Between Paradigms:  
A research proposal for a case study in a language school in Greece

Achilleas Kostoulas  
(achilleas.kostoulas@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk)

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Between Paradigms: a research proposal for a case study in a language school in Greece

The study proposed herein aims to develop an ecological understanding of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the setting of a language school in Greece, with a view to generating a conceptual framework that will integrate linguistic and pedagogical considerations with contextual influences. In doing so, this study will add to ELT theory a perspective from the underrepresented periphery of the English-speaking world, while advancing our understanding of the unique role of ELT in a context of global interconnectedness.

1. What prompted this study
At present, ELT theory appears to be undergoing a paradigm shift which is sustained by a rethinking of its linguistic and pedagogical underpinnings, as well as by a re-appraisal of the sociolinguistic impact of the English language in an increasingly globalised setting.

In the field of linguistics, academic consensus seems to be gradually moving away from established beliefs about language which can be summarised under the term ‘standard language ideology’. Briefly stated, this ideology encapsulates the idea that the needs of second language learners are best served by a ‘single monochrome standard’ of language, defined by educated native-speaker use (Quirk, 1985). In more recent years, the emergence and institutionalisation of local varieties of English (World Englishes) appear to have rendered some of the assumptions of the standard language ideology less tenable (e.g. Canagarajah, 2006, p. 23; Matsuda, 2003). Critics of this position have argued that the standard language ideology constitutes ‘deficit linguistics’ (Kachru, 1991, p. 26), whereas others have pointed out that the language variety shared by non-native speakers (English as a Lingua Franca, ELF) constitutes a more egalitarian linguistic model (Jenkins, 2006). However, the desirability of raising ELF to canonical status, and indeed its very existence, are the subject of considerable controversy (Davies, 1999; Jenkins, 2009; Kuo, 2006; Sifakis, 2008).

The scepticism towards the normative role of native-speaker varieties is paralleled by a similar restructuring in ELT pedagogy. To a great extent, ELT pedagogical orthodoxy tends to be informed by the notion of a collaborative learning group ideal, which ‘sets the conditions for a process-oriented, task-based, inductive, communicative […] methodology’ (Holliday, 1994, p. 54). The learning group ideal appears to form the ideological underpinning of dominant approaches to second language pedagogy such as Communicative Language Teaching (J. C. Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 166). These beliefs about learning were developed primarily in the educational systems of Anglophone countries as a principled response to the perceived ineffectiveness of traditional and behaviourist pedagogy. However, in recent years scepticism has been mounting regarding its appropriateness outside the settings where it was originally developed (e.g. Canagarajah, 1999; Prabhu, 1987; Yu, 2001) leading some to conclude that it constitutes ‘a classic case of pedagogy that is out of sync with local […] exigencies’
The growing awareness that language teaching pedagogy should be more sensitive to local contextual influences (Bax, 1997, 2003; Holliday, 1994) has meant that rigid adherence to methods is increasingly giving way to more flexible practices (J. C. Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 250), with ELT slowly moving towards a ‘post-method condition’ (Kumaravadivelu, 1994).

A similar ‘shift to localisation’ (Widdowson, 2004, p. 369) appears to be taking place in terms of the social context in which ELT is embedded. This increased sensitivity to local needs may stem from awareness of the ‘considerable socio-cultural loss’ associated with the global spread of English (Widdowson, 2004, p. 361). It has been argued that the spread of English perpetuates unequal distributions of power between nations (Phillipson, 1992), and that ‘a dangerous liaison’ exists between globalisation, empire and ELT (Kumaravadivelu, 2006a). The realisation that it is ‘no longer credible’ to deny the political implications of ELT pedagogy (Edge, 2006, p. xiv), has led to a growing demand in the literature for a more empowering language policy (Canagarajah, 1999), which will complement, rather than compete with, the local language ecology and local interests (Phillipson, 2009).

It would appear, from the above, that ELT is in a transition between two different informing paradigms (Figure 1). The dominant paradigm derives its linguistic and pedagogical legitimacy from the English-speaking West, and may result in linguistic hegemony. On the other hand, the emerging paradigm espouses linguistic and pedagogical norms which are bounded by local circumstance, and positions itself critically towards the political implications of ELT policy and practice. Traces of the interaction between these two paradigms were observed in earlier stages of my PhD studies. Focussing on a language school in Greece, a series of interviews and a questionnaire survey were conducted (Kostoulas, 2009d), and grounded theory was used to analyse the data (Kostoulas, 2009b). These small projects were complemented by a content analysis of the learning materials used at the language school (Kostoulas, 2009a, 2009c). The limited scope of these studies and the limitations of the methods that were used precluded the development of a theory of broader relevance, but by drawing loosely on this empirical work, and by relating the findings to the literature, one might hypothesise the existence of tension at the points where the two paradigms interface, namely the questions of which language variety (what) to teach, through which methods (how) and to what end (why).

