slutliga inriktningen av studien är en analys av de inflytande förändringar som på pedagogisk praxis.

Avhandlingen är ett exempel på en deltagande fallstudie och ett flertal metoder har använts för att samla in data. En genomgång av sekundär forskningslitteratur och en form av diskursanalys har använts för att upptäcka de politiska diskurser som är knutna till Bologna-processen och den europeiska högre utbildningen. På lokal nivå har jag valt att granska lokal policydokumentation samt transkriptioner av lärarens tal i 34 planeringsmöten som spelats in mellan september 2008 till januari 2010 samt dokumentation i form av skriftliga och muntliga diskussioner omkring organisationen av kurser runt lärandemål. Jag intervjuade även i lärarkollegiet och 5 studenter. Data som samlats in ger en indikation på de lokala diskurser som styr praxis på lokal nivå samt beskriver pedagogisk praxis efter de ändringar som gjorts i de berörda kurserna.

I mina analyser har jag använt koncept som utvecklats av Basil Bernstein ('recontextualisation', 'regulative and instructional rules' och 'pedagogic identities') för att beskriva hur införandet av

lärandemål inom Bolognaprocessen manifesterades och uppfattades på mikronivå.

### **Politiska diskurser om högre utbildning i Europa**

Det första syftet med denna fallstudie var att undersöka hur Bolognaprocessen reproduceras som en pedagogisk diskurs i policydokument vad gäller högre utbildning i Europa. Ett antal politiska diskurser hittades. Dessa diskurser tyder på ett behov av att modernisera den högre utbildningen, vilket presenteras inom ramen för diskursen genom ökad global konkurrens för kompetens och marknader, med ett ökat behov av snabb innovation, flexibilitet och kreativitet. Två relaterade diskurser är ett kunskapsbaserat samhälle och behovet av livslångt lärande. Den traditionella disciplinära diskursen framställs som mer negativ och 'introjective' i jämförelse med den moderna *credit exchange* diskurs. En annan diskurs är idén om den mer aktiva studenten tillsammans med behovet för studenter att uppnå fördjupat lärande i sina studier. Policydiskurser föreslår att större vikt bör läggas på anställbarhet, flexibilitet och generiska kompetenser, i samband med en mer elevcentrerat förhållningssätt till lärande.

Politiska texter om Bolognaprocessen främjar en diskurs som framhåller pedagogiska aktiviteter och "resultat" som är mätbara och kan uppnås genom lärandemål. Policydiskurs lyfter fram att lärandemål representerar en övergång från dominansen av vad universitetet och lärare kan ge, till en betoning på den studerandes behov och kraven från arbetslivet och samhället i stort. Diskursen lägger tonvikten på att förändra och optimera yrkesutövning och att lärare och utbildare behöver förberedas för övergången från traditionella kursplaner och bedömning. Idén om läraren som förmedlare eller förvaltare av inlärningsprocessen presenteras i diskursen, i kombination med förslaget att studenter aktivt bör delta i planeringen av sitt eget lärande. Diskursen tydliggör sambandet mellan lärandemål och förbättrat lärande samt att läranderesultat är en grund för läroplanerna omorganisation och en automatisk koppling mellan användning av lärandemål, val av lämpliga

pedagogiska strategier och utveckling av lämpliga bedömningsmetoder, s.k. konstruktiv länkning.

### **Recontextualisering av Bolognadiskurser i pedagogisk kommunikation**

Studien visar att de politiska diskurserna i Bolognaprocessen kom till uttryck i en lokal 'reglerande' diskurs, där lärare framställs som förebilder som har rollen att förmedla kunskap som anses att var nödvändigt för studenterna att komma in i yrket. Diskursen vilar på tydliga, vertikala relationer mellan lärare och student, med ansvaret för kursplanens innehåll hos lärarna. Kunskap definieras som reproduktionen av innehåll och accepterad kunskap och information. Inom den vertikala pedagogiska relationen ligger fokus främst på innehåll snarare än på enskilda elevens behov och erfarenhet.

