Culture, Identity and Attitudes of Adult Immigrant Learners of German in the Context of the German Integration Course

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Germanic Languages & Literatures
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Inspired by pioneering studies in the field of adult immigrants and second language acquisition, my dissertation research seeks to bridge the classroom as an inside space and the outside as lived social reality and to draw conclusions on how the interplay of these experiences affects and is affected by aspects of culture, attitudes and identity formation.

Set in the specific context of the German Integration Course, this qualitative study is based on a series of guided conversations with and the written accounts of five adult immigrants enrolled in the Integration Course in Frankfurt, Germany in 2012. I am predominantly interested in socio-psychological factors affecting the learning process, including learners’ perspectives on learning a second language in a compulsory setting in Germany, and the influence as well as the dependence of such perspectives on their identities and as result on their learning behavior. In my work, I don’t draw a straight line between attitudes and language achievements. Much like water refracts light and produces images, I assert that our attitudes form interpretive stances through which we explain
and make sense of our experiences. This process, in turn, affects our identity work and consequently our learning behaviour in and outside the classroom.

As of today, research on the linguistic development in adult immigrant learners enrolled in the German *Integrationskurs* and the sociocultural factors that shape it is scarce. Consequently, the present study will contribute to the small but constantly growing body of research trying to shed light on the Integration course’s potential and capacity to meet its own goals. My work also has the intention to contribute to modern SLA pedagogy by shedding more light on the process-oriented, socio-psychological realm of language acquisition in migration contexts.
Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Michael Hager. Thank you for your patience and ongoing support! I’d also like to thank Helena Jünger for helping me at the finish line. Finally, I’d like to thank all my informants for sharing their stories with me and making this project possible.
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List of Abbreviations

AMTB  Attitude Motivation Test Battery

BAMF  Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees]

GLC  German Language Course

BMI  Federal Ministry of the Interior [Bundesministerium des Inneren]

CEFR  Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

DTZ  Deutschtest für Zuwanderer [German Test for Immigrants]

ELV  Ethno Linguistic Vitality

FRO  Foreigners Registration Office

FSU  Friedrich Schiller University in Jena

GFL  German as a Foreign Language

GSL  German as a Second Language

IK  Integrationskurs

L1  First Language(s)

L2  Second Language(s)

LMU  Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich

NI  Narrative Inquiry
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<td>OK</td>
<td>Orientierungskurs [Orientation Course]</td>
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<td>SCM</td>
<td>Social Context Model</td>
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<td>SEM</td>
<td>Socio-Educational Model</td>
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Chapter 1
Introduction

In this introductory section, I will present a short overview of Germany’s migration history and policies in order to provide a backdrop to the current dissertation. I will then introduce the two studies in the field of adult migrant language acquisition that partly gave rise to this work and have strongly influenced it. Following this, I will outline my research objectives and content design.

1.1 Germany’s Migration History and Policies

In 2015, there were more than 243 million international migrants around the world, that is, people living in a country not of their birth, with almost one third of them residing in Europe (76 million)\(^1\).

Ever since the mid-1950s, Germany has been one of the primary European destinations for migrants. There are different forms of immigration that have occurred in Germany ever since, including the recruiting of guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s, the subsequent and ongoing family reunions, the influx of ethnic German repatriates\(^2\) that reached its peak in the 1980s, immigration from EU-member countries, as well as the continuing admission of Syrian and other refugees and asylum seekers from the regions of the Middle East affected by ongoing wars. According to the latest Report on Immigration by the Federal Ministry, 2.14 million people moved to Germany in 2015 alone, with the number of asylum

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\(^2\) German: Spätaussiedler.
applications reaching historic heights\(^3\). Traditionally, the majority of migrants (approximately \(75\%\)\(^4\)) have come from member states of the European Union, with EU-12\(^5\) and EU-2\(^6\) countries citizens comprising the lion’s share\(^7\). The report further confirms economic factors, for example employment and higher wages and war conflicts as the primary reasons for non-family reunion related migration\(^8\).

Since the beginning of the 1990s, when the immigration of asylum seekers, Aussiedler and family members of former guest workers reached its peak, immigration and integration have become central and controversially discussed topics on Germany’s domestic front.

The management and politics of immigration and the integration of migrants have been addressed as a central topic since 2000. The passage of the Gesetz zur Steuerung und Begrenzung der Zuwanderung und zur Regelung des Aufenthalts und der Integration von Unionsbürgern und Ausländern\(^9\), henceforth referred to in this dissertation as the Zuwanderungsgesetz or Immigration Act, in 2005 was the main result of this new political discourse. It marked the official recognition of Germany as Einwanderungsland\(^10\) and the Act, for the first time, legally addressed the acquisition of the host language as a primary factor aiding the integration process – a claim that has been long supported by substantial


\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) European Union of 12-member states: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom.

\(^6\) Romania and Bulgaria.

\(^7\) This trend was reversed for the first time in 2015, when EU migrants accounted only for 39.6\% of migrants to Germany due to the unprecedentedly high numbers of refugees in that same year.

\(^8\) Ibid., p. 28.

\(^9\) In Engl.: “An Act on the Control and Limitation of Immigration and the Regulation of Residence and Integration of EU Citizens and Foreigners”.

\(^10\) In Engl.: “Country of Immigration”.

2

“Because it fulfills a number of functions, language has a particularly important role to play in the process of individual and societal integration. It constitutes both the medium of everyday communication and a resource, in particular in the context of education and the labor market” (p. i).

The prevailing consensus on Germany’s political scene, that the knowledge of German is an imperative prerequisite for a professional and social integration of migrants, assumed forms and measures through the introduction of the Integration Course\(^{11}\) (IK) by the aforementioned Immigration Act. The law states that, if they wish to obtain a residence permit, new immigrants from non-EU-countries are obliged to take the IK, consisting of 600 hours of comprehensive German language instruction and 30 hours of an Orientation course\(^{12}\), with the latter introducing migrants to Germany’s legal system, history and culture\(^{13}\). The Act remains in force to the present day, making Germany one of the few countries in the world with state-ordained compulsory integration courses for non-EU immigrants\(^{14}\).

\(^{11}\)German: Integrationskurs. From this point on, I will use the abbreviation IK when referring to the Integration Course.

\(^{12}\)German: Orientierungskurs.

\(^{13}\)The Act was the subject of amendments in 2007, 2010 and 2016 in regard to both content and scope, for example the Orientierungskurs consisted of 45 hours at the time my study was conducted whereas it consists of 100 hours since 2016. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

\(^{14}\)Other countries include Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden.
As indicated above, Germany’s migration history must be seen as part of the global state of human mobility. It unfolded against the backdrop of the 20th century’s massive displacements of people that affected not only Europe, but also Canada, the USA and Australia. Moreover, it continues to unfold amid increased international migration affecting most countries of the world.

1.2 SLA and the Migrant Experience

This new global migration reality did not remain unnoticed by researchers and teachers in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) everywhere, who on the one hand recognize that learning the host language “is a primary factor in the ability to re-engage and participate as fully as possible within the political, social, educational, and environmental life of the society” (Burns & Roberts 2010, p.409), and on the other hand are aware of the struggles of migrants from various parts of the world with learning the official language(s) of the host country. The result is a vast body of research addressing the provision of formal second language (L2) instruction for adult immigrants, including perspectives from the US (Ricento 2013, Smoke 1998), Canada (Guo 2013, McDonald et al. 2008, Morgan 1998), Europe (Dormann et al. 1998 & 1999, Burns & Roberts 2010, Esser 2006, Schönwälder, Söhn, & Michalowski 2005), Australia (Burns & De Silva Joyce 2007, Liddicoat 2007) and Asia (Tsui & Tollefson 2007).

The initial urge to aim attention at formal L2 instruction for immigrants followed in the footsteps of established SLA research that has traditionally focused on universal cognitive processes, utilizing quantitative studies of linguistic traits. These include micro- and macro-
processes, learners’ errors, and the stages of interlanguage development. This approach, however, failed to address the natural learning processes, presumably occurring outside of the classroom, in the day-to-day lives of the learners. One of the first to define the distinction between the natural and informal environment of the target language community and the formal environment of the classroom was Spolsky (1989), who elaborated:

“The distinction between the two is usually stated as a set of contrasting conditions. In natural second language learning, the language is being used for communication, but in the formal situation it is used only to teach. In natural language learning, the learner is surrounded by fluent speakers of the target language, but in the formal classroom, only the teacher (if anyone) is fluent. In natural learning, the context is the outside world, open and stimulating; in formal learning, it is the closed four walls of the classroom. In natural language learning, the language used is free and normal; in the formal classroom, it is carefully controlled and simplified. Finally, in the natural learning situation, attention is on the meaning of the communication; in the formal situation, it is on meaningless drills “(p.171).

Although Spolsky’s distinction captures some of the deficiencies of formal language learning, it draws a very romantic picture of the outside world and barely represents immigrants’ experience of reality. The world that migrants face outside of the language classroom is often far from Spolsky’s ideal situation, which rather depicts communication between native speakers. More importantly, his assertion fails to acknowledge the variability of the factors affecting learning and how the formal and informal learning

\footnote{The term interlanguage here refers to the type of linguistic system used by foreign- and second-language learners who are in the process of acquiring a target language, as defined by Selinker (1972).}
experiences are intertwined and impact each other. It is a deficiency that the present study will attempt to address by examining both the formal and informal learning contexts, including how they are intertwined in shaping the learning experience and outcomes. In particular, I will show that practices in the IK do not mirror learners’ informal learning experiences, and thereby create a gap that immigrants need to seek to fill on their own.

It should be noted that one of the underlying reasons for such utopic views on L2 learning and use and for the similarly artificial line draw between the individual and the social spheres could be the availability of data. While studies on formal language learning of adult immigrants are numerous, research on natural language learning is less common. This can be explained with the accessibility of formal language classrooms for research purposes as opposed to the challenging task of monitoring learners’ behavior in the informal world, as L2 acquisition in informal settings is less structured and affected by divergent factors. Nevertheless, there are several research studies on communication with L2 speakers\textsuperscript{16} and natural language acquisition of adult immigrant learners that deliver critical insights into the forces and circumstances affecting the learning behavior\textsuperscript{17} and outcomes and thus are of interest to the present study.

One of the most far-reaching longitudinal studies on the SLA process of adult immigrants was conducted by the European Science Foundation (ESF) in the mid-1980s\textsuperscript{18}. The research was designed as a coordinated comparative study of the natural acquisition of the host

\textsuperscript{16} In this dissertation, I deliberately refrain from using the term \textit{native-speaker} and replace it with \textit{L2 speaker} or \textit{German speaker(s)}, as it is my aim to stand clear of the \textit{native-speaker} versus \textit{non-native-speaker} dichotomy that is problematic in several ways (see Jenkins 2007, Kramsch 2015).

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Learning behaviour} in this dissertation refers to participants’ learning strategies regarding formal learning (i.e., homework completion, reading and writing in German, etc.) and attempts to seize learning opportunities outside of the classroom, such as contacts to L2 speakers.

\textsuperscript{18} A description and result analysis of the study are available in two volumes (Perdue 1993a, 1993b).
language by adult immigrant workers in five countries over the period of five years. The project included five target languages, six mother tongues and ten interlanguages. The primary research objective of the study was to “study the structure and success of the acquisition process in adult learners, and to discover the explanatory factors behind these phenomena” (Perdue 1993a, p. xi). Most of the data analyzed in the various research areas of the project comes from the longitudinal case-studies of 26 immigrant learners of English, German, Dutch, French or Swedish. The learners were recruited shortly after their arrival in the respective country and their linguistic development was monitored by regular, audio-recorded or video-recorded encounters over the span of two and a half years. The larger social and political context in which immigrant language learners interact with speakers of the target L2 emerged as one of the main foci of the study, making it one of the first SLA studies to mark a shift towards post-structuralist understandings of L2 acquisition (Block 2014). It also addressed the fact that “misunderstandings between target language speakers and language learners can occur because of different culture-specific assumptions about the way social interaction should proceed at both a verbal and nonverbal level” (Norton 2013, p.40). Hence, the project considered an important aspect of immigrant L2 learning that is of great interest to the present study as well, namely, how contact with L2 community members affects the L2 acquisition process and learners’ willingness to further look for and seize learning opportunities outside of the classroom, as well as how such contact affects their identity formation. Bremer’s et. al. work was further seminal in that it demonstrated that communication and understanding are dynamic processes, co-constructed by both parties and governed by issues of power, which played out mostly to the disadvantage of the migrant L2 learner. Their study revealed that contact with L2 speakers had a positive
impact on migrants’ L2 acquisition only if both interlocutors were invested in meaning negotiation. However, the researchers observed that in most inter-ethnic encounters, the responsibility for understanding and adhering to communicative standards and conventions was placed on the L2 learner, while the L2 speaker took on a rather passive role. Ultimately, the migrants were expected to strive to understand their fluent interlocutors, rather than the latter adapting to the circumstances and ensuring mutual understanding. This inevitably put the migrant learners in a disadvantaged position, because it is this very engaging in social encounters that can help newcomers discover and learn the rules of appropriate behavior in a new social environment; yet, migrant learners appeared to be assessed by the way they participated, finding themselves in a “Catch-22 situation” (Norton 2013, p.41). While this can be remedied by sustained contact with the L2 community, the study showed that opportunities for learning were frequently restricted to bureaucratic and gate-keeping encounters, in which learners were disadvantaged not only by their limited competence, but also by the power imbalance between them and their interlocutors. Ultimately, the study revealed the “paradoxical situation that these learners have to cope with, namely, that they have to learn in order to communicate, whilst communicating in order to learn – and this in a racist society” (Bremer et. al. 1993, p.154). Regrettably, some 25 years later, these assertions seem to continue to hold true, as similar difficulties were confirmed in most of my informants’ cases\textsuperscript{19}. Achieving mutual understanding is dependent on both parties’ active participation. As I will show in Chapter 6, this would require the immigrant to be willing to admit lack of linguistic knowledge and understanding. Because this is rather difficult to achieve without some form of perceived humiliation or embarrassment, the

\textsuperscript{19}See Chapter 6;
evidence from the participants in my study suggests that often, the L2 learner would choose to avoid contacts with L2 speakers, rather than risk to threaten their identities and the positions they might have already carved out for themselves.

Although the ESF study was extremely insightful in several regards, it did not address identity as an influential factor in migrant L2 learning. It was Bonny Norton’s innovative longitudinal case study of five immigrant women in Canada (Norton 2000, 2013), that drew on the ESF project’s conclusions that migrant learners are not always free to choose their interlocutors, while adding the aspects of investment and identity. Norton’s work reveals that L2 learners’ encounters with L2 speakers are mostly governed by inherent power imbalances and constantly changing identities. Her study confirms the ESF project’s (Perdue 1993) findings that informal language learning is a precarious terrain. While migrants are indeed surrounded by fluent L2 speakers, these speakers seldom “willingly provide input and negotiate meaning in an egalitarian and supportive manner” (Potowski 2001, p.240) with the goal of facilitating interaction and foster L2 acquisition. Norton continues to assert that, in their lived reality, many immigrants are even faced with the hostility of the linguistic environment, as L2 speakers are often “more likely to avoid [learners] than negotiate meaning with them” (Norton 2013, p.113). The five female informants in her study provide different channels to approaching and exploring these aspects and Norton employs the concepts of investment and identity to explain their learning behavior. I adopt and apply her notions of identity and investment in a similar fashion in my work\textsuperscript{20}, in the sense that I interpret fluctuations in learners’ commitment to seize learning opportunities through the lens of their attitudes, identity formations and

\textsuperscript{20} Norton’s concept of investment is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.
willingness to invest. Norton’s use of the term identity is conceived in relation to contemporary post-structuralist theories to refer to how individuals view and understand their interconnectedness to the world, how that interconnectedness is being shaped over time and space, and how the individual conceives of possibilities for the future\textsuperscript{21}. At the core of this are “basic human needs for recognition, affiliation, and safety” (Potowski 2001, p.241), which result in various, often contradictory desires. Identity is therefore “a site of struggle” (Norton 2013, p.127). Norton goes on to argue that individuals’ identities must be viewed in the context of the larger social structure of their lives, because “societies (and classrooms) not only give us strong messages about whom we can be and to what we can aspire; they can actually forbid or curtail our participation in given social networks” (Potowski 2001, p. 241). These insights are particularly relevant to my study. I apply them in my analysis of the intricate relations between social interactions outside of the IK-classroom and dynamics, learning and behavior inside it. Norton’s examples serve exactly to illustrate the profound effects of investment, identity, and power on the L2 learners’ learning behavior and language experiences. Her study reveals that an adult learner’s history, age, gender and position within the family can influence how they understand their relationship to their new society and how they look for, respond and even sometimes resist L2 learning opportunities outside of the classroom. This perspective reflects the zeitgeist of SLA, because instead of treating learners as isolated individuals, it acknowledges the role of their unique past, their relations to local communities, as well as their constantly changing goals, desires and multiple identities.

\textsuperscript{21} The concept of identity in SLA is further discussed in detail in Chapter 3.
An aspect of migrant L2 learning of lesser prominence in Norton’s study, but of great interest to my work, is that of learner attitudes and how they are connected to aspects of identity, such as cultural and ethnic affiliations, and the learning process and outcomes. Attitudes in this study are being understood as an individual’s experiences and application of (cultural) values and beliefs and their expression through words and behavior (Allport 1967). Attitudes have been related to learner motivation and hence can be used to explain or at least provide some insight into L2 learner behavior and learning outcomes (Lambert and Gardner 1972, Gardner 2011, Heinzmann 2013). This is also the area where my study will provide a valuable contribution. There are numerous studies on aspects of L2 learner attitudes, however, most are quantitative, consider attitudes as a stable affective variable and do not take into account individual differences (Barcelos 2006). The existing qualitative studies are predominantly focused on attitudes and beliefs of children and they cannot be simply extended to attitudes in adult migrant contexts (Kalaja et al. 2015). A distinctive feature of the present work is that I do not attempt to draw a straight causational line between attitudes and language acquisition, as in traditional SLA research. Merging aspects of Gardner’s updated Socio-Economical Model (2011) with Norton’s concepts of investment and identity, I assert that just as water refracts light and produces images, our attitudes form interpretive lenses through which we explain and make sense of our experiences. This process, in turn, affects our identity formations and consequently our learning behavior in and outside the classroom.

The ESF project (Perdue 1993) and Norton’s work “Identity and Language Learning” (2000) that I referenced above have been crucial to my research project and have served as

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22 See Chapter 4.
archetypes and inspirational examples for its layout and development in several ways. They both expose the fact that, in contrast to prevailing views in L2 planning circles, opportunities to practice the L2 language often do not occur through informal contact with the majority society and that contact with L2 speakers is sometimes virtually non-existent or highly problematic. My paper is going to suggest similar findings and the two studies will be continuously referenced and further analyzed throughout this work in my attempt to supplement and enrich their results with further insights.