![Figure 1: Competing ELT paradigms](image-url)
2. What this study seeks to do

The research project proposed herein is an instrumental case study (Stake, 1994, p. 445) focussing on a typical language school in Greece (host institute). An immediate goal of this study is to understand how the dominant and emerging paradigms interact, whereas its ultimate purpose is to generate a conceptual framework that will enable policy makers and practitioners to develop a personal stance with reference to such unresolved tensions. Since the generalisation of findings generated by case study research is challenging (Silverman, 2005, p. 126), this study will focus on theory building without attempting to project specific findings to other settings (Punch, 2005, pp. 146-147; Silverman, 2005, p. 128).

Such an endeavour presents multiple challenges. Firstly, the phenomenon under study might not lend itself to straightforward explanations, because ELT practice is shaped by the co-activity of heterogeneous agents, such as teachers, learners, stakeholders, materials developers and examination boards (Kostoulas, 2009b, p. 18). In addition, the conceptual framework need to acknowledge the interdependence between the research setting and the immediate and global contexts in which it is embedded (Clarke, 2007, pp. 25-26; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 94; Stern, 1983, p. 274). It has been argued that research methods that aim to de-contextualise, segregate and atemporalise variables may not be suitable for understanding such phenomena (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 252-253). By contrast, case studies facilitate the detailed study of social phenomena in their natural setting without sacrificing sensitivity to their complexity and contextual interdependence (Punch, 2005, p. 144).

In summary, the main questions that this study aims to address are:

1. How do the dominant and emerging paradigms interact in the setting of the host institute:
   a. in terms of the model language variety (what)?
   b. in terms of the preferred methodology (how)?
   c. in terms of the ends of ELT instruction (why)?
   d. in terms of other instances of tension?
2. What other influences impact on ELT in the setting of the host institute?
3. How can ELT be conceptualised in a way that recognises the complex co-activity of agents within the host institute and the influences of its immediate and global context?

3. What this study will focus on

A methodologically rigorous inquiry was conducted to identify possible research venues and develop criteria for case selection (Appendix A). In total, 53 schools and language institutes were appraised on the basis of their teaching provision, size, location, repute and willingness to participate. The school that was ultimately selected is one with which I enjoy close professional and personal ties, since I worked there for a number of years, and as it is owned by a close family member. Despite these connections and the fact that earlier stages of my research were conducted there, the selection of this particular language school was not prompted by opportunistic considerations of convenience. It is rather the product of the school’s conformity to the criteria which emerged from the inquiry, coupled with an unexpectedly strong reluctance among other suitable schools to host the research.

The host institute is located in the town of Ioannina, where I am based, and operates three branches in different locations in the town. The school primarily caters for the needs of young learners and adolescents who attend supplementary evening courses in English as a Second
Language. In addition to the ‘General English’ programme, they offer courses aiming at language certification as well as a small number of ‘specialist’ programmes such as Business English or English for Academic Purposes. The school staff consists of a cadre of five senior teachers, supplemented by a fluctuating number of teachers with varying qualifications, who are generally employed on part-time annual contracts. In recent years, this structure has been challenged by a policy of hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers, whose roles and seniority have yet to be defined with sufficient clarity.

Following Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 27), the case on which this study will focus is delimited in terms of four dimensions: its conceptual nature, its social size, its physical location and its temporal extent. The conceptual definition of the case includes the staff and learners of the host institute, teaching activities taking place there, as well as print materials in use (e.g. syllabus documents, courseware). While a number of individuals may opt out of the research, in principle the entire host institute will come under study in order to document a variety of views from participants with diverse backgrounds and aspirations. With regard to location, the study will focus on one of the branches of the host institute, and with regard to time, fieldwork will span an academic year (September 2010 - June 2011), thus allowing for the contextual dynamics of the setting to become apparent.