Den rådande 'reglerande' diskursen innebar att uppgiften att skapa lärandemål blev ett försök att skapa enhetliga lärandemål för alla studenter, med fokus på en mätbart produkt. Resultatet av denna tolkning innebar skapandet av en produktbaserad kursplanmodell där läraren tar huvudansvaret för att överföra innehåll till studenten. Studenternas roll i sitt eget lärande var begränsad till att uppnå kriterierna för de specifika lärandemålen.

Mycket få av lärandemålen som skapades på lokal nivå som en följd av Bolognaprocessen omfattar innehåll som inte fanns innan. Processen att skapa nya lärandemål ändrade inte den befintliga sociala och moraliska ordningen i kursplanen. Istället för att utmana de pedagogiska relationerna mellan lärare och elever, de pedagogiska identiteter för lärare och elever, förstärkte införandet av lärandemål de vertikala relationerna samt den kontroll lärarna hade över alla aspekter av läroplanen.

Trots införandet av ett antal nya examinationsformer, kräver få examinationer att studenten analyserar, utvärderar eller skapar något eget. Oavsett examinationsform är de fakta, färdigheter och metoder som studenten ska behärska i stort sett givna och obestridda.

Införandet av lärandemålen kopplat till *Common European Framework for Languages* (CEFR) för att mäta studenternas språkkunskaper kan ses som det viktigaste sättet på vilket de

politiska diskurserna av Bologna-processen blev recontextualised på lokal nivå. Det var genom dessa diskurser som det blev tydligt att lärandemålen är grund för kursplanens omorganisation och ett steg bort från traditionella kursplaner och bedömning fann sitt främsta uttryck. Införandet av CEFR byggde på tron att lärandemålen kopplat till CEFR kunde leda till en kursplanereform genom att detta kunde påverka undervisningsstrategier och bedömningsmetoder.

### **Förändringens påverkan på pedagogisk praxis**

De nya lärandemålen bestreds på flera olika sätt. Hela idén om att lärande kan mätas genom lärandemål ifrågasattes. Lärarna var inte överens om att koppla lärandemålen till CEFR som ett sätt att bedöma elevernas språkkunskaper. Vidare ifrågasattes huruvida de nya lärandemålen kunde täcka in tillräckligt av den kunskap som lärarna menade att studenterna borde ha med sig.

Avhandlingen visar att införandet av lärandemålen kopplat till CEFR hade en minimal inverkan på undervisning och bedömning. Lärarnas feedback på studenternas språkbruk fortsatt fokuserade på 'fel' snarare än på "can do statements" i enlighet med CEFR. Återkoppling och utvärdering av elevernas språkkunskaper fortsatte att återspegla en traditionell syn på modern språkundervisning på universitetet.

Avhandlingen visar att de ändringar som gjorts gällande rutiner för bedömning och feedback ifrågasattes av vissa lärare. De nya metoderna för återkoppling gjorde att några av lärarna ansåg att det var svårt för dem att kunna fullgöra sitt ansvar att förmedla den nödvändiga kunskap som studenterna bör erövra under sin lärarutbildning. Förändringarna upplevdes inte som en förbättring av befintlig praxis, utan betraktas snarare som "oprofessionellt" och onödigt. Studenternas förmåga att ta till sig den feedback som gavs ifrågasattes och bristen på konkret lärarhjälp ansågs vara en del av anledningen till varför studenterna inte lyckades. Istället för att använda lärandemålen kopplat till CEFR för att utföra sitt arbete,



fortsatte lärare att använda sin professionella erfarenhet och kunskap för att bedöma eleverna språkkunskaper.