1.3 Research Objectives

My own experiences as a migrant and a German language teacher gave rise to the current project. As someone who has relocated several times on two continents and has faced the struggles of learning not one, but three host languages, I share and relate to the fates of countless migrants around the world striving to take root in a new social environment. I am aware firsthand of the importance of acquiring the host language in order to fuel economic and social integration. At the same time, I have experienced the countless socio-cultural factors in and outside of the language classroom that may influence, shape, enhance or inhibit the learning process. Along with this, I have become aware of attitudes, the constant shift in identity constructs and how they are interconnected with the acquisition of a foreign language and contacts with L2 community members. Yet, seldom have I sat in a L2 class, where teaching practices considered the complex nature of L2 acquisition in migration contexts and indeed mirrored and prepared for the reality awaiting outside. These personal perspectives, further supplemented by my own work as a language instructor and SLA researcher, led to the increased interest in L2 acquisition by immigrants, eventually resulting in this study. My personal and professional experiences have also led me to an
understanding of language acquisition and language retention as the outcome of immigrants’ learning activities and experiences in and outside the classroom, on the one hand, and certain social conditions, on the other. This will be elaborated on in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

In light of these insights, I completely relate to Kim Potowski (2001) when she asserts that traditional quantitative, product-oriented SLA research is similar to measuring growth patterns of plants under conditions of light, water and soil. Her view refers, in particular, to the attempts of numerous SLA researchers to investigate non-linguistic variables, such as attitudes and motivation by utilizing quantitative research methods (i.e., Gardner & Lambert 1974, Clément 1980). Yet, as I am going to elaborate on in detail in Chapter 4, while delivering crucial insights into factors affecting L2 learning and outcomes other than language aptitude, most of SLA research until the 90s continued to make a general distinction between the individual and the social. As a result, research was and continues to be focused on personality variables and on attempts to measure a person’s commitment to learning the L2 as a means to explain outcomes. It seems logical that the more a learner is willing and wants to acquire a second language, the more successful she/he will be doing it. For all that, understanding motivation as something a learner does or does not have in sufficient quantity, translates into views and practices that hold the individual learner accountable for success or failure in L2 acquisition, ignoring the fact that motivation is as well related to a person’s social environment (Norton 2000, 2013). To use Potowski’s metaphor, “similarly, one would be mistaken to blame an oak tree for not being ‘motivated’ enough to thrive inside of a 10-foot cage” (p. 239). This view is reflective of my experiences and Bremer’s et al. (Perdue 1993) findings, which reiterate that L2 learning outcomes
cannot be seen as the sole responsibility of the L2 learner. It was first Norton’s accounts (1995, 1997, 2000 & 2013), that provided a more in-depth insight into the correlations between the individual and the social when learning a L2. She presented the first studies that focused on adult immigrant learners\textsuperscript{23} and at the same time employed a more process-oriented, interpretative-explorative framework. In this way, her work reflected the increasing consideration of the individual learner in SLA research from the 1970s onwards, when some scholars began to question the informative value of large-scale investigations focusing on mainly linguistic issues. As a result, research over the past 17 years has turned increasingly to process-oriented interests and approaches in order to gain deeper insight into the causes of learning outcomes and the nature of L2 learners’ experience (Clemente & Higgins 2008, Duff et. al. 2012, Menard-Warwick 2009, Norton 1995, 1997, 2000, 2013, Nunan & Choi 2010, Thompson & Vasquez 2015, Xing 2016). This post-structuralist approach to investigating language acquisition offers opportunities for the inclusion of more complex, dynamic, and learner-oriented constructs, that my study aims to consider as well. Hence my decision to adopt qualitative methodology for the study of migrant learner experiences in the German IK.

I am predominantly interested in socio-psychological aspects of the learning process, more precisely learners’ attitudes and perspectives on learning German in the specific setting of the IK, and the influence as well as the dependence of such perspectives on their identities,

\textsuperscript{23} What is significant for both natural and formal language learning research streams is that they are mostly preoccupied with child or adolescent language acquisition, the formal language learning branch in particular (Gogolin 2003, McKay & Wong 1996, 2003, Kanno 2003, Talmy 2008, Vedder 2005). Yet, the extensive literature on children’s second language acquisition cannot be simply extended to adults, because in adults “language development and cognitive maturation are no longer indissolubly interwoven” (Extra & van Hout, 1996, p. 89).
and as result, on learning behavior. Numerous studies (e.g. Dörney & Ushioda 2009, Kalaja et al. 2015, Skrzypek et al. 2014) have indicated that learner attitudes towards the L2 language, culture, society and learning context can be linked to learning behavior in and outside the classroom. I plan to examine if such a correlation can be established, particularly in the context of adult migrants L2 acquisition. For this purpose, the present study inquires into what attitudes recent migrants to Germany bring into the IK and if and how their attitudes and identities are affected by the IK-experience and whether and how they change over the course of the IK. Considering that the acquisition of L2 does not begin and end with the IK-class, but is a continuous process for migrants - as opposed to college learners of German in their home country – I am interested in elucidating the relationship between attitudes, identities, the IK experience and learning behavior in and outside of the classroom. This will ultimately allow me to evaluate the IK in view of its claims and goals, where one of the primary objectives of the Orientierungskurs (OK) in particular, is to provoke “eine positive Bewertung des deutschen Staates” in immigrants (BAMF 2007, 2015, 2017). As present, research on the linguistic development of adult immigrant learners enrolled in the German IK and the sociocultural factors that shape it is scarce. Consequently, the present study will contribute to the small, but constantly growing body of research trying to shed light on the IK’s potential and capacity to meet its own goals by delivering a rare qualitative study on the subject.

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24 In Engl.: “a positive evaluation of the German state”.
25 Apart from the independent research, which I discuss in Chapter 2, BAMF conducts its own evaluative longitudinal research called The Integration Panel. It is an ongoing project and result summaries and updates can be found at: http://www.bamf.de/SiteGlobals/Forms/Archiv/EN/Publikationen_Formular.html.
In this project, based mostly on a series of guided conversations with five adult immigrants enrolled in the Integration Course in Frankfurt, Germany, I examine their attitudes towards the learning situation, the host culture and language and discuss how these attitudes interact with the learners’ identity formations as immigrants and learners of German and how they affect their learning behaviors, motivation and investment in learning opportunities in and outside the classroom. My interpretations of learners’ narratives are informed by post-structuralist theories of identities and attitudes. This allows for a more comprehensive approach, one that takes into account the complexities and interrelations of all learning factors at play.

My investigations consequently allow for conclusions about the IK’s overall efficacy and potential to do what it promises to, namely to initiate integration into German society through the acquisition of German (BAMF 2007, 2015, 2017). I assert that the implementation and execution of the IK fail to recognize the lived social reality of its participants, mostly in that it does not allow for the creation of discourse spaces and overlooks participants’ communicative needs. The emphasis on listening, reading and writing and less importance given to speaking, as experienced by my informants further exacerbate this problem, revealing a gap in the IK’s aspirations and its pedagogical reality. The reason for this, I assert, is the IK’s design, and that of the OK specifically, as it is revealing of the IK in its capacity as a political institution. The result is an integration course concept rooted in the notion of one German coherent mainstream society. This is evident in the formulations of the IK’s objectives, as well as in the lack of definitions of several of its pedagogical working concepts, i.e., culture or intercultural learning. The IK’s strict time and content constraints considerably limit the flexibility of instructors and their capacity to
incorporate learners’ experiences into the teaching processes. This creates breeding ground for pedagogical practices which go against modern SLA concepts that see transcultural competence, inclusion and critically-reflective learning as desired objectives of L2 instruction (see Byram & Hu 2013, Kramsch 2013, 2015). The results are the maintaining of an Us-vs.-Them dichotomy and the reinforcement of stereotypes and exclusion, as observed by numerous other research on the IK as well (see Hartkopf 2010, Hentges 2013a, 2013b, Zimmer 2013).

Teaching approaches that treat grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and culture as isolatable features are every-day-reality not only in IK classrooms. Hence, this work has the intention to contribute to progressive SLA pedagogy by shedding more light on the process-oriented, socio-psychological aspects of language acquisition in migration contexts. Ultimately, the study also touches on the role of the teacher in this distinct setting as particularly consequential for learning behavior and outcomes; not so much in the pure pedagogical respect, but with regard to power relations in the classroom resulting from the teacher’s positioning as the sole native speaker, representative of the IK and the host society. Hence, I argue that it is particularly important for teachers in migrant contexts to encourage learners to articulate and reflect critically upon the learning process and their experiences within and outside of the class room. This can enable them to position themselves as mediators rather than immigrants. In this sense, the findings of this study can be extended beyond adult migrant contexts of language acquisition, promoting a more comprehensive and critically reflective teaching and learning of foreign languages.
1.4 Thesis Outline

The present study seeks to bridge the classroom as an inside space and the outside as lived social reality and to draw conclusions concerning how the interplay of these experience affects and is affected by aspects of culture, attitudes and identity formations. Set in the specific context of the compulsory German IK, this qualitative study illuminates the relationship between parts of identity formation, such as ethnic identity, cultural affiliations and belonging and the individual’s dispositions towards the IK, the target language and culture and how those factors interrelate with the learning behavior in the form of investment in formal and informal learning opportunities. In addition, I draw conclusions about the conceptualization and execution of the IK, asserting that some preconditions for the successful completion of its own pedagogical and educational goals are not being met.

The following three chapters (chapters 2 to 4) are devoted to introducing the IK and mapping the theoretical terrain including the concepts of progressive SLA, identity, and learner attitudes. Chapter 2 discusses the goals, structure and practices of the IK, including the OK as defined by the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF). It further highlights relevant aspects of SLA in migrant contexts, with special focus on intercultural learning. In this chapter, I also discuss existing relevant research on the IK and its outcomes.

Chapter 3 outlines the post-structuralist understanding of identities, upon which this work is based, and outlines the notions of symbolic power, positioning and communities of practice. To develop clear connections with the theoretical concepts and to position my
work within relevant research, I review the results of existing research on identities and adult immigrant L2 learners.

Chapter 4 addresses learner attitudes and how they are related to motivation, investment, identity formations and consequently to learning behavior and outcomes. I outline primary research results in the field of attitudes and adult migrant L2 learning and position my own study within that framework.

Chapter 5 rationalizes the methodological approach used in this multiple-case study. I demonstrate the appropriateness of narrative inquiry for the investigation of identity and attitudes and further present the specific tools and methods for data collection I chose to employ.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the comprehensive content analysis of the narratives of the five participants, supplemented by my own in-class observations. Building on them, Chapter 7 discusses the results and reflects on the interrelation between attitudes, identity and learning behavior, as well as draws conclusions about the IK. Limitations of the study and areas for future research are identified in the same chapter and conclude my dissertation.
Chapter 2
The German Integration Course

The main aim of the present work is to weigh on the impact of IK practices on participants’ attitudes and identity work (see Section 1.3). Hence, before I discuss the practices in the IK classroom, an examination of the IK’s design and pedagogical framework is necessary. This will ensure a comprehensive understanding of the learning context.

I begin by delivering a thorough description and critical analysis of the IK’s design and teaching goals as outlined by BAMF (2007a, 2010c). Therefore, this chapter deals with the conceptual framework of the German Integration Course and its main objectives. I profile the structure of the IK and present its curriculum, as well as the methods and guiding principles of instruction, as defined by BAMF. Doing this will allow me to ultimately detect discrepancies between design and practices of the IK. It is not my aim to subject the IK curriculum to a pedagogically evaluative process, but to rather unravel shortcomings that might induce these discrepancies.

The first section in this chapter focuses on the composition of the IK, which consists of a language and a culture course. I strive to provide a clear picture of the learning context and conditions for the participants in my study and to show what the course entails for them. This is followed by presenting the second part of the IK, the Orientierungskurs (OK), which is aimed at familiarizing immigrants with Germany’s culture, history and political system. In light of this, I briefly discuss the role that culture plays in SLA and conclude by
discussing existing evaluative research on the IK, which allows me to position my work and highlight my contribution.

2.1 Design of the IK

In what follows, I introduce in detail the structure of the IK and the pedagogical goals of both the Language and the Orientation Courses. It is necessary for the current study to closely examine the curriculum as well as the pedagogical foundation of the IK. It will allow me to later juxtapose the IK in theory to the IK in practice and to establish a correlation between IK practices and my participants’ attitudes and learning behavior.

The IK was introduced in 2005 as part of the new Immigration Act in the Federal Republic of Germany. The fundamental premise for its implementation was the recognition of Germany as Einwanderungsland. This recognition was officially delivered by Germany’s then Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder in his Government Declaration on November 10th, 1998. The public acknowledgment of Germany as an immigrant country came some 50 years after the first bilateral guest worker recruitment agreement with Italy was signed in November 1955 and was followed by similar ones with Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Portugal and many other countries. According to the OECD report (2005), in 2005, 13% of Germany’s population was born abroad. The new political actions marked the beginning of the country’s efforts to address the prevalent immigration debate and existing immigration issues. The key strategy for tackling immigrant issues was the launch of the Integration Course.

26 In Engl.: Immigration Country.
The IK was announced as a compulsory program for non-EU newcomers wishing to obtain permanent residence permit in Germany. The course is largely governmentally subsidized as participants are required to partake with 1 Euro per Teaching Unit\(^{27}\) (TU). As specified in the Immigration Act, the IK serves:


As per the law, the IK consists of a 600-hour German Language Course and a 45-hour Orientation Course. The Language Course leads to level B1 via levels A1 and A2 in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR)\(^{29}\).

In 2005, the coordination of the Integration and Orientation Courses was assigned to BAMF, which oversees the licensing of educational providers, as well as the regulation of

\(^{27}\) One TU equals 45 minutes. The cost for the German language course for each participant would be 600,- Euros, as the course consists of 600 TUs.

\(^{28}\) In Engl.: “… acquisition of sufficient knowledge of the German language… the mediation of everyday knowledge, as well as of knowledge of the legislation, culture and history in Germany, in particular also of the values of the democratic state of the German Federal Republic and of the principles of the constitutionality, equality, tolerance and religious freedom”.

\(^{29}\) A detailed explanation of the various proficiency levels can be found on the Council of Europe’s website: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Cadre1_en.asp).
the textbooks and of the required qualifications for IK instructors. Along with the IK, BAMF offers alphabetization courses, IK for parents and women, IK for long-time German residents without knowledge of German (Förderkurse), and IK for youth.

Both the Language Course and the OK conclude with an exam. Participants who do not reach the B1 level after the first test receive a certificate for level A1 that they need to present at their local Foreigner Registration Office (FRO). Immigrants are then required to re-write the exam after completing 300 additional UEs. These additional UEs are no longer subsidized by the state and participants carry the costs themselves. The IK is considered successfully completed after passing both the OK and the B1 proficiency level tests. A failure to obtain the B1 certificate the first time results in an extension of the residence permit for a maximum of one year. Repeated failure to reach the B1 level may result in repeal or delay in the issuing of permanent residence documents and may affect a future application for naturalization\(^\text{30}\) (Aufenthaltsgesetz 2008, § 8 Abs. 3, p. 1). The FROs have the authority to decide the consequences of a failed IK, as they are charged with the issuing of residence permits. These clarifications of the IK’s administrative aspects are necessary in order to highlight how important the successful completion of the program is for newly arrived immigrants seeking to secure residency in Germany. It can further explain why so many of them perceive their instructors as gatekeepers and are cautious to speak up in class (see Sections 6.2, 6.3, 6.5).

Figure 2.1 Provides an overview of the standard IK’s set up.

\(^{30}\) Naturalization here refers to the process of granting a foreigner German citizenship.
Figure 2.1: Standard IK Set-up.
The following section delivers an overview of the guiding principles and methods of instruction prescribed for the German Language Class (GLC) as part of the IK.

2.1.1 The German Language Class (Deutschkurs)

At the time of the current study\textsuperscript{31}, participants were required to present proof of achieved level A1 proficiency in their respective country of origin in order to receive their residence permit and be admitted to the IK.

The language portion of the program consisted of the Basic GLC with 300 Teaching Units (TUs) and the Intermediate GLC with another 300 TUs. Each course consisted of three course modules of 100 TUs each. The Basic GLC had two main areas and covered topics such as dealing with official offices and agencies, occupations, continuing education, services, etc. at the A1 and A2 levels. The Intermediate GLC covered topics such as modern information technologies, society, state, cultures, etc. at the B1 level. The topics to be covered are laid down in the framework curriculum for the Integration Course as developed by the Goethe Institute with the academic support of Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich (LMU) and Friedrich Schiller University in Jena (FSU) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI). This framework is not a curriculum per se, but rather lists the maximum possible learning objectives and determines the scope of goals and content of the IK. It is meant to serve as an orientation guide for educational institutions and course planners when developing teaching materials (i.e. textbooks) and tests, i.e. the Deutsch-

\textsuperscript{31} The Integrationskurs has been subject to changes several times after 2005. The number of TUs in the Orientierungskurs was increased to 45 in 2009, 60 in 2012 and then to 100 in 2016. The 2009 amendment further introduced a standard test and study catalogue (OK tests were developed and administered by the individual educational centers before that). The curriculum for the GLC was changed 2007 in that the subjects were explained in more depth. Participants, who fail the GLC test are entitled to 300 additional TUs since 2012. Since 2017, asylum seekers have the right to apply for the IK as well (they were excluded from participation in the years before).
Test für Zuwanderer\textsuperscript{32}. The framework curriculum is part of the quality assurance and development measures backed by the BMI. It does not prescribe the methodological-didactic approaches that are to be used in IK classrooms. These are outlined in a separate document, the Konzeption für die Zusatzqualifizierung von Lehrkräften im Bereich Deutsch als Zweitsprache\textsuperscript{33} (BAMF 2007b). This concept too was developed by the Goethe Institute on behalf of the BMI and lists an extensive catalog of recommended pedagogical approaches and desired teaching objectives in the IK. The main goal of the IK is defined as follows:

„Ziel der Integrationskurse, als Kern staatlicher Integrationsmaßnahmen und -bemühungen, ist die Förderung der Integration von Migrantinnen und Migranten im Sinne gesellschaftlicher Teilhabe und Chancengleichheit“\textsuperscript{34} (BAMF 2008, p. 4).

The document further identifies four main areas, in which the IK Language Course should support its participants. These are summarized in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Areas of Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improvement of the preconditions for participation in social life in Germany</td>
<td>• acquisition of language skills to aid in everyday life;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• acquisition of language skills to aid encounters with diverse authorities (i.e., school &amp; daycare, doctors, financial services, landlords);</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{32} In Engl.: “German Test for Immigrants”.
\textsuperscript{33} In Engl.: “Concept for Additional Qualification of Instructors in the Field of German as a Second Language”.
\textsuperscript{34} In Engl.: “The goal of the integration courses as the core of state-governed integration measure and efforts is the facilitation of integration of migrants for the purpose of societal participation and equality of opportunities.”.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Improvement of the preconditions for employment in Germany</th>
<th>3. Improvement of the preconditions for socializing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• acquisition of language skills to aid communication with L2 speakers (i.e., neighbors, colleagues, acquaintances)</td>
<td>• acquisition of language skills to aid communication at social gatherings (i.e., meetings, assemblies, clubs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• acquisition of communicative skills to aid qualification measures;</td>
<td>• acquisition of language skills to aid in receiving information regarding various events (i.e., political, societal, commercial)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• acquisition of communicative skills to aid labor situation;</td>
<td>• acquisition of language skills to aid communication within the community;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Improvement of the preconditions for participation in Germany’s cultural life</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• acquisition of language skills to aid communication with L2 speakers (i.e., neighbors, colleagues, acquaintances)</td>
<td>• acquisition of language skills to aid in informing oneself about cultural events (i.e., information sessions, city fests)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The concept recognizes six additional basic learning objectives, which must be covered by the IK to ensure the implementation of the core goals stated above. These include:

- development of participants’ capabilities to actively contribute to and participate in German society through the use of personal skills, interests and strengths;
- improvement of participants’ potential for self-help by stimulating independence and autonomy;
• stimulation of self-reflection and identity searching;
• fostering intercultural learning skills;
• fostering reflective learning;
• fostering abilities for lifelong learning;

In a separate section, the document establishes the requirements concerning the GLC as part of the IK. I have condensed these in the overview below.