4. How this study will be conducted
Data regarding the teachers’ and learners’ beliefs and attitudes, the actuality of teaching and the learning materials will be generated and analysed using integrated qualitative and quantitative methods. In addition to capitalising on the strengths of different methods (Punch, 2005, p. 240), this approach is expected to increase confidence in the findings (Alexander, Thomas, Cronin, Fielding & Moran-Ellis, 2008, p. 127). The use of complementary methods is consistent with case study methodology (Punch, 2005, p. 145; Yin, 2003, p. 14) and the requirements of this research, on account of their potential to highlight different aspects of multifaceted social phenomena (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989).

The quantitative and qualitative strands of the research will be implemented in a parallel and interlocking way, so that each method ‘provides discovery and validation for the other’ (Deren et al., 2003, p. 10, cited in Alexander et al. 2008, p. 132). Greater prominence will be given to qualitative methods derived from ethnography, which lend themselves well to the study of complex social phenomena (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp. 242-243) and ELT settings in particular (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 5; Holliday, 1994, pp. 181-183), and which have been used effectively in similar research projects (K. Richards, 1996).

Fieldwork for this study will commence in September 2010 and terminate in June 2011, thus spanning 36 weeks (excluding two 15-day holidays at Christmas and Easter). This period will be divided into four 9-week phases, with each phase gravitating towards different research questions. While some overlap is expected, the first phase will primarily address Research Questions 1a-c, the second and third phases will follow up on these and also focus on emergent themes relating to Research Questions 1d and 2 respectively, and the final phase will be used to validate findings. Within each stage, four weeks will be used for the generation of qualitative data, followed by two weeks for initial analysis, while the remaining three weeks will be used for the quantitative study of documentary evidence. After fieldwork has been completed, an additional 10 months are envisaged for the synthesis of findings into a conceptual framework,
thus answering Research Question 3. Finally, the writing up of the dissertation is expected to last eight more months, leading to a submission towards the end of 2012. For a graphic depiction of this information, please refer to Appendix C.

4.1. Data generation
The broad strokes of the data generation strategy have been negotiated with the gatekeeper of the host institution, thus ensuring a context-appropriate interpretation of ethical requirements (see Section 6). Four main data generation strands are envisaged, namely interviews with staff, questionnaire surveys, classroom observation and content analysis of documentary evidence. The content of the data generation instruments will be specified in response to tentative research findings as the study progresses so as to retain sensitivity to emerging themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 35).

Qualitative data pertaining to views of staff will be elicited using **semi-structured interviews**, on account of their flexibility and suitability for generating data about behaviour, beliefs and attitudes (Robson, 2002, p. 272). Depending on pragmatic limitations, between 15 and 20 interviews will be conducted, recorded and transcribed. It is expected that each participant will take part in three or four interviews, or possibly fewer if there are more participants.

The learners’ perspective will be elicited using four **open-ended questionnaires**. Each questionnaire, which will build on previously generated data, will be administered to a different group of 30-40 learners, many of whom will be minors. Although self-completed questionnaire surveys suffer from a number of limitations, such as partial completion, unpredictable interpretation of questions, relative lack of flexibility (Robson, 2002, p. 233) and -in the case of adolescent participants- a large number of jocular responses (Fan et al., 2006), their anonymous nature is expected to encourage candid responses from participants who might otherwise be reluctant to be overly critical of themselves and their teachers (Robson, 2002, p. 234).

Additional qualitative data will be generated through **non participatory observation** of selected lessons. Subject to the consent of the class teachers, between 15 and 20 classes will be observed. Direct observation is expected to generate insights into the actuality of teaching, which may not be evident from the interview and questionnaire responses (Robson, 2002, p. 310). A non-participatory mode of observation is expected to minimise disruption to the delivery of tuition, although it is understood that reactivity cannot be completely eliminated on account of my existing relationships to many participants involved. Initially, the objective of observation will be the construction of a narrative account based on field notes, although more structured observation protocols may be used for the validation of findings in the final phase of the research.

These data will be complemented by information about language and pedagogy from the learning materials in use at the host institute. This information will be quantified using **checklists** informed by the qualitative data. Due to the prohibitive size the materials corpus, systematic sampling will be used to select a representative sample of materials. As the quality of findings in this strand of the research is conditional on high coding reliability (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 211), a number of reliability safeguards have already been developed in the form of self-training procedures and reliability checks (Kostoulas, 2009a, 2009c).
Extracts of data generation instruments which were used in the pilot stage of this research are reproduced in Appendix D by way of example.