### **Studien och tidigare forskning om praxis och förändring i högre utbildning**

Studiens slutsatser anknyter till annan forskning där man har granskat sambandet mellan beslutsfattande och genomförande av policy och som har funnit stora skillnader mellan retorik och genomförandet. Boyce (2003), till exempel, visade att många universitet när de lägger om, eliminera och revidera kurser och program, tenderar att behålla grundläggande värderingar, förutsättningar och interna strukturer i ett universitet. När det gäller lärarutbildningen, har Beach (1995, 1997) visat att tidigare reformer i Sverige hade lite inflytande på praktiken, och att detta tycktes till stor del bero på det gap som fanns mellan beslutsfattare och praktiker. Flera internationella forskare (Becher och Trowler, 2001; Clark, 1987; Dressel och Marcus, 1982; Stark och Lattuca, 1997 och 2000; Land, 2001) har pekat på det faktum att disciplinära kulturer och diskurser har ett stort inflytande på akademisk pedagogisk praxis.

Studien återspeglar den forskning som visar att praxioner inverkan kan begränsas av 'practice architectures' som verkar för att hindra vad som kan sägas och göras av, med och för vem.

Avhandlingen visar att lärarna fortsatte att använda sin professionella erfarenhet och kunskap för att bedöma eleverna språkkunskaper. Studiens slutsatser anknyter till forskning av McNamara (2011) som har hävdad att användningen av CEFR reducerar lokal variation och ignorerar andra redovisningssystem, eller uppsättningar av kulturella värden, eller beredningar av målen för språkutbildning, vilket inte direkt kan översättas till språket i CEFR. Faez, Majhanovich, Taylor, Smith och Crowley (2011) har också visat att lärare såg CEFR som en 'add-on' snarare än som en metod som skulle kunna användas för att täcka olika aspekter av läroplanen.

## **Studien och tidigare forskning om genomförandet av Bologna-processen**

Studiens slutsatser stämmer väl med andra studier som har visat hur EU:s politiska diskurser har blivit 'recontextualised' när de övergår från makronivå till mikronivå. Fallstudier på institutionell nivå om genomförandet av Bologna-reformerna är få, men forskning av Shaw, Chapman och Romyantseva (2011) har visat hur kulturella föreställningar kan fungera som filter för nya pedagogiska innovationer. Studien fann att undervisning var centralt för lärarens yrkesidentitet och att detta påverkade arbetet att genomföra Bologna-processen. När det gäller lärandemålsaspekt av Bologna-reformen, fann Lindberg Sand och Olsson (2009) att bedömningsprocesser i tre högskolekurser var opåverkad av övergången till en resultatnriktad kursplan.

Ett antal andra rapporter har vidare undersökt påverkan av Bologna-processen på högre utbildning och officiella rapporter beskriver långsamma framsteg i genomförandet av Bologna-reformerna (Westerheijden et al. 2010)

## **Studiens betydelse och konsekvenser**

Mycket lite forskning har fokuserat på hur de politiska diskurserna bakom Bologna-processreformer har tolkats på mikronivå inom högre utbildning. Studien är ett svar på vad Marginson (2007) har kallat behovet av situerade fallstudier ('situated case studies') för att bättre förstå dynamiken av globalisering inom högre utbildning.

Planering runt lärandemål är en viktig del av Bologna-processen. Enligt Michelsen (2010) har lärandemål blivit en fråga av stor politisk betydelse. Policydiskurser inom Bologna-reformen gör en koppling mellan lärandemål och lärande samt hävdar att lärandemål är en grund för kursplanens genomförande.

Studien ifrågasätter den dominerande diskursen i Bologna-policydokument och utvärderingsrapporter att bristen på framsteg i genomförandet av Bologna-processen kan förklaras i termer av en brist på förståelse och engagemang från olika intressegrupper. Enligt denna diskurs ifrågasätts inte logiken bakom lärandemål. Diskursen ignorerar komplexiteten av rekontextualisering och hur pedagogisk

förändring påverkas av befintliga maktrelationer och kulturella sedvänjor.

Fallstudien visar en alternativ förklaring som lägger vikt vid att det finns alternativa pedagogiska diskurser på mikronivå som styr praxis. I motsats till policydiskurser som presenterar att lärandemål bygger på kompetens och en 'studentcentrerad' pedagogik, styrde den lokala diskursen processen och uppdraget tolkades som ett försök att skapa enhetliga lärandemål för alla studenter, med fokus på en mätbart produkt.