Table 2.2 Requirements concerning the German Language Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements concerning the German Language Class</th>
<th>Definition and Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intercultural Learning</strong></td>
<td>• incorporation of the individual learner’s lived-in world, experiences and encounters;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• exploration and expansion of one’s own linguistic norms and values against the backdrop of cultural diversity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• fostering cultural sensitivity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• deconstruction of intercultural misconceptions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• consideration and incorporation of learner’s L1;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner-Oriented Instruction</strong></td>
<td>• language acquisition as an individual process;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• inclusion and application of learner’s identity, L1, previous experiences, knowledge and skills in the learning process through the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Differentiation** | • latent differentiation through individual aids;  
  • internal differentiation (i.e., building interest-based groups, station learning, projects, etc.);  
  • fostering teamwork and cooperation skills; |
| **Learner-Directed Learning** | • facilitation and fostering of autonomous learning through the choice of teaching materials;  
  • consideration of learners’ interests and dispositions when training their abilities to use aids (dictionaries, reference books, media, etc.); |
| **Life-Oriented Learning** | • language as subject of instruction directed at the lived realities of the participants;  
  • choice of topics, contents and linguistic input determined by their immediate relevance to participants’ everyday lives;  
  • the needs and interests of learners as primary criterion for the choice of texts (as opposed to material’s linguistic and grammatical qualities); |
| Holistic Learning | • incorporation of linguistic and non-linguistic elements;  
|                  | • incorporation of all senses and abilities into action-oriented and differentiated learning processes;  
|                  | • utilization of learners’ empirical knowledge and objective interests;  
|                  | • avoidance of cognitive-driven teaching practices;  
| Action-Oriented Learning | • action-oriented teaching as a guiding principle for the choice of every tasks;  
|                          | • facilitation of choice-oriented learning;  
|                          | • avoidance of mechanical memorization and grammar drills;  
|                          | • promotion of project work;  
| Discovery Learning | • utilization of learners’ previous attempts to systematize the L2;  
|                   | • selection of linguistic input that allows learners to discover rules autonomously;  
| Errors as Learning Triggers | • viewing errors as inherent to language development;  
|                          | • functional analysis of errors as opposed to permanent correction;  
|                          | • ensuring anxiety-free learning environment;  

Reflective Learning

- facilitation and promotion of critical reflection about the self, one’s own culture, language, speech production, behavior, goals and linguistic progress;

Methodological, Social and Media Variety

- sustained learner’s focus through diversified instruction techniques;
- intensive use of new and conventional media;
- adaptation of textbook materials to reflect learners’ lived realities;
- utilization of playful learning strategies stimulating all senses (i.e., partner- and group-games);
- exploration of the broader learning environment (i.e., through videos, drama, sketch- and roleplays, etc.)

Open Teaching Structure

- ensuring open teaching structure of all lessons;
- inclusion of learners’ initiatives (i.e., project works) with the supportive role of instructors;

It is evident from this overview that the theoretical framework of the IK German Language Course is truly comprehensive and grounded in the most innovative and state-of-the-art second language pedagogy. Major concepts such as intercultural competence, identity, critically-reflective learning, internal differentiation, inductive approaches, discovery learning, methodological diversity and error incorporation have all found their deserved place in these guidelines for principles and methods of instruction in the IK, so that the
documents are reflective of progressive L2 teaching and learning (compare Byram & Hu 2013, Kramsch 2015). Yet, the absence of a clear definition of culture is noticeable and problematic, as it could affect the understanding of intercultural learning and the teaching methods used to promote it. As it will become evident from my informants’ accounts (see Chapter 6), the methodological approaches implemented in the IK classroom, while helpful for the understanding of the grammar and syntax, appear to fail to foster intercultural competences. This could be attributed to the here outlined design of the IK as a compulsory, governmentally subsidized program, with a fixed number of TUs and a final exam with concrete consequences. This provides circumstances conducive for both instructors and participants to steer their efforts towards test preparation and the realization of the linguistic objectives. The fact that passing the test is the ultimate benchmark for measuring the success of the IK and its participants allows for extra-linguistic objectives, such as intercultural competence to fall behind on the priority list. I elaborate in more detail on the discrepancy between theory and practices of the IK and what precipitates it in Chapter 7. In the following, I give a detailed outline of the second segment of the IK, the Orientation Course, which highlights the political program behind the IK.

2.1.2. The Orientation Course

The second segment of the IK is the Orientation Course consisting of 45 TUs. Its main purpose is to signal that integration “über den bloßen Spracherwerb hinausgeht” 35 (Integrationsverordnung, §3 Abs. 1 Nr.2). The curriculum for a nationwide OK was announced by BAMF in 2004 and restructured in 2007 after the independent evaluation of

35 In Engl.: ”goes beyond mere language acquisition”.

32
Rambøll Management discovered some deficiencies (see BMI 2006, p. 4). The revised curriculum identifies six main objectives (übergeordnete Zielsetzungen) of the OK as follows:

- to generate understanding of the German political system;
- to develop a positive evaluation of the German state;
- to convey knowledge of the residents’ and citizens’ rights and responsibilities;
- to develop methodological competence;
- to develop the competence of agency;
- to develop intercultural competence;

The second major objective appears to be problematic, namely, the development of a positive evaluation of the German state (eine positive Bewertung des deutschen Staates entwickeln, BAMF 2007, p. 7). This goal has a prescriptive character in that it overrides the rest of the objectives, or as Hentges (2013a) points out:

„Die vom Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge vorgelegten sechs Zielvorgaben benennen zwar den zu behandelnden Gegenstand [...] und schreiben die Vermittlung von Kompetenzen [...] als Zielvorgabe fest. Diese zu erwerbenden Fähigkeiten werden allerdings sofort wieder stark eingegrenzt, da das Konzept auch schon das Ziel der zu lehrenden und lernenden Staatsbürgerkunde fixiert: Die positive Bewertung des deutschen Staates durch die KursteilnehmerInnen.“36 (p. 347).

36 In Engl.:” The six objectives presented by the Federal Agency for Migration and Refugees indeed name the subject-matter to be covered and establish the conveyance of competences as a goal. However, the skills that are to be acquired are immediately limited, since the concept already fixates the goal of which civics are to be taught and learned: the positive evaluation of the German state by the course participants.”.
This is a reminder that the OK and the IK, in general, are legislative conceptions. Easing immigrants’ ways into German society is one of the program’s purposes, the generating of immigrant legislation with inherent political messages is the other. The purpose of conveying political messages through integration programs has been described in research as two-fold. On the one hand, immigrants are being advised that there are certain requirements to be met and certain culture-specific knowledge to be acquired. At the same time, the receiving society is being assured that the government is concerned with the welfare of the nation and is attending to immigration issues (see Hartkopf 2010). The significance of such political measures is not to be underestimated, since research has shown that the integration of immigrants in Germany is considered problematic by large numbers of the host population (see Michalowski 2007, Sponholz 2013, Pfahl-Traughber 2013); the Sarrazin-Debate in Germany, following the publication of his controversial book “Deutschland schafft sich ab”\(^3\)\(^7\) in 2010 certainly underscores this assertion (see also Hentges et al. 2010).

The inherent legislative character of the OK becomes further evident in the ambitious scope of topics that are to be covered in only 45 TUs. Unlike the GLC, which does not have a prescribed strict program of study to be followed, BAMF has issued a nationwide curriculum for the OK (see BAMF 2007a). The content of the OK is organized around three major areas and each of them is given a different weight.

Table 2.3 provides an overview of the topics and the allotted TUs per topic.

\(^3\) In Engl.: “Germany abolishes itself”.

34
### Table 2.3 Comprehensive Curriculum of the OK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module 1</th>
<th>Policies of the Democratic State</th>
<th>19 TUs</th>
</tr>
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<td>Germany after 1945: Zero Hour, allied Occupation, formation of the BRD and the DDR;</td>
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This outline presents evidence that the OK is a demanding project – for example, participants have to grasp the complete modern German history from the 1940’s on in its political and linguistic complexity in a little more than four sessions of two hours each. This may put strain not only on the learners, but on the teachers as well (see Hartkopf 2010).
Added to this is the pressure of the final exam - the OK concludes with a standard national test, which is based on a catalogue of 250 multiple-choice questions. In order to pass, participants need to answer 13 out of the 25 randomly selected questions found on a test.

The design of the OK, in general, and the OK-test, specifically, has been criticized for two reasons. For one, the content of the OK operates with terminology and vocabulary that present a linguistic challenge for many participants. Added the multiple-choice design and gatekeeping character of the final exam, learners resort to studying the answers and not the content (see Hentges 2013a, Hartkopf 2010). This concern will be confirmed by the present study as well. Another difficulty is presented by the strict prescriptive OK curriculum that does not allow instructors any leeway for considering learners’ needs and experiences (Schillo 2007). This calls into question the attainability of intercultural competences as laid down in the OK’s overriding objectives. There is one more incongruity inherent to the OK – it is the segment of the IK focused on transmitting and conveying cultural knowledge. Its very segregation from the language course is problematic in itself, as it goes against modern concepts of culture and language. In the following, I briefly elaborate on the role of culture in SLA and on the concept of interculturalism, as they are central to both the IK’s objectives and practices.

### 2.2 Culture and Interculturalism

It is now widely acknowledged in SLA that language and culture are inextricably linked with each other (Byram 2008, Kramsch 2004, 2009b, 2013, 2015, Schecter 2015). Despite the reigning consensus in academic fields though, the actual teaching of culture in L2 classes remains problematic (Kramsch 2015). The reasons for this are partly due to the
initial segregation between language and culture (see Kramsch 2015). In its very beginning, the teaching of L2s focused predominantly on the teaching of foreign linguistic forms and not on foreign cultures. This allowed for rather straightforward learning goals and assessment criteria. The technological advancement in language laboratories after 1950 further sealed the notion of language as a tangible skill and not as cultural understanding. It was not before the emergence of discourse analysis in the 1970’s that culture was found in the meaning that interlocutors attached to words and not just to artifacts. The seminal work of Claire Kramsch (1993a, 1996, 1998) ultimately linked applied linguistics and culture, introducing new definitions of it. Culture is no longer seen as “the objective way of life of a certain speech community but the subjective way in which the members of that community give meaning to events” (Kramsch 2015, p.408). The twenty-first-century view of culture asserts that it is meaning that constitutes the culture, not the artefacts themselves and that while that meaning may often be subject of standardization by educational systems, media and businesses, it is largely idiosyncratic and “emerging from dialogic interaction among people in conversation” (ibid.). Hence, culture is increasingly identified in the linguistic practices of interlocutors, rather than within strict national borders and stands for the constraints imposed on interlocutors by their own traditions, conventions, style and ideology. In modernist research, the new annotation of culture further shifted to its understanding from heterogeneous and constant to something often contested and subject to change.

Once theory translated into practice and the teaching objectives of L2 instruction began to include culture and communicative competence, the shortcomings of hitherto prevalent native-speaker orientations became increasingly prominent (Byram & Zarate 1997, Jenkins
This led to the emergence of concepts that acknowledged learners’ communicative needs in intercultural and transcultural encounters, as well as the hybridity of communication – such are the concepts of the intercultural speaker (Byram & Zarate 1997, Risager 2007) and intercultural (communicative) competence (Byram 2012) that have been developed in the European context. Since then, intercultural communication has become a large academic field. In applied linguistics, the term *intercultural competence* is one of its derivatives and counts as one of the desired outcomes of L2 acquisition. Defined by Byram and Zarate (1997) as: “the particular kind of competence required in passing from the values of the native culture to the culture being learned, and vice versa” (Byram & Zarate 1997, p. 240), it has since been elaborated on as *intercultural communicative competence* by Byram (1997, 2003, 2012), Byram and Fleming (1998) and Guilherme (2000). Along with *intercultural competence* the idea of the *intercultural speaker* emerged as an antidote to the notion of the idealized native speaker, who Kramsch (1998) claimed “might still exist in people’s imaginations, but has never corresponded to reality” (p. 27). Byram (2008) suggested intercultural speaker qualities become the goal of L2 instruction:

“One of the outcomes of teaching languages (and cultures) should be the ability to see how different cultures relate to each other – in terms of similarities and differences – and to act as mediator between them, or more precisely between people socialized into them” (p. 68).

The intercultural speaker is thus an L2 learner who does not need to abolish his or her social, linguistic, and cultural baggage (House 2007) in an effort to emulate a native speaker ideal. In today’s multicultural world, intercultural speakers can interact with speakers of
other languages on equal terms, while maintaining awareness of their own and their interlocutor’s individuality (Byram et al. 2002, Byram 2012). As House (2007) further defines the notion, “the intercultural speaker is the person who has managed to develop his or her own third way, in between the other cultures he or she is familiar with” and “who knows and can perform in both his and her native culture and in another one acquired at some later date” (p.19). Intercultural speakers can hence take on the role of a mediator, “a third party with a third perspective” (Byram 2012) in intercultural encounters, which further advances their understanding of various cultures and languages. In the process of analyzing their own and others’ behavior, the intercultural speaker can uncover underlying attitudes and beliefs and hence act as a mediator. These qualities of the intercultural speaker make it a desirable model in L2 teaching and learning.

As demonstrated in the above teaching objective overviews, intercultural competence has been adopted as a core learning goal for the IK. However, embracing interculturalism as a teaching objective cannot be deemed constructive and beneficial without any reservation. As Hu (1999) emphasizes in her article, intercultural concepts and their implementations in L2 classrooms can have detrimental effects when they are based on a structuralist understanding of culture as descent-related. She contends that the prevailing understanding of culture in L2 teaching practices treats it as equivalent to a national affiliation, hence as something feasible that can be explained and negotiated rationally. Hu continues to explicitly caution against the potential negative effects of intercultural teaching based on the culture-language-nation equation, as it reinforces the Us-vs.-Them dichotomy and can encourage stereotyping, create a perception of foreignness and lead to the ethnicizing of learners (Hu 1999, p.295). Similar concerns have been expressed by Kramsch (1998b) who
contends that interculturalism teaching practices can easily “fall prey to reductionism, essentialism and stereotyping” (p. 30). Barro, Jordan and Roberts (1998) go one step further asserting that superficial or “thin descriptions” (p.78) of culture present in textbooks are the lesser issue. What they view as more problematic is that “in the discourses of everyday life, ‘culture’ is often invoked to explain difference and justify exclusion” (p. 78). It further can become an excuse for racism. They assert that this is exemplified in the treatment of ethnic and linguistic minorities in Europe, in general, and Germany, in particular, where *Gastarbeiter* are treated as ‘guests’ who are excluded by their cultural differences from being part of the nation conceptualized as family or as home” (p.78). Although the label *Gastarbeiter* is no longer appropriate and has been replaced with *Person mit Migrationshintergrund*, ethnic and cultural segregation persists in Germany and dominates the public discourse on immigrants and integration (Hofer 2016). It is therefore of interest where and how the IK and its teaching practices fit into this rhetoric. I assert that there are several indicators that the IK design fosters and promotes conceptualizations and applications of culture that are rooted in approaches that see it as a separate entity.

The first one is the segregation of the language course from the OK, which falls in the tradition of separating German *Landeskunde* from German language instruction (see Kramsch 1996). As Kramsch points out:

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38 In Engl.: “guest workers”.
39 In Engl.: “person with migration background”. While the term is a move in the right direction compared to the derogatory *Gastarbeiter*, it nevertheless is problematic as it is not inclusive and consolidates the notion of a homogeneous German core at the centre of German society (see Mecheril).
40 In Engl.: “regional and cultural studies”.
“this classification gives the impression that language is the mere conduit for transmission of a literary or cultural knowledge that exists out there independent of the discourse in which it is cast. [T]he academic separation in the teaching of culture, literature and language […] has caused language teaching to lose sight of the crucial factor I mentioned earlier: namely, the mediating function of language in the social construction of culture. The separation has kept language teaching within strict structural or functional bounds, with culture often considered to be a fifth skill, after speaking, listening, reading and writing” (p.5).

The second indicator is the capped number of TUs for both the language course and the OK, with the OK allowing an extremely short time span for the acquisition of complex historical events and socio-political structures and phenomena. This automatically restricts opportunities to incorporate and take into consideration participants’ experiences and perspectives, as recommended by the curriculum. The main teaching and learning goal becomes the coverage of all topics and material that will be subject to testing, as it was the case in the IK class that I observed and in those under scrutiny in other research (see Hartkopf 2010, Hentges 2013a, 2013b, Zimmer 2013).

This leads to the third indicator, the tests concluding the IK. The multiple-choice model, along with the emphasis placed on teacher accountability and learners’ performance – participants must pass a test – can deter both instructors and learners from embracing intercultural teaching concepts that are based on postmodernist conceptualizations of culture and do not essentialize it (Moore 2006).
The fourth indicator is the overarching goal laid down in the OK objectives - the evoking of positive evaluation and sentiments towards the German state. Joppke (2007) has denoted integration requirements of this kind as a form of “repressive liberalism” - repressive because the requirements and tests are obligatory and can restrict access to permanent residence or citizenship, and liberalism because the goals pursued are those of liberal values. These repressive elements inherent to the IK in fact hamper its goal of social integration, because as Hentges (2013b) points out „emanzipatorische Bildungsprozesse setzen Freiwilligkeit voraus“ (p. 161).

What this all amounts to is that, although the IK is based on solid advanced SLA theory, its set-up and legislative character create a framework that has the potential to impede the implementation of this theory. In an institutionalized setting such as that of the IK, this can lead to the teaching of “language and culture, as opposed to language as culture” (Byram & Kramsch 2008, p.21), resulting in the reinforcement of ethnic and cultural antipodes. As I will show in my study, IK practices can reinforce attitudes reflective of a self-other dualism, which further impact identity formations and learning behavior. My findings are confirmed by existing research on the IK, which I review below, in an attempt to position my work and contribution within the field.

2.3 Research on the IK

There are only a few existing studies examining the IK. Three contributions come from the field of sociology and one from the field of language education. Parallel to this, BAMF runs its own stream of subsidized research. This includes among others the Integration Panel

41 In Engl.: “emancipatory formative processes presume voluntariness”;
mentioned in Chapter 1, which monitors employment and education rates of immigrants in Germany based on statistical data gathering, which I am not going to review here.

Two of the studies focusing exclusively on the IK were conducted in 2013 by Gudrun Hentges. The first one is a qualitative investigation of the OK in respect to participants’ knowledge and understanding of the OK’s contents as outlined in the curriculum presented above. Hentges and her research team conducted two interviews with ten OK participants, one before and one following the program. Her investigations established a clear discrepancy between participants’ fluency level and the linguistic demands of the OK content. Hentges’ study showed that the fragmentary memorization of facts was guided mostly by participants’ aspirations to pass the multiple-choice test. She concluded that the IK was a positive experience in that it helped immigrants break the social isolation they experienced upon arrival in Germany. The program provided learners with opportunities to meet other immigrants and developed language skills sufficient for the newcomers to be able to initiate “Kontakte zu Nachbarn”\(^{42}\) (p. 363). However, based on her results, Hentges contests the OK’s potential to foster a critical examination of human rights, tolerance, pluralism, religious and cultural diversity, resulting in “Identifikation mit der Aufnahmegesellschaft”\(^{43}\) (p. 363). She attributes this to the OK’s controversially profiled framework fusing multiple-choice testing methods with the overarching objective of evoking positive evaluations of the German state in participants.

Another study with the OK as a focal point was conducted by Dorothea Hartkopf in 2010. Hartkopf discussed the OK as part of GSL and the challenges a German Landeskunde

\(^{42}\) In Engl.: “contacts with neighbors”.

\(^{43}\) In Engl.: “identification with the receiving society”.

43
course poses for language instructors. This qualitative study sought to answer the question whether OK instructors were pedagogically equipped to teach the OK course. Her discourse analysis of several recorded OK sessions and subsequent interviews with participants led her to conclude that instructors often felt insecure concerning the ways in which they were supposed to convey information and topics, often resorting to fact teaching with the singular goal of learners successfully passing the final test.