4.2. Data analysis
The qualitative data will be analysed using a process of analytical induction (Punch, 2005, p. 197), which is loosely derived from grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Analysis will initially involve the disaggregation of data and the identification of a broad range of beliefs, attitudes and teaching practices, which will then be related to the competing paradigms. Ultimately, selected data will be synthesised into a coherent conceptual description. This inductive process will draw on lessons learnt from the pilot inquiry: my initial data analysis, which adhered to grounded theory methodology rather rigidly, resulted in context-specific findings, which proved difficult to generalise without recourse to the literature (Kostoulas, 2009b). By using hermeneutically helpful insights from the literature as conceptual touchstones, this study should compensate for the tendency of grounded theory to privilege ‘narrow and case-specific explanations’ (Hodkinson, 2008, p. 93) which might preclude theoretical generalisation.

The emergent findings from the qualitative strands of the study will be confirmed and complemented by a content analysis of the documentary evidence (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002). The frequency distributions of various linguistic forms and the prevalence of particular pedagogical patterns will be calculated, norms will be defined and the statistical significance of deviations from these norms will be established. In line with the overall inductive orientation of this study, the categories and units of analysis will draw on insights from the qualitative data, but will be further elaborated and validated using statistical techniques such as cluster analysis, as documented in Kostoulas (2009c).

5. Why the findings will be trustworthy
Ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings is challenging in two respects. As this study draws on two radically different epistemological traditions, it is not entirely compatible with either rationalistic notions such as validity, reliability and objectivity (Edge & Richards, 1998, p. 335), or the post-modern alternatives proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 289-331), namely credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability. Furthermore, my own relation to the host institute is such that cannot be reduced to epistemologically naïve invocations of ‘objectivity’.

To address the first challenge an epistemological common ground was sought in Maxwell’s (2002) validity typology. Maxwell defines validity as a product of several overlapping criteria ranging from factual accuracy to generalisability and, beyond that, to the soundness of evaluative claims. The factual accuracy of the account (descriptive validity) will be addressed by using overlapping data generation methods and extensive respondent validation, which will also ensure the congruence between the account and the participants’ understanding of the phenomena (interpretative validity) . The development of research methods that are epistemologically compatible with the understanding of the studied phenomena, the use of constant comparisons and the critical juxtaposition of alternative theoretical explanations are expected to contribute towards the generation of theory which is internally consistent (theoretical validity). Internal generalisability, defined as the degree to which the observed aspects of the case are representative of the whole, will be addressed through the use of
overlapping research methods focussing on different aspects of the case, and systematic sampling where appropriate. *External generalisability* (i.e. the degree to which the account is applicable to other populations) will not be explicitly invoked, in keeping with the guidelines of case study research (Yin, 2003, p. 10). However, it is expected that the provision of a descriptively and interpretatively rich account of the case should facilitate the critical transfer of theoretical insights to other settings. *Evaluative validity*, the last of Maxwell’s criteria, is not relevant to this study because no evaluative claims will be made.

The second challenge highlights the need for a **reflexive attitude**, which consists of three incremental requirements. At minimum, it involves a heightened awareness and acknowledgement of my own subjectivity, which stems from my pre-existing relationships with the research participants and from the situated nature of my presence there during fieldwork. Added to this, a reflexive attitude involves acknowledging that the thick description that will emerge from my research is a constitutive rather than a representational act (cf. Pennycook, 2005). Most importantly, it involves understanding that as a researcher I am part of the social reality which I seek to understand, and that my own actions and reflections are inextricably bound to it. In more practical terms, I will try to augment the trustworthiness of the findings by keeping extensive observational, theoretical and methodological notes and a research journal all of which will be used to inform my analysis.

6. **What ethical considerations underpin this study**

This study will be informed by context-sensitive application of relevant ethical guidelines (British Educational Research Association, 2004; Hellenic Data Protection Authority, n.d.; The University of Manchester, n.d.) pertaining to issues such as participation, the impact of the research and confidentiality.

Participation in the study will be governed by the principle of **voluntary informed consent**. To that end, the aims and procedures of the study will be communicated to the staff of the school in a meeting prior to commencing fieldwork, and consent will be recorded in writing before each interview. Similar information will be provided to learners, at a level commensurate to their level of maturity and language skills, and consent will be elicited orally with the facilitation of their teachers. Additionally, in the case of underage participants, a letter will be delivered to their legal guardians explaining the aims and procedures of the research as they relate to the students, and informing them of their right to opt out of the study at any time, for any or no reason. Examples of forms used to record consent are reproduced in Appendix E.