Den generella slutsatsen från denna fallstudie är erkännandet av att det finns lokala diskurser som kan underlätta eller mer sannolikt hindra pedagogiska förändringar. Studiens slutsatser ifrågasätter också många diskurser bakom Bologna-processen, i synnerhet diskursen att lärandemål är en grund för kursplanernas genomförande. Studien bör vara av intresse för aktörer inom många universitetsmiljöer och återspeglar frågor relaterat till kursplanutveckling om gäller för andra institutioner inom högre utbildning.

### **Att åstadkomma förändring i högre utbildning genom lärandemål**

Som policyoptimist betraktade jag införandet av lärandemål som synonymt med diskurserna som argumenterar för en mer studentcentrerad undervisning och ett djupare lärande. Studien visar dock att rekontextualisering av Bologna-processen på lokal mikronivå hade liten inverkan på de former av symbolisk kontroll som sker både formellt och informellt genom pedagogisk praxis. Mer konkret hade de ändringar som gjordes litet inflytande på studenternas möjligheter att engagera sig och kritiskt tänka.

Processen att skapa lärandemålen ändrade inte de traditionella kunskapsstrukturer som är tillgänglig för studenterna. Den lokala diskursen på mikronivå fortsatte att återspegla den dominerande reglerande diskursen bestående av traditionella relationer mellan studenter och lärare inom universitetsutbildning (dvs. som sändare och mottagare) Detta i sin tur innebar en fortsättning av traditionell undervisning, som omfattar såväl val av ämnesinnehåll som regler för överföring av kunskap.



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## Appendix one

Proposals from the discipline specific group.

### **Styrdokument**

#### **Etiska värden och demokrati**

Studenten visar förtrogenhet med *läroplanen* och *värdegrunden* genom att

- diskutera, kritiskt granska och reflektera över dess innehåll
- koppla innehållet till undervisningen och yrkesrollen

### **Skollagen**

Studenten visar kännedom om *skollagen* genom att

- tolka och finna stöd för hur lärare bör agera i olika situationer utifrån sin yrkesroll

### **Bedömning och betyg**

Studenten visar förtrogenhet med *kursplanen i engelska* genom att

- diskutera strävansmålen och reflektera över hur dessa styr och påverkar undervisningen
- redogöra för uppnåendemålen i åk 5 och 9
- bedöma och ge respons samt motivera sin bedömning

Studenten visar goda kunskaper om IUP och utvecklingssamtal som verktyg genom att

- planera och/eller utvärdera ett utvecklingssamtal/ett föräldramöte med hänsyn till elev-, föräldra- och lärarperspektivet
- upprätta en individuell utvecklingsplan enligt Skolverkets riktlinjer samt motivera sina ställningstaganden

## **Lärarrollen**

### **Redskap och förhållningssätt**

Studenten visar förmåga att vara didaktiskt flexibel genom att

- använda och värdera media och andra redskap som pedagogiska hjälpmedel
- använda och värdera olika didaktiska strategier och metoder för att nå kunskap

### **Inläring**

Studenten visar kunskap om olika sorters lärstilar genom att

- planera, genomföra och kommentera lektioner anpassade till olika individer och situationer
- reflektera över individualisering ur ett långsiktigt perspektiv

Studenten visar förmåga att förmedla ämneskunskaper genom att bl a

- belysa engelskans roll i världen
- förklara språkrelaterade problemområden
- anpassa nivå och innehåll till målgruppen

## Appendix two

Learning outcomes produced as a result of the process were as follows. The student should be able to show that they can:

1. Carry out and report on classroom research carried out through interviews/observations.
2. Analyse and describe the interplay between a school and wider society in an English speaking country and making comparisons with the situation in Sweden.
3. Demonstrate that they can reflect on their own learning.
4. Demonstrate that they can reflect on their own learning, language development and development in the role as a teacher.
5. Describe the theories behind the goals for the syllabus for English.
6. Compare and critically evaluate the English language parts of the Swedish syllabus. and the foreign language parts of the syllabus from an English speaking country.
7. Explain the reasons behind the status that English has in the world today.
8. Identify and describe the major differences between the main varieties of English.
9. Demonstrate an understanding of history and culture in an English speaking country.
10. Explain grammatical and phonological issues that are common problem areas for learners of English.
11. Use functional grammar to analyse sentences and texts.
12. Analyse learners' errors and identifying the processes that may cause them.
13. Motivate the assessment and grading of examples of student work.
14. Apply the fundamental values and task of the school to realistic case studies from the school environment.
15. Vary language and teaching practice to fit the target group/pupil.
16. Use literature in the language classroom to help students to develop their understanding of language, literature and culture.
17. Plan and argue for a literary theme around a number of chosen books.
18. Argue for the selection of media and other materials to be used in the classroom.
19. Show awareness of ways of encouraging students to become more responsible for and more aware of their own language learning.
20. Demonstrate the ability to plan a short curriculum aimed at helping students pass the National Tests of Foreign Languages (NAFS).

## Appendix Three

Learning outcomes: Language Proficiency (C1 level CEFR)

### **Writing**

1 I can express myself fluently and accurately in writing on a range of general, academic or professional topics, varying my vocabulary and style according to the context.

2 I can write a well-structured critical review of a paper, project or proposal relating to my academic field, giving reasons for my opinion.

3 I can write clear, well-structured texts on complex subjects in my field, underlining the relevant salient points, expanding and supporting points of view at some length with subsidiary points, reasons and relevant examples, and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.

4 I can write using all tenses, aspects and moods of verbs.

5 I can use most sentence structures.

### **Communication/Spoken interaction**

1 I can express myself fluently, accurately and spontaneously on a wide range of general, academic or professional topics.

2 I can participate effectively in extended discussions on abstract and complex topics of a specialist nature in my academic or professional field.

3 I can argue a formal position convincingly, responding to questions and comments and answering complex lines of counter argument fluently, spontaneously and appropriately.

4 I can interact using fluent, sustained speech.

5 I can use register, technical language and idiom as appropriate to the subject matter, context and the relationship with others.

6 I can use all tenses, aspects and moods of verbs.

7 I can use most sentence structures.

8 I can use pronunciation close to that of a native speaker.

9 I can use stress and intonation appropriate to the meaning and nuance that I intend to convey.

## **Spoken production**

- 1 I can give clear detailed descriptions of complex subjects in my field.
- 2 I can elaborate a detailed argument or narrative, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
- 3 I can give a detailed oral summary of long and complex topics relating to my area of study.
- 4 I can give a clear, well-structured presentation on a complex subject in my field, expanding and supporting points of view with appropriate reasons and examples.
- 5 I can use register, technical language and idiom as appropriate to the subject matter, context and the relationship with others.
- 6 I can use all tenses, aspects and moods of verbs.
- 7 I can use most sentence structures.
- 8 I can use pronunciation close to that of a native speaker.
- 9 I can use stress and intonation appropriate to the meaning and nuance that I intend to convey.

## **Reading**

- 1 I can understand in detail highly specialised texts in my own academic or professional field, such as research reports or abstracts.
- 2 I can read literary texts with no difficulty and with an appreciation of implicit meanings and ideas.
- 3 I can appreciate the relevant socio-historical or political context of most literary works.
- 4 I can understand a wide range of alternative terms and structures which express standard, colloquial, formal and informal registers.
- 5 I can understand all tenses, aspects and moods of verbs.
- 6 I can understand most sentence structures, except the most complex or obscure.

## **Listening**

- 1 I can follow extended speech even when it is not clearly structured.
- 2 I can easily follow complex interactions between third parties in group discussion even on abstract or less familiar topics.

3 I can follow most lectures, discussions and debates in my academic or professional field with relative ease.

4 I can understand a wide range of alternative terms and structures which express standard, colloquial, formal and informal registers.