The problems that the methods of testing in the IK pose for participants are further discussed by Hentges (2013b) in her second publication concerning this program. In this latter study, she focuses on the IK as existing between the conflicting priorities of voluntariness and repression, help and penalty, fördern und fordern. Hentges positions integration measures in Germany within the European context and reviews the integration debate in Germany. She ultimately links the calls for stricter penalties for Integrationsverweigerer made by politicians and public officials with the IK’s design as a compulsory program, where failing the exams can have several repercussions. This, she claims, is a Catch-22 situation, because the emancipatory educational goals of the IK can only be met on conditions of voluntariness, which are currently not a given.

Deficiencies in the IK structure are the focus of Veronika Zimmer’s (2013) large-scale investigation of IK practices and learner experiences in the refugee and immigrant transit camp Friedland, the only facility for initial reception of ethnic German re-settlers from the former Soviet republics. Zimmer investigated the practices of IKs offered in the camp within the broader framework of adult education. She utilized qualitative research methods

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44 In Engl.: “foster and demand”.
45 In Engl.: “integration refuseniks”.

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in that she conducted problem-centered interviews with a total of 23 participants in two IKs. The interviews were conducted at the beginning, middle and end of the IKs. Based on her data analysis, Zimmer ascertained that learner-centered didactics did not find any actual entry into the teaching practices as instruction adhered strictly to the textbooks. This stripped instruction from any inclusion-fostering properties. The program was further sharply criticized by learners for its lack of language practice, as they – similarly to my informants - viewed communicative competences as their main learning objective. A perceived feeling of social isolation due to the remote location of the camp was further noted as an L2-acquisition hampering factor.

Overall, all four studies conclude that the IK and OK are important first steps in the process of assisting and guiding immigrants into their new lives in their new country; however, they also highlight the same obstacles found in the implementation of the teaching goals and curricula outlined above. What sets my research apart is the focus on learning behavior and how it is affected by the IK’s teaching practices. While all four studies stay strictly within the constraints of the IK, I attempt to relate classroom experiences to outside learning behavior through the prism of attitudes and identity formation.

2.4 Conclusions

The thorough overview of the pedagogical and conceptual framework of the IK and existing research on it allowed for the detection of several deficiencies in the IK’s design. One shortcoming of the IK that is of greatest relevance to my research objectives is the gap between the program’s layout and curriculum. While the GLC boasts a curricular framework grounded in progressive SLA research, capped number of TUs and testing
methods can act as hurdles for the implementation of that very same framework. In addition, the segregation of the OK from the IK along with the latter’s rigorous curriculum, tight time limit and multiple-choice testing signal an understanding of language and culture as separate entities. This contradicts not only modern SLA theory, but also aspects of both the GLC and OK learning objectives related to intercultural competences. While the reasons for these discrepancies might be found in the legislative functions of the IK as a governmental institution, what they mean for IK practices is that culture is understood as the teaching of facts that are realized either correctly or incorrectly. Although it is no doubt necessary and beneficial to acquaint immigrant learners with German laws, history and culture, the way that the IK attempts to accomplish this does not leave much space for interpretation and the incorporation of learners’ perspectives and experiences. The consequential essentialization of cultures can have an impact on the formation of identities and attitudes towards one’s own and the host communities. In Chapter 6, I will demonstrate how these can in turn affect learning behavior.

The next chapter will begin to map the theoretical terrain of my investigation. I explore the notions of identity, power, positioning and communities of practice as defined by post-structuralist research.
Chapter 3

Identity and Second Language Acquisition

In this chapter, I continue to map the theoretical terrain of the present study by introducing the concept of identity and how it is interrelated to L2 acquisition processes. After contextualizing research in this area, I elaborate on post-structuralist conceptualizations of identity, which constitute the base of this work and further draw on Bourdieu’s notions of ‘legitimate speaker’ (1977) and ‘symbolic power’ (1991). I take the position that post-structuralist conceptions of identity and Bourdieu’s notions are theoretically useful for the interpretation of the findings from my study. In addition, I refer to and discuss the notions of ‘communities of practice’, ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ (Lave & Wenger 1991), and positioning theory (Harré 2012), as they allow for the establishing and examining of L2 learning as a social practice. Consequently, I discuss existing research in the field of migrant SLA and identity in an effort to position my work.

3.1 Structuralist Theories of Identity

There are several models of identity that exist in SLA (for a full review see Evans 2013), however, a major distinction can be drawn between models that see identity as a stable unitary self-concept or as evolving multiple self-concepts and subjectivities in a constant state of flux. This binarism is mirrored in the understandings of language, which too can be grouped in two different paradigms – language as an objective phenomenon that although related to the self, can be examined independently and language as intertwined and co-constructed by the self. Vygotsky (1962) summarized the differences between the two paradigms as follows:
A look at the results of former investigations of thought and language will show that all theories offered from antiquity to our time range between identification, or, fusion of thought and speech on the one hand, and their equally absolute, almost metaphysical disjunction and segregation on the other” (p. 2).

The first paradigm has been traditionally described as structuralism and is reflective of Chomsky’s (1975) legacy, where language is seen within an innate mental structure. The second paradigm views identity as inextricable from language and experiences and contends that “language is not passively reflecting some pre-existing conceptual structure; on the contrary, it is actively engaged in bringing structures into being, such language does not simply correspond to, reflect or describe human experience; rather, it interprets, or as we prefer to say ‘construes’ it” (Klippert 2003, p.166). This understanding of language is the result of the social turn (Block 2003) in SLA and has been defined as post-structuralist.

Although SLA research explicitly focused on the self began emerging from the 1980’s on, identity has been considered in SLA research since the 1960s onwards, although as Block (2014) points out, it was rather “lurking in the wings without ever coming out as a full-blown object of interest” (p. 72). Block continues to cite several studies that can be considered precursors of modern research on identity in SLA. Among these are Lambert’s (1972) research about bilingualism in Canadians learning either French or English, Guiora’s et al. (1972) research on pronunciation as the aspect of language most connected to one’s language ego, Schumann’s (1974, 1976, 1978) Acculturation Model based on the studying of pidginization and social distance, as well as Brown’s (1980) examination of affective factors and sociocultural variables, Bailey’s (1983) diary studies and Schmidt’s (1983) investigation of communicative competence development in a Japanese learner in
Hawaii. These studies however, generally considered identity as a “fixed and measurable phenomenon, clearly relatable to successful or unsuccessful language learning experiences” (Block 2014, p. 72). These studies were later criticized by Pavlenko (2002) for their attempts to investigate socio-psychological phenomena with normative structuralist approaches. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) further delivered a comprehensive overview of socio-psychological and interactional approaches to investigating identity in multilingual contexts. They point out that the socio-psychological paradigm, grounded in the work of Tajfel (1974, 1981) and Berry (1980), generally assumed of a one-directional relation between language and ethnic identity, conceiving of individuals as “members of homogeneous, uniform, and bounded ethnolinguistic communities” (p. 5). This, however, diminished their informative value because they failed to acknowledge hybrid identities and the complexity of identity negotiations embedded in sociopolitical and socioeconomic contexts. The shortcomings of interactional sociolinguistic approaches on the other hand, (e.g. Gumperz 1982, Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985, Scotton 1988), that focused on negotiation of identities in code-switching and language choice, have been found to lie in their assumption that identity is the only factor influencing code-switching (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004).

Since the focus of the present work is to explore migrant learners’ attitudes and how they relate to their identity formations and subsequent learning behavior, a structuralist view of identities is unfitting, as it does not recognize the multfaceted character of identities and their relation to power. I agree with Block (2014) that it is in the adult migrant context, more than any other contexts, that “one’s identity and sense of self are put on the line, not least because most factors that are familiar to the individual – socio-historically, socio-
culturally and linguistically – have disappeared and been replaced by new ones” (p. 5). Therefore, I adopt post-structuralist conceptualizations of identities, which view language use as a complex social practice, governed by relations of power.

3.2 Post-structuralist Theories of Identity

The nature of post-structuralism has been captured most precisely by Kramsch (1998a), as follows:

“Rather than focus on the multiple, changing and even conflictual nature of structures in the social world – males vs. females, powerful vs. powerless, native vs. non-native, [post-structuralism] turns its attention away from the structures themselves and focuses instead on the conditions of possibility of certain structures rather than others emerging at certain points in time” (p. 311).

For instance, in my approach to the IK context regarding motivation, I do not seek to establish unidirectional relations between motivation, attitudes and learning behavior, i.e. I do not conceive of a motivated participant as of one who would hold positive attitudes, attend regularly, complete homework and look to create learning opportunities outside the classroom. I rather seek to understand why a participant who describes him/herself as motivated and willing to learn chooses to forego some learning opportunities outside and inside the classroom (see 6.2 and 6.4 respectively) and whether his/her choices can be related not only to their attitudes, but also to their identity work. This requires a thorough consideration of their social environment and the value they place on L2 acquisition at different points in time and in different settings. Therefore, I chose narrative inquiry as my research method, as it offers a more nuanced, complex and rich understanding of identities.
This is further confirmed in the surging number of identity-focused research within applied linguistics in the past 20 years (Block 2006, 2014, Evans 2015, Jackson 2008, Jenkins 2007, Norton 2000, Omoniyi & White, 2006, Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004b).

### 3.2.1 Identity as a Social Construct

Post-structuralism is generally traced back to Chris Weedon’s (1987, 1997, 2004) work. A feminist scholar, she developed a theory of subjectivity, which attempts to bring together language, personal experiences and social power. An aspect of central importance in Weedon’s theory is that it treats language and subjectivity as mutually constitutive and embedded in larger social structures. As Weedon (1997) points out:

> “Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed […]. Subjectivity is produced in a whole range of discursive practices—economic, social and political—the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power” (p. 21).

Norton (1995, 2000, 2013) leaned strongly on Weedon’s work to develop her theory of identity and language learning, which sees identity as a nonunitary subject, a site of struggle and as changing over time. Her conceptualizations of the self went against dominant SLA definitions of the individual as one having an essential, fixed and unitary core (i.e., motivated-unmotivated, extrovert-introvert, etc.) and instead depict the subject as “diverse, contradictory, dynamic and changing over historical time and social place” (Norton 2013, p.125). She further contends that subjectivity is produced in a range of different social
settings governed by relations of power. Therefore, individuals can inhabit different identities in different social settings – one can for example host the identities of a learner, a spouse and an entrepreneur and while this happens simultaneously, different contexts trigger the dominance of a particular identity. This entails that an individual’s identity can be questioned and challenged by those very same social contexts, hence making it a site of struggle. The third aspect of Norton’s adaptation of subjectivity theory is that identity is subject to change over time and this is where her theory conflicts with some SLA theories of motivation, which treat it as fixed. She specifically addresses Schumann’s acculturation model, as it was developed to explain L2 acquisition of immigrants in particular and had a far-reaching impact on SLA research, constituting a “key term” in the field. (see VanPatten 2010). While acknowledging the theory’s contribution to recognizing contacts with L2 speakers as linguistically beneficial for learners, Norton criticizes the model for drawing a causal link between acculturation and SLA and for disregarding the fact that social interactions are products of the willingness of both parties to engage. This very willingness is in turn linked to relations of power, explaining why in some cases, immigrant learners, albeit motivated and hosting positive attitudes towards the L2 community can resist or be excluded from participation, hence experiencing no linguistic benefits. Norton’s conceptualization is more complex in that it can explain why one and the same individual can be motivated to learn in one setting and reject learning opportunities in another. It has particularly important implications for understanding how learners perceive of informal learning opportunities and whether they seize or reject them. As evident from my

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46 It is important to note here that acculturation theory has been developed and has advanced in recent years. The concept is now considered to be an unfolding process of change arising from intercultural contact, strongly affected by context (see Ward & Geeraert 2016).
informants’ accounts in Chapter 6, learners may choose to avoid contacts with fluent L2 speakers if they perceive of them as identity-threatenning and can appear unmotivated in one situation and highly engaged in another.

For the present study, I lean strongly on Norton’s conceptualizations and understanding of identity and further complement them by other aspects of post-structuralist theory, such as the differentiation between self-constructed subject positions and those imposed on individuals by others (Blommaert 2005, Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004). Based on the notion that identities are constructed in practices and are the outcome of “socially conditioned semiotic work” (Blommaert 2005, p. 205), Blommaert remarks:

“Whenever we talk about identity, we need to differentiate between ‘achieved’ or ‘inhabited’ identity – the identity people themselves articulate or claim – and ‘ascribed’ or ‘attributed’ identity – the identity given to someone by someone else” (Blommaert 2006, p. 238).

In the following, I complement Norton’s theory with Pavlenko and Blackledge’s (2004) twist on Harré and Langenhove’s (1999) positioning theory, as a particularly useful theoretical framework to explain the findings of my study.

### 3.2.2 Positioning Theory

employed the term “discursive practice” to refer to the different ways people construct their psychological and social realities, with an emphasis on the role of discourse in these constructions (Davis & Harré 1990). Thus, the main focus is the linguistic features of individuals’ narratives, as they provide the basic elements for analyzing their positioning within those very narratives. Positioning theory is “an attempt to develop a social psychology of selfhood” (Linehan & McCarthy 2000, p. 435) and to convey that individuals’ participation in their social interactions is the outcome of their psychological makeup operating within their social environment. Through these interactions, individuals present the understanding of their selves, past and present experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and competencies (Berger & Luckman 1967, Norton 2000, Wenger 1998). Their identities are thus revealed via the way they position themselves - a term that has been referred to as *reflective positioning*, but also through the way that they are positioned by others - interactive positioning - in their everyday experiences (Harré 1998, 1993, Harré & van Langenhove 1999, 1991, Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004). Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) have modified this theory to provide a conceptual framework for negotiation of identities in multilingual settings. They distinguish between three types of identities:

- imposed identity
- assumed identity
- negotiable identity

According to Pavlenko & Blackledge, imposed identity is one that is assigned to individuals by others and is not negotiable. Assumed identity is one that individuals do not attempt to challenge and feel comfortable with, whereas negotiable identity is an identity option that individuals can contest and resist. An important concept in positioning theory is that of
“fluidity” of positions within a conversation. In other words, individuals can be repositioned at particular points in time within a conversation. Therefore, positions are not seen as fixed entities and it has to be kept in mind that because of individual differences, the same dialogue might trigger different “emotional responses” in different participants. Harré and van Langenhove’s (1999) position is that all the small stories in an individual’s life form a grand narrative, with multiple episodes in which the individuals act out their identities and perform “who they are” in response to varying social settings. Some identity theorists (De Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg 2006, Harré & van Langenhove 1999) are primarily concerned with the lexical choices and linguistic features that individuals use in order to position themselves within their narratives. In the context of recent research within SLA, positioning theory focuses on the semantic features of narrative language, giving consideration to the impact of unequal power relations in determining the L2 learners’ position within the L2 learning environment. Some of the factors that determine the positioning of a L2 learner in the new society are their racial and ethnic backgrounds. In a study by Miller (2004) investigating the integration of two groups of high school students, the author argues that, “If students are to negotiate their identities in school settings, they need access to spoken interactions with English speakers in which their voices are heard, and their identities are seen as usable capital in the first place” (Miller 2004, p. 312). She compared Chinese and Bosnian students’ integration within the school context by looking at the “visibility” and “audibility” of the two groups of students and consequently argued that due to being positioned as inaudible, Chinese students did not get the chance to develop independent voices. Thus, this positioning can have a significant impact on the ways L2
learners get access to the L2-speaking society, and develop or fail to develop an audible voice within (Miller 2004, Norton 2013, Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004).

Positioning theory as a theoretical framework in this study provides the basis for a socio-psychological analysis of the informants’ narratives. Drawing on Harré (1993, 1998, 2012), Harré and van Langenhove (1999, 1991), Davis and Harré (1999, 1990), Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), Miller (2004), and Norton (2000), the concept of positioning is employed to elucidate the meanings attached to immigrants’ cultural and social positioning and to weight the impact this has on the language learning process. The theory further provides an analytic framework to interpret negotiations of identities within individuals’ narratives.

3.2.3 Identity and Symbolic Power

In post-structuralist research, the process of constructing and negotiating identity is often perceived as “embedded in larger social, political, economic, and cultural systems” (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004, p. 10). This allows for the consideration of unequal power relations related to among others, ethnicity, race, nationality, social class and gender. It is therefore safe to assert that individuals do not develop their identities independently of their surroundings, but that they are shaped in a co-constructing process. As Block (2008) points out, “social environments provide conditions and impose constraints whilst individuals act on those same social environments, continuously altering and reshaping them” (p. 143). It is therefore of particular importance for the present study to address the aspect of power relations and I begin by elaborating on the notion of symbolic capital as coined by Bourdieu (1977, 1984, 1991) It provided an alternative perspective on language learners’ positioning
within the social context. *Symbolic capital* is generally subdivided into economic, cultural and social capital. It is also closely related to the notion of *habitus*. Therefore, before I elaborate on *symbolic capital*, it is necessary to clarify the term *habitus* first.

The concept of *habitus* in sociology incorporates the relationship between the social and the individual and pertains to “how the ‘outer’ and ‘inner’ social-self interact and help to shape each other” (Grenfell 2008, p.50). Habitus is generally defined by Bourdieu as, “the property of social agents” (as cited in Grenfell 2008, p.51) and encompasses an individual’s “properties”, such as education, economic status, family background, nationality, among others. Specifically, habitus is an individual’s way of being in addition to the history one carries within oneself. Therefore, the theory assumes that the individual’s previous background informs his or her present and future social practices. These practices are internalized and operate at a subconscious level. In Bourdieu’s theoretical framework, the “structure” of habitus is formed in line with social regularities and is hence not random. Therefore, individuals’ practices within their specific environment are the sum of their habitus and their capital within their current social context or field (see Grenfell 2008). Bourdieu summarizes this in the equation below:

\[
[(\text{habitus}) \ (\text{capital})] + \text{field} = \text{practice}.
\]

An individual’s habitus is manifested through the choices she or he makes. Bourdieu asserts that at the same time, these choices are determined by the possible options within an individual’s social context. In this sense, “capital” is defined as “a source of profit, advantage and power, as well as net assets and resources” (Cote & Levine 2002, p. 143). It encompasses economic, cultural, sociological, and psychological resources which “enable
an individual to understand and negotiate the various social, occupational and personal obstacles and opportunities they are likely to encounter” (Cote 1996, p. 426). The quality of an individual’s habitus and their capital makes them develop a certain “feel of the social game” (Bourdieu 1990). The individual’s understanding of this social game is dynamic and changes as she or he gains more experience. Bourdieu uses the term “practical mastery” and “practical knowledge” for the time when individuals develop a feel for understanding and mastering social regularities (Grenfell 2008). In the case of newcomer L2 learners, this “practical mastery” is initially missing, making them vulnerable to the dominant language community and complicating their access to L2 communities of practice, as immigrants are often not aware of the “rules of entry” (Block 2007). Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital therefore offers a comprehensive theoretical framework, useful in explaining the impact of power relations on identity formations and L2 acquisition. The first form of capital, economic capital refers to material resources, such as finances, properties and assets. The second form of capital, cultural capital, refers to the arsenal of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings and credentials that an individual has acquired in his or her life. The forms of cultural capital that one possesses are related to social class. Hence, sharing similar forms of cultural capital can create a sense of collective identity - us. Therefore, Bourdieu points out that cultural capital is a main source of social inequality, as some forms of cultural capital are more valuable than others, and can impede an individual’s social mobility. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital is composed of three types - embodied, objectified, and institutionalized. Specific features of an individual’s speech, such as accent or dialect, are examples of embodied capital, while credentials, qualifications and academic titles
represent examples for institutionalized cultural capital. This makes evident that language mastery and fluency are related to an individual’s recognition by socially dominant groups, as certain foreign accents and even languages can evoke rather negative associations. In the case of immigrant L2 learners, this could place them a priori in a disadvantaged position, as shown in the example of Youssef (see Section 6.4). He was immediately recognized and marginalized as Moroccan by his accent when speaking French in France. Similarly, Karim and his companions were asked to leave the venue they had gathered in, because they spoke Arabic (see Section 6.6). Bourdieu’s concept of “legitimate speaker” (1997) relates exactly to immigrant groups and “how they come to be accepted” (Block 2003, p. 53). The way capital is understood within every social interaction impacts the way a non-native speaker is accepted within the host society or is viewed as a competent user of a language (Danaher, Schirato & Webb 2000). Language therefore works as a significant mechanism of power, as “varieties in language use (i.e. code-mixing, accents, vocabulary choices) tend to reinforce the position of each interlocutor” (Jackson 2008, p. 26) in a particular social space.