In implementing the study, care will be taken to observe the twin principles of **non-malfeasance** and **beneficence**. Unobtrusive fieldwork procedures, such as non-participatory observation, will be used to avoid disruption to the effective delivery of tuition. Similarly, the interviews will be conducted and questionnaires will be completed outside normal teaching hours. Although it is impossible to completely eliminate interference with the normal operations of the host institute, the host institute management and I are currently exploring ways to offset any possible undesirable effects. Direct benefit for the host institute will result from sharing findings which can lead to improvements in syllabus design and teaching provision, whereas individual teachers may profit from the opportunity to engage in non-judgemental discourse about their practice (Edge, 1992, 2002).
In order to protect the privacy of participants, the University policy on data security will be rigorously enforced. Pseudonyms will be used to identify individual participants, and personally identifying information will be omitted or altered when disseminating findings. Data will be stored in the password-protected p-drive provided by the University, and will be accessed through the encrypted Virtual Private Network. Backup copies of the data will be saved on removable media (e.g. flash drives), which will be stored in physically secure locations. Throughout the research, access to the dataset will be limited to myself, except as required for the purposes of academic supervision.

An ongoing ethical review process is planned in order to ensure the consistent application of the ethical guidelines, and the appropriate resolution of developing tensions. At the end of each data generation phase, a reflective memo will be drafted defining my position with respect to ethical dilemmas such as validity versus confidentiality or reciprocity versus detached inquiry, and outlining how this position is reflected in my methodological choices. This memo will be used as the basis for consultation with my academic supervisor regarding the subsequent phases of the research. While this process is unlikely to completely eliminate ethical tensions, their documentation coupled with reflection and regular external audit should increase my awareness of potential pitfalls and facilitate the formulation of appropriate responses (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 296-297).

7. What makes this study worthwhile
The expected contributions made by this study will be substantive and conceptual. A substantive contribution will be made in the form of a ‘thick description’ of the host institution, which may add to the knowledge base of ELT settings (Edge & Richards, 1998, p. 351). In addition to the intrinsic value of such a description, it could be used to generate insights of broader applicability regarding the interaction between the two competing paradigms that inform ELT, and the way the resolution of this interaction is bounded by contextual circumstance. Such insights can contribute usefully towards syllabus design or professional development programmes that are sensitive to the culture of the institution (Holliday, 1994).

The empirical generation of a conceptual framework will enhance understanding of the way ELT practice is shaped by interlocking dynamics, and the way tensions between competing dynamics are resolved. This conceptual contribution does not aim for the degree of abstraction associated with formal theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 56), but can nevertheless prove useful as a source for tentative hypotheses about ELT practices in other settings. In addition to guiding further research, the articulation of a conceptual framework can facilitate ELT professionals to critically position themselves between competing paradigms (Cumming, 2008, pp. 286-287).

These contributions are aimed at three main audiences. The most immediate audience comprises the staff of the host institute, to whom findings will be communicated through a professional report and, possibly, professional development sessions. More broadly, the substantive and conceptual insights may be of use to ELT practitioners and course designers, particularly in the ‘outer circle’ (Kachru, 1985) of locales where English is taught as a foreign language, leading to publications in the professional press and presentations in professional conferences. The conceptual contribution, which is primarily of scholarly interest, will be disseminated in the form of a dissertation, as well as academic publications and conferences.
Works cited


Appendix A

Defining the case

Between August 2009 and March 2010, a small scale inquiry was conducted in order to select an appropriate venue for conducting fieldwork. This inquiry consisted of three parallel processes:

- Learning about potential sites;
- Refinement of selection criteria;
- Increasingly focussed case definition.