5 I can understand all tenses, aspects and moods of verbs.

6 I can understand most sentence structures.

## Appendix Four

According to course documentation the students taking the courses in 2007 should achieve knowledge about

- The language teachers' professional role
- Phonetic concepts
- Policy documents in English and ability to critically examine them
- Education research on second language learning
- Language learning portfolios
- Information technology as a tool for learning
- Reading experiences as a pathway to learning, identity and communication skills
- Literature for children and teenagers
- Various reading strategies
- How language, reading and thinking can be integrated into conversations about literature
- Aesthetic forms of expression as an adaptation of literature
- Relevant grammatical terminology
- Practical application of the process-oriented writing instruction
- The need to analyze, review and process their own and others' texts
- The storyline method through English literature
- How the school individualizes instruction to meet each student based on their own level of maturity
- PowerPoint presentation as a learning tool.
- English pronunciation and the rules for correct English pronunciation

In addition students should be able to

- Carry out an interview and present the results
- Compare Swedish and Anglo-Saxon culture
- Deliver a speech in English
- Conduct a PowerPoint presentation
- Conduct literature discussions in a student group

- Write an essay regarding how literature can be used as part of English language development
- Make observations of school activities
- Based on existing policy documents plan, implement and evaluate teaching sequences
- Create an environment where each student is given the opportunity to speak from their own knowledge
- Use English literature and literature as a starting point for working life issues, cultural events and social issues
- Analyze and critically assess English-language literary texts, their own texts, student texts
- Express themselves in writing in different genres / text types
- Make informed choices of text content and approach to visualize language development and linguistic awareness among future students
- Identify and support pupils with reading and writing skills problems
- Integrate the English concept of culture in thematic working
- Use dictionaries
- Explain grammatical concepts
- Describe different literary movements and genres, and conduct their own analysis of English literature, both modern and classical
- Introduce and work with literature in education
- Use IT as a tool for teaching, learning, presentation and portfolio assessment
- Differentiate their teaching to meet pupils' different needs and learning styles
- Implement and report on classroom research
- Describe the principles of tests and assessment
- Describe factors that promote interaction with parents groups



## Appendix Five

<b>2008: The new learning outcomes: The student should be able to show that they can:</b>	<b>2007: what the students should achieve knowledge about</b>	<b>2007: what the students should be able to do</b>
Carry out and report on classroom research carried out through interviews/observations.		Carry out an interview and present the results Implement and report on classroom research.
Analyse and describe the interplay between a school and wider society in an English speaking country and making comparisons with the situation in Sweden.		Compare Swedish and Anglo-Saxon culture.
Demonstrate that they can reflect on their own learning.		
Demonstrate that they can reflect on their own learning, language development and development in the role as a teacher.		
Describe the theories behind the goals for the syllabus for English.	Education research on second language learning.	
Compare and critically evaluate the English language parts of the Swedish syllabus and the foreign language parts of the syllabus from an English speaking country.	Policy documents in English and ability to critically examine them.	
Explain the reasons behind the status that English has in the world today.		
Identify and describe the major differences between the main varieties of English.	English pronunciation and the rules for correct English pronunciation.	
Demonstrate an understanding of history and culture in an English speaking country.		Compare Swedish and Anglo-Saxon culture Conduct literature discussions in a student group. Use English literature and literature as a starting point for working life issues, cultural events and social issues.

Explain grammatical and phonological issues that are common problem areas for learners of English.	Phonetic concepts Relevant grammatical terminology.	Explain grammatical concepts.
Use functional grammar to analyse sentences and texts.	Relevant grammatical terminology.	
Analyse learners' errors and identifying the processes that may cause them.	The need to analyze, review and process their own and others' texts.	Analyze and critically assess English-language literary texts, their own texts, student texts.
Motivate the assessment and grading of examples of student work.	The need to analyze, review and process their own and others' texts.	Analyze and critically assess English-language literary texts, their own texts, student texts. Describe the principles of tests and assessment.
Apply the fundamental values and task of the school to realistic case studies from the school environment.		
Vary language and teaching practice to fit the target group/pupil.	How the school individualizes instruction to meet each student based on their own level of maturity.	Create an environment where each student is given the opportunity to speak from their own knowledge. Differentiate their teaching to meet pupils' different needs and learning styles
Use literature in the language classroom to help students to develop their understanding of language, literature and culture.	Reading experiences as a pathway to learning, identity and communication skills. How language, reading and thinking can be integrated into conversations about literature.	Write an essay regarding how literature can be used as part of English language development.
Plan and argue for a literary theme around a number of chosen books.	Literature for children and teenagers. Various reading strategies. Aesthetic forms of expression as an adaptation of literature.	
Argue for the selection of media and other materials to be used in the classroom.	Information technology as a tool for learning.	Deliver a speech in English.
Show awareness of ways of encouraging students to become more responsible for and more aware of their own language learning.		Make observations of school activities. Make informed choices of text content and approach to visualize language development and linguistic awareness among future students.