Social capital further manifests itself in institutional contacts, concerning the connections to and relationships with less, equally, or more powerful others. Therefore, according to Bourdieu, an individual can gain symbolic capital in the form of prestige and reputation when the different kinds of capital are perceived and recognized as legitimate by the dominant group or institution (Bourdieu, 1991). He lastly asserts that due to its dependence on legitimation, symbolic capital is bound to be distributed unequally within any given speech community.

The notions of capital and investment may help in interpreting learning behavior and shifting motivations as they are evident in the narratives of IK participants, because as
Kramsch (2015) points out, “learning another language is acquiring a skill that will enable learners to gain access to resources that give them more social power, and more freedom to play with the constraints imposed by the social and cultural structures of society. Language […] gives its users a profit of distinction on the market of symbolic exchanges” (p.406). I employ these notions to explain investment and learning behavior in and outside of the classroom. Immigrant learners’ willingness to invest in L2 mediated social networks is addressed below.

3.2.4 Identity and Communities of Practice

The post-structuralist theories of identity outlined above, together with Bourdieu’s notions of symbolic power and legitimate discourse, help advance the conceptualization of language learning as a complex social practice, rather than a skill to be internalized. The term social practice that I refer to here, was defined by Lave and Wenger (1991) as follows:

“In contrast with learning as internalization, learning as increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world. Conceiving of learning in terms of participation focuses attention on ways in which it is an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations. [...] Insistence on the historical nature of motivation, desire and the very relations by which social and culturally mediated experience is available to persons-in-practice is one key to the goals to be met in developing a theory of practice” (p. 49-50).

Lave and Wenger further continue to assert that learning is situated within specific communities of practice. The relationship between social participation and communities of practice is vital in Wenger’s (1998) work. Social participation here refers “not just to local
events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relationship to these communities” (p. 4). Communities of practice hence refer to the various subject positions individuals adopt, depending on who they are within a given time and space. Communities of practice, however, are not just random networks that anyone can join at any given time. In an ideal situation and a welcoming context, an individual can gain entry to a specific community of practice by “legitimate peripheral participation”. This participation can be secured through exposure to “mutual engagement with other members, to their actions and their negotiation of the enterprise, and to their repertoire in use” (Wenger 1998, p. 100). Yet, Wenger points out, that “in order to be on an inbound trajectory, newcomers must be granted enough legitimacy to be treated as potential members” (ibid. p101). Therefore, participation must always begin peripherally. There is then the option that an individual will not be deemed legitimate to participate. In order to be allowed participation, an individual must have accumulated appropriate cultural capital or in other words “the educational resources and assets, necessary to be a fully functioning participant in a particular community of practice” (Block 2014, p. 25). This brings us back to Bourdieu’s definition of cultural capital and its manifestation through behavioral patterns (accent and attitudes), association with particular artefacts (books, music, etc.) and a connection to institutions (academia, governmental agencies).

What Lave and Wenger’s (1991), Wenger’s (1998) and Bourdieu’s work leads to is that identity is constructed in social interactions and social context, at the same time as it helps construct them. In sum, identity is “constitutive of and constituted by the social environment” (Block 2014, p. 26). Thus, it can be claimed that environments impose
constraints on individuals, at the same time as individuals act on these environments, constantly changing and reconstructing them.

Having outlined the main concepts pertaining to identity and social power, in the next section, I discuss important research related to identity and L2 learning processes in migrant settings.

3.3 Research on Identity and Adult Migrant L2 Acquisition

In this section, I discuss existing research on identity and adult migrant L2 acquisition, as this will allow me to illuminate the intricate relationship between identity and language learning and to further position my work within this academic field. The ESF project, along with studies conducted by Norton (2000), Machado-Casas (2012), Marx (2002) and Seilhamer (2013) are particularly insightful and their findings are relevant to my research objectives.

A study that can be seen as a bridge between structuralist and post-structuralist research on language acquisition is the ESF project (Perdue 1993a and b) that I briefly presented in Chapter 1. Although primarily concerned with misunderstandings experienced by immigrants in mostly gate-keeping encounters in five Western-European countries, the study linked sociolinguistic issues with narrative inquiry, which was later established as the norm for conducting identity-related research (see Chapter 5). The project was carried out in England, Germany, France, Sweden and the Netherlands and the data collection took place between 1982 and 1986. It involved 30 individual cases and Panjabi, Italian, Turkish, Arabic, Spanish and Finnish as L1s. The research interests focused mainly on the dynamics of misunderstandings in discourse and how immigrants sought to repair or avoid them. As
a result, Broeder et al challenged several assumptions in SLA about informal learning contexts, which I summarize below:

- The first assumption that was challenged was that residing in a foreign country automatically increases immigrants’ opportunities to learn the L2. This assumption stems from the prevalent idea that the best way to learn a L2 is to be in the country where it is spoken. As will become evident in my findings as well, living in a country does not guarantee exposure to and use of the L2 (see Section 6.3)

- The second assumption challenged by the project was that in L2 encounters, similar to L1 ones, all interlocutors engage in meaning negotiation in order to ensure mutual understanding. Contrary to this, Broeder et al. found that the responsibility for achieving mutual understanding was placed mostly on the immigrants. As a result, conversations that failed to achieve this ended in resentment, adding to immigrants’ “sense of frustration and consolidating their ascribed position of unworthy interlocutor” (1996a, p.91). This was a scenario all too familiar to the informants of my study as well.

- The third assumption that the project deemed to be unfounded was that immigrants could acquire the target language through interactions with L2 speakers. What the study showed was that immigrant learners were often judged and assessed by their L2 performance. Based on this, they were often positioned as inferior and inadequate interlocutors. This was confirmed during my investigations as well.
The fourth and last assumption about informal learning that failed to stand ground was that the right to speak and the right to be heard are a given. Broeder et al. showed that on the contrary, the complex power relations between interlocutors often assign immigrants to an inferior position, thus excluding them from participation.

While the ESF project did not implicitly address identity issues, it certainly did bring them to the surface (see Block 2014, Norton 2013). The findings of their study were later drawn on by Norton (2013), who shifted the focus to that of identity entirely. In her longitudinal study, she discussed in detail the accounts of five immigrant women in Canada, investigating the relationship between identity, power and the seizing (or not) of learning opportunities. Norton’s central contention is that “the opportunity to practice speaking English outside the classroom is dependent largely on [immigrants’] access to Anglophone social networks (p. 135) and that the access to these networks was very difficult to achieve. The struggles of the five women to gain access to L2-speaking networks were captured in individual case studies, based on data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, diary entries and essays over the course of one year. The five accounts draw a clear picture of the complex and often conflicting nature of identity and of how subject positions develop over time. Her study further sheds light on the power relations governing discourse and relationships with L2 speakers representative of the dominant community.

These power relations are revealed in other research on identity and L2 acquisition in migrant contexts, that in addition capture how immigrants, maybe more so than other L2 learners, constantly make use of languages to act on aspects of their multiple identities. Machado-Casas (2012) for example, studied identity through comprehensive interviews...
with immigrants from indigenous communities in Latin America, who had settled in the U.S. Their accounts show the multiplicity of the identities they inhabit and their relation to language; however, they also emphasize the connection between language, capital and power. At home and with their families, participants spoke mostly their L1, which was an indigenous language. They also felt safe to adhere to their indigenous culture and customs. In interactions with the U.S. Latino community though, Machado-Casas’ informants appeared to exhibit a different identity, speaking Spanish and accommodating dominant cultural norms of their country of origin. This protected them from being marginalized as indigenous people by their Spanish-speaking compatriots. Same informants, when interacting with English-speaking Americans emphasized language and mannerisms that they believed could signal their long-term status as U.S. residents and even helped them avoid negative attention, for example, from immigration police. Machado-Casas found that “outside identities ensure physical and social survival; home identities ensure private cultural survival” (p. 547). The study in addition highlights how adult immigrants adjust their language to ensure participation in desired communities of practice or to distance themselves from undesired such, all within in a context that valued the knowledge of certain languages over that of others.

Seilhamer’s (2013) study also emphasized the changes occurring in identity formations related to language and social interaction. His study focused on blog postings by individuals who had lived away from their country of origin and showcased the profound impact L2 learning has on perceptions of self. “I am a different person in each language, adapting myself to the culture of the people who speak it,” (p. 7) a participant asserted. Another one observed that he was more self-deprecating when using his mother tongue Japanese than
when speaking English, his L2. A third person reported she was more outgoing in L2 English environments than with Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese friends. Some bloggers even believed that their facial features and body postures changed when they switched languages. Seilhamer accounted for these changes with participants’ accommodation attempts, which he described as semi-conscious efforts to shorten social distance. His findings confirm that the construction of new identities is an integral process for immigrants as they inevitably experience the new and changing relationships associated with establishing a new home in a new country. His results align with Machado-Casas’ (2012) and Norton’s (2014) findings and validate the notion that immigrants construct and switch between multiple identities to interact successfully in their multiple worlds.

Further insights into a person’s ability to exercise several identities in migration settings, though delivered from a different perspective, come from Nicole Marx (2002). Her retrospective first-person account highlights the role that accents and pronunciation play in the dynamic process of language learning and identity formations. By adjusting her accent and physical appearance, Marx managed to negotiate her membership in various linguistic, national and cultural communities in three different countries – Canada, Germany and the United States. The adjustment she made were reflective of the preferred identity she wished to project and were further related to the communities of practice she wished to access. Her diary entries also captured how she struggled to contest identities imposed on her by social contexts and her interlocutors. Her desire to overcome her foreigner status and to be seen as a competent speaker of German brings her case close to the cases of participants in my study. Her comment that “after approximately one year in the L2 setting, I began consciously to attempt to achieve a German native speaker accent” (p. 272) bears striking
resemblance to one of my informant’s accounts (see Section 6.4). Marx further depicted the inner conflicts that she experienced upon return to her home country, Canada, as she failed to completely shed her linguistic experiences abroad due to what she calls a new second-culture (C2) identity:

“I had constructed a new C2 identity, one which contained labels ascribed to me by interlocutors. [...] Having assumed the identity of a non-native in the C2, it becomes difficult to shed the role of a foreigner, now integral to one’s conception of self, upon return to the C1” (p. 274).

This particular remark is reminiscent of a comment made by one of my informants in regard to the ways he felt and was perceived upon return to his home land (see Section 6.3). Although Marx’ autobiographical accounts have been criticized for their inherent subjectivity, they highlight important aspects of the intricate relationship between L2 acquisition and identity in migration contexts and how these affect participation in communities of practice.

### 3.4 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to address post-structuralist conceptualizations of identity and to show that they are most suitable for the interpretation of my data. This is largely the case because they view identity as multilayered and dynamic and hence have the potential to account for changes and fluctuations in self perceptions. The notions of positioning, social power, communities of practice and legitimate peripheral participation further complement identity theories and are particularly important for my research foci, as I employ them as research tools for the interpretation of my informants’ accounts.
After providing an overview of the IK’s design and of the conceptualizations of identity in SLA, I turn my attention to the third focal point of my research, learner attitudes. The following chapter continues to complement the theoretical framework of the present work by discussing attitudes and their connection to identity and learning behavior and outcomes.
Chapter 4

Attitudes in Second Language Acquisition

Learner perspectives and identity formations in the process of learning German in the IK present the core research interest of the present study. Therefore, the following chapter will examine the theoretical frameworks and methodological approaches in the field of learner attitudes. I will begin by defining the concept and reviewing existing research on the role of attitudes, motivation and investment in SLA with the purpose of highlighting their interdependence with learners’ self-constructions and the learning process. Subsequently, I will outline primary research results in the field of attitudes and adult migrant L2 learning in order to position my work within this academic landscape and to ascertain how it can contribute to a better understanding of the key factors affecting L2 acquisition in migration contexts.

4.1 Learner Attitudes in SLA Theory

The growing influence of the social sciences on SLA since the middle of the last century has made researchers more aware of the fact that “variability is a central feature of the human species” (Dörnyei 2010, p. 2), hence leading to an increased interest in learner individual differences. This has further led to the overall shift from teacher-directed to learner-centered teaching and learning since the 70’s and to the assertion that “individual differences are related to some of the core issues in applied linguistics and that they can be meaningfully linked to the most important processes underlying SLA” (Dörnyei 2010, p.3). This is relevant to the present study, which aims to explore a specific personal variable -
that of attitudes and how they can be linked to self-constructions and learning behaviour. In addition, the insights from social-psychology that I apply to my analysis of the learners’ narratives underscore the importance of individual differences and hence the idiosyncrasy of the learning experience and its dependence on the context.

Current research on the nature and effects of learner attitudes on second language acquisition has its origins in Gardner and Lambert’s seminal investigation of language learning motivation carried out in Canada in the 1950’s. Since then, it has been widely acknowledged that a learner’s success at language acquisition is dependent to a considerable extend on his or her motivation to learn the language (Dörney & Ryan 2015). Attitudes and motivation are often treated together, which is considered consequential given that “attitudes have motivational properties and motivation has attitudinal implications” (Gardner 2008, p. 31). Attitudes towards the target L2, culture and community constitute an integral aspect of motivation. In the following, I examine theory and research that have sought to associate motivation, attitudes, investment, identity and ultimately learning behaviour and success. A comprehensive understanding of such individual differences as attitudes and of how they affect learning behaviour can ultimately aid the development of classroom strategies for overcoming unfavourable motivational dispositions.

4.1.1 Definition of Attitudes

Following Hogg and Vaughan (2005), an attitude is “a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols” (p. 150). The three-fold nature of attitudes was first suggested by
Rosenberg and Hovland (1960) and has prevailed in the fields of psychology and social-psychology. An attitude is commonly conceptualized as consisting of three dimensions: affective, behavioral and cognitive. The affective component concerns feelings towards the attitude object. The behavioral component or action component concerns a readiness for action or behavioral intention and the cognitive component concerns thoughts and beliefs about the attitude object. This tripartite model is known as the ABC model of attitudes (McLeod 2014).

Throughout my data collection and analysis of the narratives, I have acknowledged the affective and cognitive components as inherent to attitudes. The results of my study suggest a highly complex relation between attitudes and learning behaviour. While there is undeniably a link between attitudes and behaviour (see Ajzen 1988, de Saint Léger & Storch 2009, Heinzmann 2013), I suggest that it is not causational; rather, attitudes affect learning behaviours through the identity formations they might precipitate and support (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). In relation to this, it is necessary to note that I do not conceive of attitudes as being static. As Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain (2013) assert, “rather than occurring in a vacuum in individual speakers’ minds, attitudes are created and perpetuated through interaction as a part of socialization, and this means that we cannot regard them either as fixed in the minds of individuals or as easily retrieved” (p. 37). Hence, my understanding of attitudes is based on the notion, that just like identities, they are fluid, subject to change and can be highly ambivalent (see Wood 2000). Therefore, their study also requires a complex theoretical framework, inclusive of both structuralist and post-structuralist approaches.
4.1.2 Attitudes, Beliefs and Identity

Another aspect of attitudes, namely their dependence on beliefs and identity is of great relevance for the present work and hence necessitates a closer examination.

As noted above, attitudes are based upon individuals’ experiences. They are also considered to be the affective response to underlying beliefs. For my work, I have adopted Kalaja’s et al. (2015) definition of holding a belief in language learning as “an occasion when a learner, or basically anybody, happens to reflect on aspects of language learning or teaching, relates these to experiences of his or her own or those of others, and assigns these aspects his or her own personal meanings. An occasion like this would involve others, and so holding a belief would in fact be an experience shared in time and space” (p.10). This view acknowledges the dynamic nature of beliefs and the fact that they are social constructs, dependent on context and experiences. Since beliefs are the ideas inherent to attitudes, there is a general understanding that the relationship is causational; for example, accumulations of favorable beliefs lead to favorable attitudes and accumulations of unfavorable beliefs lead to unfavorable attitudes. In the SLA literature, language learners’ beliefs have appeared under various categories including folklinguistics, (learner) representations, metacognitive knowledge and cultural beliefs (for a full review see Barcelos 2006b) and definitions (e.g., Barcelos 2006b, Bernat & Gvozdenko 2005, Gabillon 2005, Kalaja et al. 2015). Early research treated L2 learner beliefs as static, identifying them as either ‘functional’ or ‘dysfunctional’ (Benson and Lor, 1999), or ‘correct’ or ‘incorrect’ (Horwitz, 1988; Riley, 1997). More recent L2 belief research studies, however, in particular those that have approached beliefs from a sociocultural perspective, have revealed that learner
beliefs are fluid and in a constant flux, hence they can be mediated (Alanen 2003, Barcelos 2006b, Dufva 2003, Kalaja et al. 2015).

The study of attitudes and beliefs is also intricately linked to aspects of learners’ identity formations, as demonstrated by Barcelos (2006b). She emphasizes that “beliefs are intrinsically related to our identities and selves” (p. 177). Her understanding of identities as socially co-constructed is on par with Norton’s definition of identity (see Chapter 3). Referencing Lave and Wenger’s (1991) concepts of communities of practice (see Chapter 3), she concludes that “identity, learning, and beliefs are inseparable” (ibid. p. 177). In her view, which coincides with mine, the learning process is embedded in the experiences learners have in interactions with others. These experiences are bidirectionally shaped by the learners’ sense of self. Barcelos (2006a) concludes that “understanding students’ beliefs means understanding their world and their identity” (p. 8).

In the quest to devise a comprehensive theoretical framework for the investigation and interpretation of attitudes, identity and learning behaviour and outcomes, in the following, I will elaborate on Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model (SEM). It offers a paradigm for understanding the correlation between attitudes and L2 acquisition that I modify and adopt for the analysis of my informants’ narratives (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). However, I will also flag some limitations of this model and suggest Ethno-Linguistic Vitality (ELV) and Norton’s notion of investment as ways to alleviate SEM’s shortcomings. This will yield a more holistic theoretical framework that allows for in-depth investigation of the complex array of factors that affect learning behaviour and L2 acquisition.
4.1.3 Gardner’s Socio-Educational Model

Gardner and Lambert’s research was pioneering, because it challenged the prevalent understanding that successful language acquisition is dependent solely upon language aptitude. They isolated motivation and attitudes as independent factors and asserted that the cultural context needs to be considered as well. Their theory holds that

“…success in mastering a second language would depend not only on intellectual capacity and language aptitude but also on the learner’s perceptions of the other ethnolinguistic group involved, his attitudes towards representatives of that group and his willingness to identify enough to adopt distinctive aspects of behaviour, linguistic and non-linguistic, that characterize that other group”. (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, p.132)

The theory has been revisited and revised several times since its initial conception and Gardner went on to develop SEM of language learning based on his empirical research in different settings (Gardner 1985, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2011). His model is by far the most influential model of motivation to have emerged from social psychological research to the present day. In the most recent versions of the approach, Gardner distinguishes between a Cultural and an Educational context of language instruction and acquisition. The model recognizes four complex variables – Integrativeness, Attitudes toward the Learning Situation, Motivation, and Language Anxiety. All variables are assessed by the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). According to Gardner, the first two variables reflect the differentiation between two contexts. The first one, Integrativeness, incorporates variables
associated with the cultural context including characteristics of the individual that make him or her receptive to cultural input. In the AMTB, it is assessed by three measures:

- integrative orientation;
- attitudes toward the target language community;
- interest in foreign languages;

The second variable, Attitudes toward the Learning Situation, relates to the educational component and involves affective responses to all aspects of the learning environment. In the AMTB it is assessed by two variables:

- evaluation of the teacher;
- evaluation of the course;

Gardner posits that Integrativeness and Attitudes toward the Learning Situation are positively correlated with one another, mostly because “the reactions toward the classroom environment will be influenced in part by the perception of the environment that will be influenced by the individual’s level of integrativeness” (Gardner 2011, p. 25). Figure 4.1 illustrates Gardner’s SEM.