As seen in Figure 2, initially general information was sought from the public domain regarding a large number of potential sites. By evaluating these sites against theoretical criteria, a short list of suitable sites was generated. Contact was made with these institutes, primarily by email, requesting their participation in the study and limited demographical information. The response rate was quite low, and of the institutes that responded only five indicated that they would be interested in learning more about the research (Figure 4).
The information about the potential research venues was tabulated against the theoretical criteria to facilitate comparison. The research venues were then ranked in order of suitability (Table 1). This ranking was subsequently reconsidered because (a) financial developments threatened to compromise my ability to travel to Site A13 as frequently as necessary for data generation, and (b) I was offered nearly unrestricted access to Site C1. This resulted in Site C1 being selected as host institute.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>History &amp; repute</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideal criteria</td>
<td>Diverse teaching provision</td>
<td>4-12 staff Approx. 200 students</td>
<td>Ioannina or Athens</td>
<td>&gt;2 years in operation, successful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A13</td>
<td>General English, exam preparation, EYL, teacher training, publishing</td>
<td>Athens</td>
<td>International presence (publishing), financially challenged?</td>
<td>Theoretically appealing; but pragmatically challenging (location)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>EYL &amp; exams preparation; Also German</td>
<td>Arta</td>
<td>Family owned</td>
<td>Acceptable location &amp; size</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B19</td>
<td>General English, Exam preparation, EYL</td>
<td>Preveza</td>
<td>Exam oriented; operating since 1988</td>
<td>Too narrow focus, small size</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B27</td>
<td>General English, Exam preparation, EYL</td>
<td>Arta</td>
<td>Operating since 2003</td>
<td>Too narrow focus, small size</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>General English, EYL, exam preparation, (limited) materials development</td>
<td>Ioannina</td>
<td>Est. 1976, reputation of success, challenged by recent restructuring</td>
<td>Ideally located, easy access; reflexivity? Provision not especially diverse</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF POSSIBLE RESEARCH VENUES

Following negotiations with the gate keeper of the host institute, the case was further defined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Participants | • Teachers (core & part-time)  
              • Learners enrolled in any programme of study |
| Activities | • Lessons and self-access learning (not including 1-on-1 tutorials)  
             • Placement, diagnostic and achievement tests (not including proficiency examinations provided by external examination boards) |
| Materials | • Learning materials (print & electronic)  
           • Syllabus documents & lesson plans |
| Location | One of three branches |
| Temporal extent | September 2010 – June 2011 |

TABLE 2: DIMENSIONS OF THE CASE

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1 EYL: English for Young Learners
Appendix B

Obtaining access

April 12th 2010

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that we will be happy to assist Mr. Achilleas Kostoulas in his research leading to his Phd. Pursuit allowing him to use our institution's premises as well as our consent to contact our staff and students as he might see suitable with the understanding that his findings will remain strictly anonymous and will be used only for the purpose of his research.

It is understood that anyone interested should feel free to contact us at the above printed address.

Yours faithfully

[Signature]
### Appendix C

**Planning fieldwork**

#### Overall Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2009-2010</th>
<th>2010-2011</th>
<th>2011-2012</th>
<th>2012-2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lit Review</strong></td>
<td>Preliminary literature review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Literature review informed by emerging themes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field work</strong></td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Phase I (RQ 1a-c)</td>
<td>Phase II (RQ 1d)</td>
<td>Phase III (RQ 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Initial analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dissemination</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Main data analysis &amp; synthesis of findings</td>
<td>Professional report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Timetable Template for Phases I-IV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Data Generation</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Analysis of Qualitative Data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Timetable Template for Weeks 1-4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Day 1</th>
<th>Day 2</th>
<th>Day 3</th>
<th>Day 4</th>
<th>Day 5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
<td>Setup &amp; Conduct Interview, Notes (2 hours)</td>
<td>Transcription (2.5 hours)</td>
<td>Transcription (2.5 hours)</td>
<td>Observation &amp; Notes (2.5 hours) Collection (0.5 hours)</td>
<td>Data Entry (3 hours)</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observation</strong></td>
<td>Administration (0.5 hours)</td>
<td>Journal Keeping (0.5 hours)</td>
<td>Journal Keeping (0.5 hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questionnaires</strong></td>
<td>Administration (0.5 hours)</td>
<td>Journal Keeping (0.5 hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Journal Keeping (0.5 hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Journal Keeping (0.5 hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2 An additional 5 hours per week are set aside for non-fieldwork related activities (e.g. communicating with supervisors, record keeping, skills training etc.)
Appendix D
Generating data

Extracts of student questionnaires used in the pilot study

My English learning history
You may think that learning English is the same for everybody. In some ways it is, but there are also very important differences. Each person’s history is unique, just as you are unique. By sharing your learning history with us, you not only can help us learn more about you, but also help us to learn more about the exciting mosaic of experiences that all these individual histories form.

In the space below, you can write about your English learning history. There are some questions on the left margin to guide you, but feel free to write anything you find interesting.