Demonstrate the ability to plan a short curriculum aimed at helping students pass the National Tests of Foreign Languages (NAFS).		Based on existing policy documents plan, implement and evaluate teaching sequences.
	The language teachers' professional role.	
	Language learning portfolios.	
	Practical application of the process-oriented writing instruction.	
	The storyline method through English literature.	
	PowerPoint presentation as a learning tool.	Conduct a PowerPoint presentation.
		Express themselves in writing in different genres / text types.
		Identify and support pupils with reading and writing skills problems.
		Integrate the English concept of culture in thematic working.
		Use dictionaries.
		Use IT as a tool for teaching, learning, presentation and portfolio assessment.
		Describe factors that promote interaction with parents groups.

## Appendix six

Learning outcomes, methods of assessment and assessment criteria contained in course handbooks from 2008 and 2009.

<b>Learning outcome</b>	<b>Method of assessment</b>	<b>Assessment criteria</b>
Carry out and report on classroom research carried out through interviews/observations.	Individual written paper.	The paper should be based on data collected through interviews/observations and concern English teaching/learning or issues connected to 11-13 year-olds.
Analyse and describe the interplay between a school and wider society in an English speaking country and making comparisons with the situation in Sweden.	Individual oral presentation.	Students must be able to give a presentation (without reading) describing an English speaking country and making comparisons with Sweden. The presentation must involve the use of digital presentation techniques.
Demonstrate that I can reflect on my own learning.	Keeping an on line log book.	Students should organise their reflections on progress towards reaching the course learning outcomes in three written documents written at the beginning, middle and end of the course.
Demonstrate that I can reflect on my own learning, language development and development in the role as a teacher.	Keeping an on line log book.	Students should organise their reflections on progress towards reaching the course learning outcomes in three written documents written at the beginning, middle and end of the course.
Describe the theories behind the goals for the syllabus for English.	Individual written paper.	Should describe the theories behind the current syllabus for English.
Compare and critically evaluate the English language parts of the Swedish syllabus and the foreign language parts of the syllabus from an English speaking country.	Individual oral presentation.	Should describe the differences and similarities in the syllabuses for English in Sweden and Foreign Languages in an English speaking country.
Explain the reasons behind the status that English has in the world today.	Individual written paper.	Students should explain (some of) the reasons for English being a dominant, global language.

Identify and describe the major differences between the main varieties of English.	Individual oral presentation.	Students must be able to give a presentation (without reading) describing a specific variety of English.
Demonstrate an understanding of history and culture in an English speaking country.	Group presentation.	Students should give a presentation explaining a segment of history/society within a group presentation.
	Individual written paper.	Students should analyse a literary work as an expression of culture.
Explain grammatical and phonological issues that are common problem areas for learners of English.	Written paper analysing the pronunciation of a Swedish speaker of English compared to standard British or American model of pronunciation.	Students must be able to analyse the pronunciation of a Swedish speaker of English from the perspective of phonological issues that are common problem areas for learners of English.
	Student run grammar lessons.	Students must be active, interact with students, be able to explain grammatical issues and show an awareness of the theories behind the goals for the syllabus for English as well as didactic theories and methods. Students should take an active part in the planning of the class.
	Written examination.	Students must be able to explain grammatical issues that are common problem areas for learners of English.
Use functional grammar to analyse sentences and texts.	Written examination.	The students should be able to carry out an analysis of clause elements.
Analyse learners' errors and identifying the processes that may cause them.	Individual written paper.	Students should perform an error analysis of sample texts written by their peers. The analysis should be presented with three different sections: description, explanation, and evaluation.
Motivate the assessment and grading of examples of student work.	Group discussion. Group written paper.	Students should try to agree on the assessment of school pupils work based on the