Integrativeness and Attitudes toward the Learning Situation are particularly relevant to my research objectives and for that reason, I will elaborate further on these two aspects.

Integrativeness, as Gardner defines it, refers to an openness to other cultures in general and to the L2 specifically. Individuals who are high in integrativeness display an inclination to adopt or at least get to know the characteristics of another cultural and linguistic group (Gardner 2006). He conceptualized Integrativeness as consisting of three dimensions: an
interest in foreign languages, positive attitudes towards the L2 community, and an integrative orientation, that is a desire to get psychologically closer to the L2 community.

Figure 4.1 Gardner’s (2011) Socio Educational Model

Among all the concepts in Gardner’s model that have to do with Integrativeness, the concept of an integrative orientation is by far the most well known. Gardner developed a distinction between integrative orientation and instrumental orientation that became highly
influential for later research and that I employ in the present study as well. Orientation here refers to the reasons an individual has for learning an L2. A strong integrative orientation is characterized by a willingness or even desire to become psychologically closer to L2 speakers. It further implies having a rather positive disposition towards the L2 community (Gardner 2010; Gardner and Lambert, 1972). Strong integrative orientation is associated with a desire to interact with and even become linguistically similar (i.e. pronunciation-wise, use of dialects, etc.) or similar in appearance (i.e. attire, physical appearance) to particular L2 communities of practice. Three of the participants in my study, for example, displayed very strong integrative motivation. It was revealed either by strong desire to access Germany’s literary and cultural heritage (see Section 6.4), attempts to adjust pronunciation features (see Section 6.5) or efforts to visibly appear German47 (see Section 6.6). The ways in which integrative motivation is revealed in behaviour are exemplified in Nicole Marx’s (2002) self-accounts of her prolonged sojourns in Germany (see Chapter 3) and how she sought to gain access to desired communities of practice by adjusting pronunciation and appearance. An integrative orientation, hence implies some sort of psychological and emotional identification with the L2 community (Dörnyei, 2003).

An instrumental orientation, on the other hand, implies learning the language for more pragmatic reasons, such as gaining social recognition or economic advantages (Gardner and Lambert, 1972)48. To align Gardner’s and Norton’s theoretical frameworks, instrumental

47 *German* here refers to the respective understanding of each informant of what constitutes being German.

48 It is important to note that integrative and instrumental orientations should not be confused with integrative and instrumental motivation. Many motivation scholars attempt to assess learners’ motivation to learn a given language solely by asking them for their reasons for doing so. In Gardner’s model, reasons for learning a language (that is orientations) are only one constituent of language learning motivation. Gardner rightly insists that there is more to motivation than having a reason for doing something and that motivation cannot be assessed by asking learners for their reasons for learning alone.
orientation corresponds to investment in the sense that it refers to learners’ desire to acquire symbolic and material resources. It is also necessary to note that individuals can display both integrative and instrumental orientation, as is the case with all participants in my study.

Although Gardner has based his assertions on a plethora of mostly quantitative research and Likert-scale and rank-order items, which capture attitudes at a given point and hence treats them as being static, his recent reconceptualization of integrative motivation recognizes the learner as having a past, present and future (Gardner 2010) and acknowledges that past experiences, position within the family and cultural background are all factors that contribute to the learner profile of an individual along with the learning context and the learner’s desire for the future. His SEM is particularly compatible with the present study. While the conceptualization of integrative orientation might appear obsolete in an EFL class in Taiwan (see Warden & Lin 2000) and for English as a lingua franca in general, it is highly relevant to the learning context of the IK, where integration into the German society is a primary teaching objective, well integrated into the curriculum. Hence, Gardner’s theoretical framework offers a starting point for the developing of interview questions for emic, quantitative research, as is the case of the present study, where attitudes and integrative orientations are assessed at three stages of the IK, allowing for observations on changes and developments. Furthermore, inquiries about my informants’ attitudes present only a portion of all the aspects found in my investigation, which strives to deliver a more holistic picture of adult migrant L2 learning processes and outcomes.

In the following section, I am going to elaborate on Norton’s notion of investment and on how it can compliment Gardner’s SEM.
4.1.4 Investment

The publication of Norton’s seminal work “Social Identity, Investment, and Language Learning” (Norton 1995) underscored and reinforced the socio-cultural turn in language education (Block 2007). It was reflective of the transformation into heterogeneous multicultural societies that many post-industrial nations were undergoing. Rooted mostly in Weedon’s (1987) poststructuralist works, Norton’s essay made the claim that “learning a language is a powerful political act, in which language constructs both social organization and the sense of self” (Darvin & Norton 2016, p.19). Norton rightfully accused cognitive theories within SLA of failing to capture the complexity of processes involved in L2 acquisition and to acknowledge the social factors at play. She claimed that this resulted in artificial differentiations between the individual and the social and in placing the responsibility for successful or failed L2 acquisition solely on the learner. In her study, she contested the informative value of existing research on learner motivation that mostly operated on dichotomous categorizations of learners (e.g. good – bad, motivated – unmotivated, introvert – extrovert, etc.), claiming that it neglected to recognize that learners had complex and multiple social identities that were changing across time and space and that were reproduced in social encounters, ultimately affecting learning behavior. Instead, she focused on investigating how relations of power impacted social interactions and limited learners’ opportunities to speak (Bourdieu 1991). As result, she proposed the notion of motivation to be replaced with the concept of investment, which she claimed can better “capture the complex relationship of language learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to speak it” (Norton 1995, p.9).
Based on a year-long data collection process, which included diaries, questionnaires, individual and group interviews and home visits, Norton investigated the natural learning experiences of several immigrant women in Canada in their homes, workplaces and communities. She focused primarily on the women’s interactions with English speakers and more precisely on how they reacted to, created or even resisted opportunities to speak English. Her inquiries led her to conclude that these opportunities were socially structured by unequal relations of power and by shifting identity formations. Norton, therefore, devised up-to-date conceptualizations of social identity (see Chapter 3) and investment. The essence of the concept of investment is best captured by Darvin & Norton (2016) as follows:

“By highlighting the socially and historically constructed relationship between learners and the target language, investment provides a critical lens that allows researchers to examine the relations of power in different learning contexts, and to what extent these conditions shape how learners commit to learning a language. Learners invest in a language because it will help them acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will in turn increase the value of their cultural capital and social power” (p. 20).

By introducing the notions of power, identity and investment and theorizing their interconnectedness, Norton succeeded in closing the gap between the social and the individual variables that SLA researchers had so far treated as separate entities. At this point it is necessary to assert that I do not consider Gardner’s SEM and Norton’s notion of investment to be mutually exclusive, but rather see them as mutually complimentary. Throughout his research career, Gardner mostly investigated motivation and L2 acquisition
in formal settings, while Norton’s research focuses rather on L2 learning resulting from informal interaction and communicative events. Because I aim to bridge both the formal and informal learning settings in the present study, I adopt aspects of both theoretical frameworks. In addition, Norton’s conceptualization of identity does not include attitudes, which I will show play a role in the L2 acquisition process of adult immigrants enrolled in the German IK. Therefore, I require a broader theoretical framework that can encompass all aspects that my research aspires to focus on. In my observations, SLA research tends to focus on either formal or informal learning contexts, often presuming the context that is out of their research interest is an utopic place. This is exemplified by Spolsky’s (1989) ideal view of the outside world as an “open and stimulating” place, where “the learner is surrounded by fluent speakers” (p. 171); similarly, Bremer et al. (1993) oppose the “racist” milieu that migrant L2 learners are faced with to “tutored second language acquisition”, where the adult learner is “supported at every turn by a battery of teaching and learning aids” (p. 154). Even Norton (2000) describes immigrants placed in a subsidized Employment and Immigration Canada language training program as “fortunate” (p. 25). Because my study investigates both the formal and informal learning contexts of adult immigrants in Germany, I draw on and incorporate theoretical frameworks and insights from both research realms. It is important to recognize that each learning setting is characterized by its own set of issues, and if the aim of SLA is to deliver meaningful and effective methods of L2 teaching and learning, one needs to be aware of deficiencies in both learning settings and of how the two contexts constantly shape one another.

In order to further complement the theoretical framework on attitudes, in the following I also consider ELV as a factor to be taken into consideration.
4.1.5 ELV and Clément’s Social Context Model

A subtler examination of the social milieu in which L2 learners interact is offered by Clément’s Social Context Model (SCM); (1980). It not only distinguishes between monolingual and multilingual contexts in a way similar to Gardner, but also takes into consideration the ELV of the language communities involved (Giles & Byrne 1982). I identify ELV as a factor that possibly played a role in shaping some of my participants’ attitudes and therefore consider it necessary to briefly elaborate on it in the following.

ELV is defined as “a group’s ability to maintain and protect its existence in time as a collective entity with a distinctive identity and language” (Ehala 2015, p. 1). The ethnolinguistic vitality of a group is determined by three factors: status variables, demographic variables and institutional support variables. Status variables include economic, social, and historic status as perceived from within and from outside the group; demographic variables encompass population size, birth rate, geographic concentration, immigration, and emigration; institutional support includes representation in the mass media, education, government services, industry, religion, and culture (Reid & Giles 2010).

In the SCM, Clément recognizes two motivational processes, a primary and a secondary one. He sees motivation as primarily determined by two antagonistic forces: integrativeness and fear of assimilation. Whether the individual is more strongly driven by integrativeness or by fear of assimilation depends on his or her assessment of the respective ELVs of the L1 and L2 groups. He asserts that a high ELV of the L2 group might attract people and foster an integrative tendency. On the other hand, it might also inspire fear of assimilation if the L2 group seems too powerful in comparison to the L1 group. Whether the resulting
tendency is toward integrativeness or toward fear of assimilation can be attributed to the
delicate weighing of the ELV. Clément’s model exhibits several shortcomings, primarily
because it operates on antagonisms and treats learners and their orientations as one-
dimensional. He claims that if integrativeness predominates, the learner will be more
motivated to learn the L2 language, will approach the L2 community and ultimately
has shown in her work (1995, 2000, 2013), approaching the L2 community is not such an
easy task entirely up to the learner, as the L2 community has to be willing to be approached
and to engage in interactions. SMC further completely neglects the existence of learners’
social identity formations and their role in the L2 acquisition process. Instead, Clément
proposes a secondary motivational process, which refers to the self-confidence of the
learner in using the L2, defined in terms of low language use anxiety and high self-
perceptions of one’s L2 competence (Clément, Dörnyei & Noels 1994, p. 422). He
continues to conclude that the more confident the learner is, the more frequent engagement
in practicing the language, therefore, the higher proficiency. While I disfavour Clément’s
theorisations, because of their deeply structuralist nature, I do not consider it wise to
completely dismiss his model, specifically in regard to the role of ELV. I, therefore, adopt
modified aspects of it. As I will show in Chapter 6, it appeared that several of the
participants in my study were affected by the ELV of their L1. Although no unidirectional
relationship could be found, the presence of high ELV of a learners’ L1 and the perceived
status of it might have influenced their attitudes and ultimately their identities and
positioning. As to Clément’s secondary motivational process, I replace his theory work with
Norton’s conceptualizations of identity and investment, because they deliver the best means
to capture the complexity of all L2 acquisition processes at work. As Kramsch (2013) points out:

Norton’s notion of investment, a strong dynamic term with economic connotations … accentuates the role of human agency and identity in engaging with the task at hand, in accumulating economic and symbolic capital, in having stakes in the endeavor and in persevering in that endeavor. In the North American context, investment in SLA has become synonymous with ‘language learning commitment’ and is based on a learner’s intentional choice and desire”. (p. 195)

Even though Clément’s SCM, later expanded by Giles and Byrne (1982), does go towards a more comprehensive analysis of the role of the social context in motivational processes, it focuses on the macro-level. Rooted in the structuralist tradition, it explores the impact of broad social constellations on the overall motivation and attitudes of large groups of people. As Heinzmann (2013) summarizes its shortcomings, “it does not look closely at how specific social constellations in specific situations affect specific individuals and it does not take into account more locally constructed social circumstances and identities” (p.23).

4.2 Learner Attitudes in SLA - Research

After mapping out the theoretical terrain in the previous section, below, I will attempt to position my study within the large body of empirical research on attitudes and L2 acquisition.
4.2.1 Orientations of Research on Attitudes

Understanding L2 learners is a matter of investigating a variety of observable and unobservable evidence about their learning of language. Learner attitudes toward the learning context and the L2, as discussed above, represent one subset of these unobservable attributes and the body of research that focuses on them can be generally categorized as having one of three orientations (Wesely 2012):

- focusing more on the learner as the agent, considering attitudes as static and investigating how they relate to their demographic or identity characteristics; these studies are generally referred to as “trait” studies;
- focusing more on the impact of the learning situation on learners’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs; these are the so called “state” studies;
- focusing on the interaction between the learner and the learning environment; these studies are referred to as “dynamic” studies;

Numerous scholars have noted the distinction between “trait” and “state” orientations in research on language learner attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs (i.e., Barcelos 2006a, Dörnyei 2009a, 2009b MacIntyre 2007). A third orientation has been suggested by Barcelos (2006a, 2006b) and others to characterize studies that focus on the “dynamic, constantly negotiated, embedded, and interconnected nature of learners’ attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs” (Wesely 2012). The present study intends to contribute to the latter.

In the following I am going to review existing research with regard to attitudes and adult L2 learning outcomes in migration contexts in order to complete this study’s theoretical and empirical foundation.
4.2.2 Studies on Attitudes and Migrant L2 Learning

While learner attitudes have been investigated in different areas of SLA, research on attitudes and adult L2 learning in migration contexts is relatively scarce. Only a small number of studies have been conducted on this aspect to date and they are exclusively quantitative. Existing results underline the importance of this research area because learner attitudes do not only provide information about learner perspectives on the nature of the learning process, they may also be linked to the acquisition process and the concrete actions of students, as I will attempt to showcase with my study as well. The research which I will outline below has investigated these links and the observed correlations can be grouped into two types. The first type of inquiries has observed a positive correlation between attitudes and L2 learning outcome (i.e., informants holding positive outlooks towards the L2 language and community display higher levels of L2 fluency). The second group, which comprises a small body of research, is ambiguous about the link between attitudes and L2 learning, asserting that no correlation can be discerned (for a complete review see Trofimovich & Tureševa 2015). In the following, I will briefly review the relevant studies and their conclusions, followed by my attempt to expound on why they are problematic in their methodological approach and to position my work with respect to such studies.

49 In this section, I only consider studies on attitudes. Research investigating beliefs in SLA is not included.
4.2.2.1 Attitudes and Positive L2 Learning Outcomes

A common claim across migrant context studies is that L2 learning is most efficient when speakers display either a double-positive attitude, that is, a favorable view of their own ethnic group and of the L2 community or at least a positive attitude towards the L2 community at a minimum. A study conducted in Ireland by Skrzypek, Kopeckova, Bidzinska and Singleton (2014) on Polish immigrants’ attitudes towards English and the Irish community attempted to relate orientations towards the L2 community with ELV and L2 achievement. The study revealed that high Polish ELV along with exhibited positive orientations towards both the English language and the Irish culture and society were related to higher degree of cultural and linguistic integration over time. Similar findings were demonstrated by two recent studies conducted by Michel, Titzmann and Silbereisen (2012) and Silbereisen, Titzmann & Stoessel (2014). They examined the linguistic development and achievements of ethnic German immigrants from Russia and noted that shifting language use patterns from L1 to L2 German were dependent upon holding positive attitudes towards the L2 community and having increased contact with L2 speakers, while at the same time identifying less strongly with the home culture. Another study by Titzmann, Serwata, Silbereisen & Davidov (2016) examining proximity to and contact with the L2 German community of ethnic Russian and Turkish immigrant women sought to affirm the reciprocal relation between positive majority orientation, contacts with the L2 German community, and L2 use. In the case of Turkish migrant women, positive attitudes towards the German host community and a strong desire to establish contacts positively affected L2 achievement. This, however, came at the expense of weaker intra-ethnic social contacts. Titzmann et al. (2016) explain their findings by the fact that “language is not just
a communication tool, but also a vehicle transporting identity and understanding for another culture” (p. 1090) and they deduce that increased L2 use can operate as means of reducing migrants’ predominantly intra-ethnic social contacts. They conclude that “language courses that convey language proficiency are certainly a first step, because immigrants (whether mothers, fathers, or children) need to feel competent in expressing themselves before they begin to use the new language in private domains” (ibid. 1090). Additionally, they also stress the need for a “societal atmosphere in which members of minorities perceive that using the new language pays off.” (ibid. p.1090).

The positive link between favourable attitudes towards the target community and language and L2 use established by the aforementioned studies has also been confirmed by studies conducted in multilingual contexts without a migration aspect. For example, Gatbonton and Trofimovich (2008) showed that the native French speakers of L2 English in Quebec who exhibited positive attitudes and willingness to be identified as bi-nationals (Canadian and French Canadian) were the ones who reported the highest L2 ability scores. In a recent study of Kurdish learners of Turkish in Turkey, using listener-rated measures of L2 accent, Polat and Schallert (2013) reported that the most successful L2 learners were either those who displayed strong identification with their own and L2 groups or those who strongly affiliated themselves with the L2 group. The disadvantaged group included the speakers with a single orientation towards their own ethnic group.

All these findings seem to indicate that a doubly-favourable orientation towards the native and the L2 communities has a positive effect on L2 acquisition, but this is not a required condition for learners to show at least some linguistic progress. What these studies seem to confirm is that a positive opinion of the L2 group can play a supportive role for L2 learning.
and use. It is necessary to keep in mind though that all these results are only valid under various preconditions.

**4.2.2.2 No correlation between Attitudes and L2 Learning Outcomes**

Although the studies above indicate a relationship between attitudes, ethnic affiliations and L2 learning behaviour and performance, a study by Diehl and Schnell (2006) suggested that, in the case of German immigrants, positive orientations and associations with the German speaking community might bear little relationship with L2 achievement. Diehl and Schnell analyzed large-scale self-report data from first and second-generation immigrants to Germany over a 17-year period. Across time, the researchers observed an increase in most immigrants’ attitudes and self-identification with the German culture (feeling totally German). This went hand in hand with a clear decrease in their identification with their ethnic group (feeling totally like a member of the country of origin), particularly in the second generation. What is interesting in this study is that immigrants’ L2 skills appeared to “stagnate” over time, in that first- and second-generation speakers reported similarly high German fluency in the 1980s and in the early 2000s, whereby second-generation informants evaluated themselves higher than their parents. The data, although not longitudinal, implies that positive attitudes and self-identification with the L2 group need not necessarily translate into steady improvement of L2 skills. At the same time, 40% of the Turkish, 65% of the EU, and 80% of the Yugoslavian participants rated their German language proficiency as “very good”, which was the highest-ranking option. Diehl and Schnell conclude that although stagnation may occur at some point, it is not the case that positive attitudes cannot be related to L2 learning behaviour and achievements, at least up and until a certain threshold. The researchers rather attribute the observed stagnation in language
acquisition in first-generation migrants to the fact “that learning complex skills like speaking a foreign language may be harder at higher ages” (Diehl & Schnell 2006, p. 802).