Let’s start with your first English lesson.

Why did you decide to learn English?

Where did you start learning English?

What were the lessons like?

Did you enjoy it? Why (not)?

Did you learn English at any other place?

How was that different?

Do you like it now? Why?

What are your plans?

Thank you for sharing your English language story with us; it will help us with the next part.

My opinion about English lessons
In the second part you can share your opinion about English lessons (don’t worry, your teacher will never know who wrote what). It is very helpful to answer these questions as honestly as possible, because if teachers know what you really think, it will be easier for them to design better lessons. There are five easy questions in this part:

• In my opinion, learning English is ___________________________.
  Why? ____________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

• What I enjoy most about English lessons is ___________________________.
  Why? ____________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

• I don’t really like it when___________________________________________.
  Why? ____________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

• The most important thing about learning English is ___________________.
  Why? ____________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

• The most useful thing we do in an English lesson is ___________________.
  Why? ____________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________
  ________________________________________________________________

Great! This finishes the second part of the questionnaire! There’s only one more left.
Extract of interview schedule & feedback form

Interview Schedule

0. Introductory comments
   ◆ Appreciation
     I truly appreciate your agreeing to take part in this interview. I know how many demands there are on your time, and I would like to thank you for making yours available.
   ◆ Introduce self and study:
     As you probably know, I am conducting doctoral research at the University of Manchester. Specifically, I am looking into the way English is taught in young learners in Greece.
   ◆ Purpose of the interview:
     I am trying to do through these interviews is to broaden my understanding of the Greek context, and to identify certain lexis which need to be studied in more depth. I feel quite certain that you will be able to help me because of your extensive experience as a teacher in this context.
   ◆ Confidentiality & ethics
     As I mentioned in the cover letter, anything you say in the interview will be strictly confidential. By this I mean that only I will have access to the record of this conversation, that the information will only be used for the purposes of my research, and that if I do quote you I will not do so by name. Is it OK if I record this interview?
   ◆ Obtain consent:
     Before we go on, is there any more research?
     Can I have the consent form?

1. History
   Could you please tell me a few things about your background?
   Additional prompts (if necessary):
   ◆ How long ago did you start teaching?
   ◆ What was your first job like?
   ◆ Had you worked in EFL before that?

2. Current role
   Can you tell me about your current role?
   Additional prompts (if necessary):
   ◆ Could you elaborate a little more on your current role?
   ◆ Apart from actually teaching, what else do you do?

3. Positive experiences
   What do you like best about your role?
   In case of a generic answer:
   ◆ Is there anything specific to being a Greek teacher in an ELT environment?

4. Challenges
   What do you perceive as the most challenging aspect of teaching in Greece?
   Additional prompts (if necessary):
   ◆ What aspects of your job do you find particularly difficult?

Section II: Interview data

Interview number:
Interviewee Code:
Date / Time:
Duration:
Location:

Section II: Procedural remarks

1. How well did the interview handle?
   ◆ Very well.
   ◆ Not as well.

2. How did I feel during the interview?
   ◆ Comfortable.
   ◆ Not as comfortable.

3. What was my impression of the interviewee?
   ◆ Surprised.
   ◆ Not surprised.

4. What aspects of the interview went well?
   ◆ Professional approach.
   ◆ Informal and open.

5. What aspects of the interview could be improved? How?
   ◆ More open-ended questions.
   ◆ Less direct questions.


Learning materials database

Extract of codebook used for content analysis of learning materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Activity type</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>Decontextualised</td>
<td>Activities of this type focus on the presentation and / or practice of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOC</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>grammatical forms. The language units will typically focus on verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOC</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Activities of this type focus on the learning of words. These may be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD</td>
<td>Reading activities</td>
<td>focus on the extraction of meaning from a written text (i.e. reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPK</td>
<td>Speaking activities</td>
<td>focus primarily on developing oral fluency. This category does not</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples: grammar presentation boxes, gap & cue exercises

Examples: multiple-choice activities, matching activities

Examples: reading comprehension questions

Examples: role-plays, presentations
Appendix E

Obtaining consent

Extracts from information brochures

What is this research about?
This research project, which forms part of my PhD studies at the University of Manchester, looks into how beliefs about language and teaching come together with other social influences to shape the way the English language is taught in different settings in Greece. Although many of these influences have been described in one way or another in the academic and professional literature, these descriptions have often been criticized as being either too theoretical or too foreign and irrelevant to teachers’ needs. That is why it is important to document your views, the views of ELT professionals in Greece, and use these to construct a new theoretical framework that is both relevant to our educational context and practically oriented.