		criteria in the syllabus for English. Paper should describe and motivate the assessment and grading of the work.
Apply the fundamental values and task of the school to realistic case studies from the school environment.	Individual written paper.	Students should describe an incident from their own time at school, where someone was exposed to degrading treatment and present ideas for how as a teacher you would work to prevent degrading treatment. Paper should refer to the curriculum and The Act Prohibiting Discrimination and Other Degrading Treatment of Children and School Students.
Vary language and teaching practice to fit the target group/pupil.	Student run classes. Academic vocational training.	Students must be active, interact with students, communicate their message and show an awareness of the theories behind the goals for the syllabus for English as well as didactic theories and methods. Students should take an active part in the planning of the class.
Use literature in the language classroom to help students to develop their understanding of language, literature and culture.	Student run lessons.  Group written paper.	In small groups you will be responsible for some exercises from the book <i>Teaching Large Multilevel Classes</i> and you have to present the exercises and give the rest of the class, who will be your adult pupils, instructions.  Group should make suggestions for how a piece of literature could be used as a basis for classroom activities. The paper should select the age-group the activity is intended for, contain a lesson plan and learning goals.

	<p>Group student run lessons</p> <p>Literary seminars.</p> <p>Individual written paper.</p>	<p>Students must be active, interact with the students, communicate their message and show an awareness of the theories behind the goals for the syllabus for English as well as didactic theories and methods. Students should take an active part in the planning of the class.</p> <p>Students are to show that they have analysed literature critically and can demonstrate an understanding of language, literature and culture.</p> <p>The essay should analyse a literary work from the point of view of, for instance, plot, characterisation and themes. It should present a clear line of thought, be adequately structured in full paragraphs and culminate in a logical conclusion. In addition, a didactic standpoint should be added stating how the novel could be used as teaching material for young students.</p>
<p>Plan and argue for a literary theme around a number of chosen books.</p>	<p>Group oral presentation of four books by using different forms of expression.</p> <p>Individual written paper.</p>	<p>Students must be active, communicate their message and show an awareness of the theories behind the goals for the syllabus for English as well as didactic theories and methods. Students should take an active part in the planning of the presentation.</p> <p>Students should argue for and plan a language developing thematical work using one piece of literature.</p>
<p>Show awareness of ways of encouraging students to become more responsible for and more aware of their own language learning.</p>	<p>Individual written paper</p>	<p>Should describe the general problem area, method and materials used, literature referred to, the pupils that are part of the action research,</p>

	<p>Individual oral presentation and discussion</p>	<p>results, discussion and reference list.</p> <p>Should present the responsibility and awareness level in the class/group, where you did your research, argue for your actions , the impact that your action research has had both on the pupils that were part of your study as well as the impact that the research had had on your own understanding and approach to the dynamics of the language classroom. You should refer to relevant literature in the field and include critical reflection of that literature based on your experience of doing your research.</p> <p>Students should take part in a discussion of each others' results.</p>
<p>Demonstrate the ability to plan a short curriculum aimed at helping students pass the National Tests of Foreign Languages (NAFS).</p>	<p>Individual written paper.</p>	<p>Should plan a two week period of English for a year 9 explaining what you are going to do (reading, writing etc), how you will do it and why you will do what you do. You must refer to what you know about the National tests, but also to the syllabus for English.</p>
<p>Argue for the selection of media and other materials to be used in the classroom.</p>	<p>Individual oral presentation.</p>	<p>Students should argue for the selection of media and/or other materials to be used in the classroom based on the criteria in the syllabus for English.</p>



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