Overall, the findings from the studies discussed in this section form an interesting backdrop to my own research interest. Yet, several methodological and thematical shortcomings are noticeable, which I discuss thoroughly below.

4.2.3 Methodological Shortcomings of the Studies

The results of the studies that I have reviewed above can be summarized as identifying some correlations, yet as Wesley points out in her research review article “Learner Attitudes, Perceptions and Beliefs in Language Learning (2012), “there has been a lack of clarity and few conclusive findings about the directionality of this relationship, particularly across different contexts of study” (p.111). This observation is her response to her own question which she had posed earlier in her article, namely “Is there any causal relationship between learner attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs and outcomes like achievement or proficiency? Do more positive attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs truly contribute significantly to making language learners more successful in the classroom, or as language learners in general?” In my opinion, research has not been able to provide a definite answer to these questions simply because it is an unattainable goal. Relating learner attitudes towards the L2 language and community to learning behaviour and outcomes is not the same as relating input frequency and L2 listening comprehension. Yet, both are studied by means of the same research methods. This leads to the core of the issue. The quantitative, large-scale character of these studies aims at extracting a cause-and-effect relationship based on generalizations and classifications. While such an approach can help build an
explanatorily adequate model of learning, it can also narrow our understanding of the complexity of the issues at hand and could be the reason for inconclusive results. It further presupposes that attitudes and beliefs are static and at the disposition of an individual to easily retrieve. This, however is not the case, as Woods (2007) argues: “What we say we believe may not always be the factor which influences our actions, and individuals can carry out actions which seem to be inconsistent with what they say their beliefs are” (p. 207). This is the reason why I chose a qualitative research method. Rather than looking for a direct link between learners’ attitudes and learning behavior, it allowed me to regard attitudes as an interpretive lens which learners employ to make sense of and explain experiences, while they negotiate their identities (see Chapter 7). Because attitudes are so closely related to beliefs and identities and are dynamic and socially constructed, I believe they require a broader study approach like the emic qualitative method employed in this work.

4.3 Conclusions

In this chapter, I have laid out the theoretical framework that underlies the interpretation of my informants’ narratives, as well as surveyed study results in the field of learner attitudes and L2 acquisition. Although the majority of the research introduced here, including Gardner’s and Clément’s models, is based on quantitative research methods that are different than mine, they highlight trends which speak to my own research interests. It is my aim to build on these foundational concepts in new and different ways or as Welsey (2012) frames it, to make an attempt to uncouple “survey instruments and their theoretical foundations, thus investigating the same concepts with the same components but different research methods” (p. 111). Therefore, I view Gardner’s SEM as partially applicable to the
present study, in that it does recognise the two language acquisition contexts – the formal and informal one and rightly asserts that “motivation will play a bigger role than aptitude in the informal context largely because it will determine whether or not individuals will even avail themselves of the experience” (Gardner 2011, p. 25). Whereas the model was rather static when it first emerged, its latest version acknowledges the fact that motivation is not a fixed characteristic that determines achievement, but rather involves fluid and dynamic processes. While his model might still be problematic in L2 acquisition contexts where immediate identification with a target language community is not feasible (e.g., EFL), the aspects of Integrativeness and Attitudes toward the Learning Situation, complemented by Norton’s concept of investment, are applicable to the context of the IK, where there is an explicit integrative component inherent to the course and its teaching and learning objectives. Moreover, the political and public discourse in Germany in particular, and in Europe in general, with regard to immigration is characterized by othering and Us-vs.-Them dichotomies, exerting a palpable and omnipresent pressure to take a side (Hofer 2016). After all, in 2011 and 2012, the political debate around immigrants in Germany was still strongly influenced by Sarrazin’s book “Deutschland schafft sich ab” and had rather evolved into a “Integrations-Verweigerer-Debatte” (Hentges 2013, p.359). This, as I will show, had impact on immigrants’ attitudes towards their own and the L2 communities, as they appear to be intricately related to perceptions of belonging and positioning.

The insights gained from research on attitudes, identity and L2 acquisition so far have indicated that learner attitudes and identity constructs often appear to be related to contacts with L2 communities of practice and to L2 achievement in a reciprocal fashion. As I will

50 In Engl.: “Integration-Refusenik-Debate”.
show in Chapter 6, the quality and frequency of these contacts may shape attitudes and
dispositions and ultimately influence learners’ willingness to further invest in learning
opportunities through access to L2 communities.

Despite the publications of high-profile qualitative research (Norton, 1995) and some
critique in regard to the pervasiveness of survey research (Dörnyei 1994, Oxford 1994) in
the field of learner attitudes and beliefs, survey research continues to dominate in academia
(Wesley 2012). This is where the current study differs, as I attempt to examine these
unobservable attributes by employing qualitative research. I do this by employing narrative
inquiry. This involves inviting L2 immigrant learners to share what they think, and later
looking into how these thoughts are relevant to learning behavior and outcomes. Grotjahn
(2003) justifies the use of such contextual approaches as follows:

“Um ein wirkliches Verständnis des Forschungsgegenstandes Lehren und Lernen von
Sprachen zu erreichen, ist sowohl das Verstehen von Intentionen und
Handlungsgründen aus der Innenperspektive als auch eine kausale Erklärung der
beobachtbaren Handlungen und Verhaltensweisen aus der Außenperspektive
notwendig“ (p. 497)51.

These research methods also conceive attitudes and identities as contextual, dynamic, and
socially constructed. In order to investigate their interconnectedness holistically, one needs
to apply a contextual emic research design, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the
underlying processes and factors and further illuminates the idiosyncrasy and complexity

51 In Engl.: “Achieving a true understanding of the research object Teaching and Learning of Languages requires an
understanding of intentions and reasons for action from the inner perspective, as well as a causal explanation of the
observed actions and behaviour from an external perspective”. 

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of each L2 learning experience. The next chapter will cater to these considerations by introducing narrative inquiry as my research approach of choice.
Chapter 5

Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to account for my choice of research methodology and its implementation in the current study. I will begin by elaborating on narrative inquiry (NI) within the field of SLA and will then present the epistemology underlying the present work, along with the specific tools and methods for data collection that I chose to utilize. In the second half of this chapter, I will elucidate the research and data collection processes, as well as the analytical and interpretative modes employed in the study.

5.1 Narrative Inquiry

Although narratives have been used in research since the beginning of the 20th century (see Thomas & Znaniecki, 1919), they were overhauled by experimental and statistical survey methodologies already by the end of it. Consequently, NI did not find their way into SLA until only recently, when an increased interest in narratives in the social sciences denoted the narrative turn (Riessman, 2003) and led to the adoption of narrative approaches for the studying of language teaching and learning as well. Due to the great amount of existing narrative studies, NI is nowadays considered an “established approach to qualitative research” (Barkhuizen, Benson & Chik 2014, p. xi). Yet, given the existence of on-going criticism (i.e. Bamberg 2007), I feel it is imperative to account for my choice of methodology and to demonstrate why and how it is the most suitable approach for exploring my specific research interests.
Hearing and telling stories about past events are phenomena inherent and familiar to every human being. Yet, they are not only a “basic, necessary, and fascinating human activity” (Daiute 2014, p.4), but also a fundamental way for people to organize their understanding of the world (Cortazzi 2002) and construct the self (Josselson, Lieblich & McAdams 2006). According to Bruner’s distinction between paradigmatic and narrative types of cognition (Bruner 1986), the first one gave rise to the development of rational thinking and furthermore research that favors rational arguments over narratives. The hegemony of quantitative approaches, however, has recently been criticized for leading to conclusions that are disconnected from the lived experiences of individuals. In SLA, these quantitative approaches translated into notions that the sole responsibility for successful or failed L2 learning is in the hands of the learner and in artificial differentiations between formal and informal L2 learning. Over time, scholars “became weary of variables and the quantification of the positivist approach” (Josselson 1993, p. xv) and challenged the assumption that natural phenomena should be studied much with the same methodologies as social, psychological and educational ones (Barkhuizen et al. 2014). With the emergence of post-structuralist conceptualizations of self and identity, the need for a different methodological approach became more apparent, leading researchers to turn to narratives as a tool that could reveal the meanings underlying individuals’ actions and open access into their inner worlds. Narratives have further been linked to the idea that research should both involve and empower the individuals at the core of the research interests (Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton & Richardson 1992, Norton 2013) and should “make aspects of the world vivid and generate a sense of empathy … [to] help us to know what it feels like” (Eisner 1995, p.5). Ultimately, narrative inquiries can give a voice to and offer an
opportunity for marginalized groups or people to participate in knowledge construction in
the academy (Canagarajah 1996).

A central distinctive aspect of NI is that the introspection and articulation of learners’ lived
experiences allows for the revelation of unstated emotions, thoughts, and attitudes, which
are the main foci of my study. The pedagogical value for SLA in these revelations is that
they lend themselves to further examination for the purpose of explaining learning behavior
and even crafting behavior management strategies (Johnson & Golombek 2011). L2
learners’ narratives with their inherent temporal line reveal the causal relationship between
past and current experiences and learning behavior in and outside the L2 classroom.
Understanding this relationship and learners’ perspectives and underlying attitudes can be
a tool for both learners and teachers to “be more thoughtful and mindful of their work”
(Johnson & Golombeck 2002, p.7), promoting a more critically-reflective L2 learning.
Generally, narratives grant researchers access to information that otherwise often remains
unconscious and concealed, including to the learners themselves. This allows for the
emergence of deeply hidden assumptions, which can have implications for both teaching
and learning second languages (Bell 2002). This is not to say that narratives replace or make
obsolete surveys, observations, experiments or other research methods. As Pavlenko and
Lantolf describe it, they do “bring to the surface aspects of human activity including SLA
that cannot be captured in the more traditional approach to research” (2000, p.159).

The specifics of narrative inquiry, in particular, its suitability for investigating identity
formations and underlying attitudes make it distinctively relevant and suited for my desired
research objectives. In the following, I will elaborate more closely on the definition of
narratives and NI and which type of NI and why I deemed this most fitting for the present study.

5.2 Definition and Types of Narratives and Narrative Inquiry

“Narrative inquiry brings storytelling and research together either by using stories as research data or by using storytelling as a tool for data analysis or presentation of findings.” (Barkhuizen et al. 2014, p. 3).

5.2.1 Narratives

Narratives are stories. Yet, is every story appropriate for narrative inquiry research? In order to answer this question, one would need a definition of narratives, however, given the variety of texts considered narratives across different disciplines, Barkhuizen et al. (2014) are correct to assert that narratives and NI are “notoriously hard to define” (p.2).

My understanding of narratives is largely influenced by Daiute’s (2014) broader definition as “accounts of daily life, stories that spring from the imagination, vignettes of daily life, news reports of events of public interest, histories, gossip and other oral and written accounts in past, present, and future time” (2014, p.2), complimented by Murray’s (2009) assertion, that “a story can be research when it is interpreted in view of the literature of a field, and this process yields implications for practice, future research or theory building” (p. 46). In this sense, my answer to the opening question is positive.

Within the field of language teaching and learning, Benson (2014, p.155) has observed four main classifications of narratives as follows:
• A narrative as a “key story”. This understanding is based on Labov’s theoretical work (1972), where each account of past experience consists of six components: abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution, evaluation and coda. While Labov’s work paved the way for systematic investigation of nonfictional narratives and has been widely adopted (Johnstone 2016), his approach is of structuralist nature and has been criticized for being too linear, static and limiting (Edwards 1997).

• A narrative as a “life story” or an autobiographical account. In the field of narrative research and identity, this conceptualization is conceived of as the way in which humans reconstruct and make sense of their lives. (Bruner 2001).

• A narrative in the sense of “master narratives” or overarching “culture-wide ideologies” that govern and affect the themes and accounts of specific events (Lyotard 1984, Tannen 2008).

• A narrative as a “small story”. These signify more fragmentary accounts captured in everyday talk or short stretches of narrative within an interview (Bamber & Geogakopoulou 2008, Vasquez 2011, De Fina 2013). The analysis of this subcategory of narratives within applied linguistics has indeed yielded insights into language and learning. Yet, it is somewhat problematic, for it blurs the line between narratives and everyday talk, reflecting on the aforementioned difficulty to strictly define narratives.

Benson concludes that the type of narrative text is of lesser importance compared to the underlying focus on the activity of storytelling and its “meaning-making functions” that is common to all research in the field of NI (Pomerantz & Kearney 2012, p.224).
My handling and application of narratives draws to a degree on the first three classifications, in that I prompt my informants to share accounts of past experiences, but at the same time also their life stories and visions for their future. In the analysis of the gathered data, I identify “units” (Riessman 2003) or in other words accounts of specific events, which are part of a bigger, thematically comprehensive narrative triggered by my thematically oriented questions. The analysis of both illuminate experiences, identity formations, but also allows for the exploration of the assumptions and attitudes inherent in the shaping of these narratives. Tannen (2008) terms these master narratives. During my interviews, for example, when asked about contacts with L2 speakers outside of the classroom, all of the participants addressed the difficulty of making friends or lasting contacts with Germans and exemplified this with specific accounts. One of the culturally held beliefs that emerged as an underlying narrative for some participants was that Germans are cold, formal and unsociable. Over time, experiences that either confirmed or disproved these perceptions influenced these participants’ motivation to further seek learning opportunities through contact with L2 speakers.

My understanding and use of narratives do not stray from research practices and fit into the broader framework of four major quality criteria that all NI research within SLA has in common, as observed by Barkhuizen et al. (2014, p.7):

1. The narratives I use as data are stories of personal experience. Although my research is not designed as an autobiographical one, it does work with autobiographical data.

2. The narratives in my study recount experiences of language learning.
3. These experiences are situated in the context of the narrators’ everyday life.

4. Lastly, the stories involve and illuminate aspects of the narrators’ identities.

The use of narratives allowed the participants in my study to articulate and bring forth the significance of language learning for their lives and identity formations.

5.2.2 Narrative Inquiry

Due to the extensive use of narratives across a variety of research fields nowadays, the concept of narrative inquiry within SLA has meanwhile grown into a catchall umbrella term for qualitative research utilizing narratives to explore teachers’ and learners’ experiences (Barkhuizen et al. 2014, Benson 2014). There are, however, several specific categories and themes that distinguish NI within language teaching and learning research. Below, I will position my work with respect to them.

5.2.2.1 Categories

A basic distinction made within NI is based on Polkinghorne’s work (see Barkhuizen 2014, Benson 2013, 2014). Following Bruner’s concept of cognitive dualism (1986), he differentiates between narrative analysis and analysis of narratives. The first one denotes a “narrative-type” NI, the second one a “paradigmatic-type” NI (Polkinghorne 1995, p. 5). Specifically, narrative analysis refers to NI where results are presented and analyzed as a story or in a narrative form. Analysis of narratives on the other hand refers to NI where stories (narratives) are used as data. This distinction is not strict though and relies upon the researchers understanding of what constitutes a narrative (Barkhuizen et al. 2014, Benson 2013, 2014). In line with my understanding of narratives and with established research (i.e.,
Benson 2013, Norton 2000), I adopt and modify this common distinction for the present work in that I draw on both methods and use narratives as data, yet without producing “paradigmatic typologies or categories” (p.5) as Polkinghorne suggests. It is my aim, through this work, to emphasize the singularity and idiosyncrasy of each of my participants’ learning experiences, rather than to “separate the data into groups of like items [in order to] identify the common attributes that define them as members of a category” (ibid, p. 10).

In keeping with my objectives, I use a narrative form throughout the analysis of the individual cases in order to re-construct and re-tell the stories of my participants. Based on the collected data and analysis, I draw more general conclusions about the IK, its didactics, goals and efficacy in reaching these goals (see Chapter 7). A more detailed elaboration on my analytical approach is to be found in Section 5.4.

A second distinction is made in regard to the relationship of the researcher and the participants, that is, there are biographical, autobiographical and (auto)biographical types of NI. In adhering to the biographical approach (i.e., in re-telling my participants’ autobiographical accounts), I remain within the clear differentiation between the roles of researcher and participants.

The third distinction addresses the focus of NI research and whether it targets the content of narratives (what people say) or rather the linguistic features of the narratives (how people say what they do). Since I am interested in illuminating socio-psychological aspects of L2 learning, my study is concerned with the content of narratives and what it reveals about the interrelations between identity, attitudes and L2 learning. Linguistic issues, such as syntax, grammar use and vocabulary range will be addressed solely for the purpose of assessing L2 acquisition progress and bringing it in line with the learners’ perceived linguistic progress.
The evidence will be sourced not from interviews, but from the classroom observations and coursework reviews.

Apart from these main distinctions, the boundaries of NI are often blurred and it generally intersects with research approaches such as case study, ethnography, longitudinal research, diary study and language memoirs, most of which the present study incorporates to a certain degree as well (see Section 5.3). This open-endedness of NI is reflective of its fluid character and the fact that to the present day, there are no strict guidelines for conducting NI research. Barkhuizen et al. (2014) frame this as follows:

“A narrative research journey is not a matter of following a set of cut and dried directions, but of feeling one’s way through a project with the guidance of those who have gone before.” (ibid., p. xii)

This is true for the present study as well, where the methodology for data collection and analysis were inspired by a plethora of existing studies of qualitative nature in SLA (i.e., Norton 2000, Menard-Warwick 2009, Nunan & Choi 2010).

5.2.2.2 Themes

There are three major themes that have emerged within SLA-oriented NI research. These are identity, context and affect. My study is interested in exploring aspects of all three.

What sets NI apart from other research methods is its potential to provide access to L2 learning experiences over longer time spans, as it can capture both retrospective and longitudinal accounts of language learning. This is the case in the present study, where participants were monitored and interviewed throughout the duration of the IK. NI fit my
agenda perfectly, as it is a research method that grants access to L2 learning as “lived experiences that take place over long periods of time and in multiple settings and contexts” (Barkhuizen et al. 2014, p.12). Migrating to another country and having to learn another language takes up a big part of an individual’s life (Norton 2000, 2013, Bremer et al. 1993) and entails a longer developmental process that is influenced by factors and experiences in and outside of the L2 classroom. This is inevitably related to changes in identity formations, which can only happen over time, because “prolonged contact with an L2 and a new and different cultural setting causes irreversible destabilization of the individual’s sense of self” (Block 2002, p. 2). In this regard, it can be claimed that NI is the best suited research approach for the investigation of the development of L2 identities over time, which is the focus of the present study. Its capacity has been confirmed through its wide use in established identity-oriented research (e.g. Benson et al. 2013, Giroir 2013, Norton 2013, Simpson 2010).

A second pervasive theme within SLA oriented NI studies is that of context. This is plausible, because “when language learners are asked to tell their histories, they inevitably address contextual, situational, and cultural factors as part of the story of their learning” (Oxford 1996, p. 582). In the case of migrants, L2 learning is not situated in a single learning context, as it does not stop once class ends. It continues outside of the L2 classroom, where the L2 is also most needed. The NI method allows for considering not only the social, historical and cultural contexts, in which L2 learning happens, but most importantly for viewing them framed by the primary context, that of the L2 learners’ lives.