How will this research do that?
I have already conducted an exploratory research project in a language school in Greece, which helped me identify some salient dynamics that I think impact teaching practice in that particular setting.

What I am now interested in finding out is whether these dynamics are also present in other settings as well. In order to determine whether these dynamics are generalizable, I would like to visit one or more schools such as yours and learn from your experience. You can find out more about what this involves in the following pages.

Ultimately, the information you share with me will help me construct a conceptual framework that describes how the English language is taught in Greece. I expect that this framework can be disseminated through academic journals, the professional press and conferences. Hopefully, it will prove helpful for teacher trainers and materials developers, who will be able to cater to your professional needs in a way that is more sensitive to the local context.

Not sure yet?
I hope that the information in this brochure has made you consider the possibility of participating in my research. However, I appreciate that this is a difficult decision which you may want to reflect on, and that you may still have some reservations. In this page, I will try to address some common concerns that you may share.

How long is this going to last?
The simple answer is that the duration of the research is ready to your. I will remain at your school for as long as you are happy to have me. A more elaborate answer is that the number and duration of my visits will be determined through negotiation with you, to ensure that I can collect as much information as possible, without impacting the operation of your school. That said, you can always withdraw your participation at any time. If that happens, I will stop collecting data from your school.

Will our privacy be compromised?
Absolutely not! Your privacy is a great concern for both the University and me personally.

With this in mind, I have taken every reasonable step to protect it, by guaranteeing that my activity will be confidential and the data will be anonymous. This means that I will not share ‘raw’ data from my visits with anyone. The school and individual participants will be referred to within randomly generated pseudonyms. In publications arising from this research, quotations or references to the school or individuals will use the same pseudonym and any information that can identify you (e.g. place of work) will be omitted or changed.

What if we don’t feel comfortable sharing some information?
I have worked for several years in schools such as yours and I am very much aware that some information is just too sensitive. In order to ensure that no information comes out that you are not comfortable sharing, safeguards are in place in all phases of the research.

The data I collect will be treated with sensitivity and in the strictest confidence and all reasonable measures of electronic and physical security will be taken, in accordance with University policy. At the end of the data-gathering process, you will be given the option to review the data you provided, and it will be possible to edit any information that you are not comfortable with. I am confident that these safeguards are more than adequate to alleviate your concerns, and that what is showcased in the research are the strengths of your school.

Who can we contact if we have concerns about what you are doing?
Among many others, my academic supervisors, Dr. Ian Stimson (ian.stimson@manchester.ac.uk) and Dr. Helen Edge (helen.edge@manchester.ac.uk), make certain that my work conforms to the ethical guidelines of the University and can be contacted if you feel that my activity is wrongful. In addition, your personal information is protected by Greek legislation. You can find more information about your rights in the website of the Hellenic Data Protection Authority (www.dpg.gov.gr).
Sample consent form

Demographic Data and Consent Form

Thank you for your interest in my research focusing on the dynamics that impact the way English Language Teaching (ELT) is practiced in Greece.

The interview to which you have been invited will last approximately an hour. You will be asked questions which elicit your views on your experience as an ELT teacher, as well as your perceptions of various challenges and factors that impact our shared professional domain. The interview will be recorded so as to ensure that your views will be reported accurately, but you have the option to provide comments ‘off the record’ if you prefer. Your views will be treated with strict confidentiality and reported anonymously. Under no circumstances will any information gathered during the interview be used for purposes other than those of the research project.

This document is used to elicit some information that will be useful in selecting people to interview, and to arrange the meeting at a time and location that are convenient to you. Please return the completed document [redacted] You will then be contacted in order to finalise arrangements for the interview.

Should you have any additional queries about the research or issues you may wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact me [redacted].

Important:
Before reading on, please answer the following questions:

- I have read and understood the cover letter outlining the purpose of the research project.  
  Yes ☐ No ☐

- I understand that I do not have to participate in the interview, and that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time.  
  Yes ☐ No ☐

- I understand that some of my responses may be anonymously quoted in the research report, and I consent to this use.  
  Yes ☐ No ☐

If you have answered YES to ALL the questions above, please sign at the dotted line below and proceed to the following page.