The third theme arises from the fact that autobiographical narratives of the type used in the present study, bring to the surface the emotional aspects of the language acquisition process.
The analysis of people’s stories allows for feelings, assumptions and held values to surface. This provides researchers with the opportunity to recognize the *master* narratives inherent to the shaping of their stories and to relate them to identity formations and L2 learning behavior and outcomes.

5.2.2.3 Limitations:

Any research method has its limitations and NI is no exception. Below, I attempt to address some of these limitations and how I sought to mitigate them.

One of the main features of NI – its focus on individual experiences – makes it unfit for studies with a larger number of participants due to the considerable time commitment it requires. For my study, I selected six German learners from a group of initially fourteen enrolled in the IK at a Frankfurt location. This number allowed me to spend considerable time on each case study and at the same time elicit valuable insights about migrant L2 learners and the German IK in general.

Understanding L2 learners is possible through the examination of a variety of evidence about the language learning process, both observable and unobservable. The present study is largely concerned with a certain subset of unobservable features of language learners: that of their attitudes and perceptions about learning German in the IK, along with their identity formations. In that these attributes are unobservable, I use NI to prompt language learners to share what they think. This is done under the assumption that these thoughts are pertinent and important to understanding how the language acquisition process works. It does not, however, imply that I take accounts and opinions to be “true” and overlook their subjectivity. The probably most frequently uttered criticism of NI is regarding its subjective
and interpretive nature (Pavlenko 1998) and it is essential for researchers “not to fall into the trap of treating narratives as factual accounts of their subject matter” (Barkhuizen et al. 2014, p.5) if they wish to guard the trustworthiness of the research results. Thus, when learners expressed opinions about the IK, I treated them as their subjective interpretations of it and not as the truth about the state of the program. I then attempted to rather identify master narratives and further underlying reasons for these comments. In addition, I sought to expand the sources of information and supplemented the interviews with e-journals, classroom observations and coursework examination (see Section 5.9).

My understanding of what narratives represent is based on sociological and psychological research. In sociology, narratives have been used as a means of investigating social phenomena from the perspective of “the changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their everyday lives” (Roberts 2002, p. 1). In psychology, narratives are viewed as the “key to understanding the ways in which individuals organize their experiences and the identities through which they represent them to themselves and others” (Barkhuizen et al. 2014, p.5). It can be argued that they have the potential to do both, provided they are not seen as the truth about L2 learning in a specific context, but rather as offering alternative perspectives. My aim with the described focus on narratives in this study is to contribute to a richer and more complete understanding of migrant L2 learning perspectives and experiences.

There is also another area of concern regarding NI. The close observation of and collaboration with participants inevitably shortens the distance between the researcher and the researched. Indeed, a certain closeness is even required for the participants to feel comfortable sharing their personal accounts and letting the researcher into their lives. This
can often lead to the perception of a partnership, which makes it difficult for the researcher to remain disengaged and ultimately brings forth ethical concerns. Moreover, this collaboration raises an awareness that “the constructed narrative and subsequent analysis illuminates the researcher as much as the participant” (Bell 2002, p. 210). The reconstruction and reading of personal accounts and their subsequent placement in a larger context inevitably imposes meaning on the learner’s lived experiences, thus the final product of NI research is always the researcher’s interpretation of the learners’ accounts. This is something that NI researchers do not seek to deny, but rather embrace as a strength, as Duff (2008) observes:

“[M]ost qualitative researchers, especially poststructuralists, do not see subjectivity as a major issue, as something that can or should be eliminated. Rather, they see it as an inevitable engagement with the world in which meanings and realities are constructed (not just discovered) and in which the researcher is very much present” (p. 56).

Hence, my subjectivity as principal in this research project must be considered as an integral part of it. In addition, I hope that by using a narrative form for the re-construction of my participants’ narratives, I leave room for readers to make their own interpretations, which might differ from mine (see 5.4).

5.3 The Data Collection Process

In the late summer of 2011, I sent out a call for research assistance to 22 certified language schools offering the IK in Frankfurt, Germany. Frankfurt was the city of choice for two reasons. For one, it is a focal point for newly arrived immigrants in Germany. In addition, the Toronto-Frankfurt air path is well served with frequent and direct flights, which
allowed me to stay within the allotted research budget without jeopardising the regularity of the visits.

Below, I will elaborate on the language school, that granted me access to classrooms, the process of selection of participants and the data types and collection processes.

5.3.1 The School

One of the first schools to respond to the call and offer their assistance was one of the largest certified private carriers of Integration Courses with numerous capacious language schools operating in the Frankfurt area. I was granted unlimited access to Integrationskurs classrooms in order to select suitable informants for my qualitative research. As a next step, I contacted a particular branch and obtained their consent as well. They informed me of two IK classes that were scheduled to begin on November 21st and December 5th respectively. After meeting with the school’s manager, I commenced the selection of potential informants by auditing both classes in their second and first week of instruction respectively. This was done after informing the instructors of the purpose of my study and obtaining their consent. After spending a day with each group and careful consideration, I settled on the group consisting of 14 learners, who had started the IK on November 21st. There were several reasons for my choice. This particular group was beginning the IK at Modul 3 (see Section 2.1), which meant that participants would be slightly better linguistically equipped for the interviews than their peers who were starting at Modul 2. Since the other group had just begun the IK, I assumed that participants would not be able

52 I intentionally withhold the carrier’s name for two reasons. The first is that my study warrants absolute anonymity. The second is that I do not wish my study to be read as an evaluation of teaching practices in a particular carrier, which might unwillingly damage the school’s reputation.
to share any impressions about the course and the teaching and learning process. Moreover, groups were still subject to formation during the first week, thus I opted for the one where no one was expected to be transferred to another level after this point.

5.3.2 The Instructors and Textbooks

It is not the intent of the present dissertation to evaluate the work of individual instructors employed in IK classrooms. I rather see the teachers and the textbooks in use as part of the IK institution, since both are under the BAMF policy umbrella. The eligibility criteria for IK teachers are set by BAMF and include either a university degree in GFL or GSL or a Zusatzqualifizierung certificate issued by one of the BAMF-certified educational organisations. It is necessary to point out that instructors come to the IK from a variety of educational backgrounds and that only a small portion of them hold a university degree in GFL or GSL (see Hartkopf 2010). This can be explained in part by the fact that instructors with a university degree are more likely to seek employment within the public-school system rather than the IK due to working conditions. Therefore, the IK has been marked by a shortage of instructors since its very introduction, exacerbated by the shortage of school teachers in many federal republics and the significant discrepancy in salary levels and social security benefits between the two teaching professions. On average, IK instructors receive 40% less compared to school teachers and are self-employed, meaning that they cover social insurance contributions on their own. The fact that the profession of an IK instructor fails to attract is reflected in the statistical data confirming that only about 50% of all IK

53 In Engl.: “Additional qualification”.
54 A detailed description of the required qualifications can be retrieved at: http://www.bamf.de/DE/Infothek/Lehrkraefte/Kriterien/kriterien-node.html
certified instructors are indeed working as IK instructors (Bündnis DaF-DaZ Lehrkräfte 2016). As result, there has been a clear tendency for BAMF to over time lower the criterions and qualification requirements for IK instructors to ensure a sufficient number of IK offerings (compare Zulassungskriterien für Lehrkräfte in Integrationskursen, §15 Abs. 1 und 2 IntV from 2004 and 2017). For theses reasons, some research has questioned the subject-didactic knowledge some IK instructors may bring to the course (Hartkopf 2010, Zimmer 2013). In addition, the very tight time-frame of the IK and the OK specifically makes the reaching of learning objectives highly problematic, as it puts the content width and thematic depth in sharp competition with each other (Hartkopf 2010, p. 81).

BAMF is also in charge of issuing the list with approved textbooks to be used in the IK. The textbook used in class was Berliner Platz Neu in Teilbänden, Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch, A1, A2, B1, mit Audio-CD (Munich: Langenscheidt, 2009) by Susan Kaufmann and Margaret Rodi. The book displayed a very gradual introduction to topics and grammar, which made it suitable for learners at the beginner level. Largely based on the communicative approach, exercises were aimed at training speaking, writing and listening comprehension with authentic materials. The book further included a variety of exercise types, such as matching tasks, word-scrambles, multiple choice, fill-in-the gap, short dictations, word-snakes (determining beginning and end of a word), crosswords, correction of capital and small initial letters, etc. The layout of chapters and topics appeared clear and accessible, with short topic and grammar summaries after each chapter. In addition, the book was visually stimulating with numerous pictures. The choice of topics was in line with

55 A detailed list can be retrieved at: http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Integrationskurse/Lehrkraefte/liste-zugelassener-lehrwerke.pdf?__blob=publicationFile
BAMF’s learning objectives, covering all areas relevant to migrants to Germany, except for instructions on how to fill out forms and how to conduct conversations at governmental offices.

While I acknowledge the role of the language instructor and the methodology dictated by the textbooks in use, my research is more concerned with the effects of IK-classroom practices on learners’ attitudes, identities and learning behaviour from the participants’ perspective. Hence, I do not undertake a comprehensive examination of the teaching methodologies or the textbooks or pedagogical approaches of the teachers, as this would vastly exceed the scope of the present work. Indeed, until I started observing the IK, I did not intend to provide specific information on the instructors. This changed, as I believe the circumstances might have been somewhat unusual. As mentioned above, each group in the IK is taught by two teachers in a weekly rotational pattern commencing on Fridays. The two teachers assigned to my focus group were Zorica and Susanne – both long-term IK instructors and employees of the language school. Zorica was the instructor in the first week of my stay. When Susanne took over on Friday, I witnessed an explicitly offensive behaviour towards the participants. They informed me their reports about such incidents to the school’s administration had been ignored. After discussing the matter with Zorica, she approached the school management which led to Susanne’s reprimand and a subsequent correction in her behaviour and language. I discuss these events among other things in my observations (see Section 6.1). It was, however, necessary for these circumstances to be clarified and explained prior to the case study analysis in Chapter 6, as all participants repeatedly referenced them in their interviews. It is further necessary to take under consideration the fact that Susanne was an experienced IK instructor employed at several
IK schools since the IK’s introduction. As much as her attitudes might have been noticeable and in that sense different compared to those of other IK instructors, she was allowed by the school administration to keep her position and continue teaching. In that, she too must be considered part of the IK institution. This particular instructor and the possible effects she might have had on the participants’ learning is further addressed in chapter 7.

5.3.3 Participants

The selection of participants for the study presented me with the first challenge, which I had anticipated – the language. Ideally, narrative studies would be carried out in a shared first language or at least in the interviewee’s native language(s) (Pavlenko 2007), but it is the nature of SLA research that this is rarely an option. Furthermore, in his NI research on ethnic German speakers in Czechoslovakia, Nekvapil (2003) showed that “the language does not have a significant influence on the stability of the narratives investigated” (p. 66). English and/or German had to be the languages of the interviews, because none of the IK participants spoke a L1 that intersected with my L1 or L2s. This significantly reduced the number of participants I could recruit for the study. Most importantly, it excluded learners whose stories and perspectives I wished to hear and give voice to the most. This aspect is addressed again in Chapter 7.

The alternative to using German and/or English as interview languages would have been to employ translators. This, however, could have had a negative impact of its own in that it prevents the interviewer from establishing a close relationship and good rapport with the interviewees (Kouritzin 2000). It can further “negate the feeling of pride that second language speakers often have when they discover for themselves that they can make
themselves understood in a foreign language” (ibid, p. 18). One of my informants chose to give the interviews in English, the rest all chose German. Many of them felt it provided a rare and much-needed opportunity to practice the new language (see Sections 6.3, 6.4, 6.5). I also encouraged learners to make use of code-switching between English, German and their respective L1 if they felt it necessary. I later used professional services to translate the few foreign expressions from the transcripts.

Out of the fourteen learners in the group, seven had sufficient knowledge of either German or English and were hence suitable for participation in the project. I decided to conduct interviews with all seven of them, in order to secure enough data in case one or more participants dropped the course. This proved to be a good measure of precaution.

The initial seven learners, who agreed to participate in the study were Cemre from Turkey, Youssef from Morocco, Ahmed from Turkey, Esma from Turkey, Darla from Turkey, Dario from Columbia and Carlos from Bolivia\textsuperscript{56}. Esma, Darla, Dario and Carlos all took a break from the Integrationskurs for various reasons. Esma withdrew in January 2012, because she had to return to Turkey due to a family emergency. She enrolled in the second round of Integrationskurs a few months later. Darla was pregnant when the Integrationskurs began and was forced to withdraw two months into it due to pregnancy complications and prolonged hospitalizations. Dario abruptly withdrew from the course in March and moved to Berlin, where he continued with the IK\textsuperscript{57}. Carlos struggled with the learning material, did not attend regularly and eventually dropped the IK in early spring.

\textsuperscript{56} All participants’ names used in this study are pseudonyms.
\textsuperscript{57} This information is based on the IK instructor’s Zorica accounts.
The three other participants, Cemre, Youssef and Ahmed all remained in the Integrationskurs and completed both the course and the study. At my second visit to Frankfurt in May 2012, six more students had joined the course. Two of them – Monica from Italy and Karim from Tunisia – displayed sufficient knowledge of German and English and agreed to join the study. After completing the initial forms, I conducted extended interviews with them. Both Monica and Karim completed the IK and the study.

The following chart provides a brief overview of all the learners I interviewed for the study. For further details about each of the participants who completed the study, see Chapter 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Date of First Interview</th>
<th>Date of Second Interview</th>
<th>Date of Third Interview</th>
<th>Successful Completion of the IK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahmed</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>08.12.2011</td>
<td>06.05.2012</td>
<td>24.09.2012</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karim</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>09.05.2012</td>
<td>28.09.2012</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monica</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>10.05.2012</td>
<td>26.09.2012</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.4 The Interviews

Interviews represent the main data collection tool for the present study. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that “[t]he qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ points of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations” (p. 1). For these reasons, I deemed it the most suitable method for accessing personal perspectives on language learning in a situated context as that of the IK.

Before the interviews, all selected learners filled out the Information Letter and Consent Form. Although the research plan was to focus on five or six cases, I interviewed all seven learners as a preventive measure, which proved wise as outlined above. After carefully reviewing the information provided on the forms, I began to schedule and conduct the initial interviews. Five of the interviews were scheduled and took place right after the end of
classes and two interviews were scheduled for later in the evening, due to participants’ obligations. Anticipating that interviewees would share very personal experiences, I made sure to provide privacy. Some interviews took place on the premises of the course carrier, where we were accommodated in a vacant room provided for the purposes of the study by the office manager of the language school. This guaranteed confidentiality, participants’ anonymity and a calm atmosphere. Some interviews, however, were conducted in nearby cafes. This was done in consultation with the participants, as they simply felt more comfortable outside of the school’s premises. All initial interviews were audio-recorded on a portable recorder by Sony ICD-BX112. This model was chosen mainly because of its discrete size, which added to an environment conducive to conversation. My goal was for the participants to forget about the formality of the situation and for a natural discourse to emerge. The following two rounds of interviews were recorded on an iPad2 using the application Instant Audio Recorder 3.5, which ensured superior quality of the audiotapes.

The second round of interviews followed a similar pattern, some were done on school premises, some in informal locations. Since the last round of interviews was shortly after the completion of the IK, all interviews took place in informal locations (for details see individual cases in Chapter 6).

There are three formats for research interviews - structured, semi-structured and open (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009). For the present study, I opted for a semi-structured form as it is the most flexible one. In his discussion of life history interviews, Atkinson (1998) asserts that “the less structure a life story interview has, the more effective it will be in achieving the goal of getting the person’s own story in the way, form, and style that the individual wants to tell it in” (p. 41). It is also the most commonly used configuration in language
learning research (Barkhuizen et al. 2014). Following Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), I prepared for the interview stage with an interview guide (see Appendix B), which Richards (2003) describes as “a resource that can be drawn on in whatever way and to whatever extent is appropriate” (p. 69). It contained the topics to be covered and suggested questions. Since participants were informed about the purpose of my study, I posed direct questions from the start, yet avoiding direct conceptual questions, as these may rather impede conversation (Sennett 2004). I further strived to formulate interview questions that would “contribute thematically to knowledge production and dynamically to promoting a good interview interaction” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 131). This resulted in short, easy to understand questions devoid of academic language, that were related to the theoretical conceptions of my research topic. This set of core questions helped me in anchoring the individual interviews and in ensuring coherence across the interviews. Although questions were largely similar across all interviews, I chose not to use standardized questions and rather modified them to fit the vocabulary, educational background, and the comprehension of each participant (Shaffer & Elkins 2005). The form of a semi-structured interview provided me with a certain flexibility in that it allowed me to ask follow-up questions whenever there was need for clarity and additional elaborations. This is what eventually turned each interview into a unique personal account.

As to the interview questions, I used gradual progress, which allowed me to move from the more general questions, to the more project-specific ones and as such eased interviewees into the conversation. To be able to track and recognize changes over time, the core of the interview questions stayed the same at all three stages of the interviewing process and
focused on three main topics, aimed at a “cognitive clarification of the subjects’ experience of learning” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p.24):

- attitudes towards the IK, Germany, Germans and the German language;
- cultural and ethnic affiliations and belonging;
- learning behaviour and habits regarding formal learning;
- learning behaviour in informal learning context;

Since I felt that some of the participants were initially slightly sceptical about the interviewing process and what it would entail, I followed Block’s (2002) strategy and introduced academic linkage between language learning, identity and attitudes in the wording of the questions, (e.g., Many researchers see communication with native speakers outside of the classroom as very important for the learning of a new language. Do you agree? Do you try to speak German outside of the IK?). This strategy helped me to draw participants’ focus towards the research purposes of my investigation and to assure them I was not simply collecting their personal accounts and information. The use of academic linkage was unnecessary for the second and third rounds of interviews where participants were already acquainted and more comfortable with the interviewing process. Otherwise, throughout the data collection, I continued to use accessible everyday language and to avoid academic terms.

With regard to the time variable, the interviews can be described as concurrent, that is participants recounted their past history of learning German or of other languages and compared it to their current adjustment to the new linguistic environment and experiences with the IK.
Each interview lasted between 45 min and 1.5 hours and the core data set is comprised of a total of 17 hours of interview recordings. These were supplemented with short journal entries in form of emails, classroom observations, course work examination and conversations with the school manager and the instructors. These are additionally outlined below.

5.3.5 Journal Entries:

Diaries in NI research are meant to record general reflections and observations, such as the writer’s thoughts and feelings about their learning and stories of language-related experiences. In the case of classroom-based learning as in the IK, learners were provided with an additional chance to comment on the teaching practices and classroom activities (see Appendix C). Benson (2004) points out that an important characteristic of learner diaries as narrative data is that they are written concurrently with learning. This makes them particularly useful for research like mine, that aims to explore and understand affective factors, learning strategies, and the learners’ own perceptions of their language learning, because the information is recorded while learners are actually engaged in the process of learning. Diary studies further make accessible data observable by other methods (Faerch & Kasper, 1987) and provide a rich, full picture of learning in its social and cognitive dimensions from the learners’ point of view (Bailey 1990). Since the diary entries in my study were meant as a supplement to the interviews and I did not wish to ask too much of my informants who were overwhelmed with adjusting to new lives, realities and a job market, I scheduled them to occur only once in-between interviews. I felt that a greater frequency could have repelled learners from participating in the study, given that I was not physically present to encourage them. I sent a total of two emails, one approximately a
month after my first visit and another one a month after my second visit. In my emails, I asked for general updates on the IK and participants’ learning efforts outside of it. Everyone responded regularly and in a timely fashion.

5.3.6 Classroom Observations

Along with the interviews and journal entries, throughout all three visits at the language school, I regularly attended all classes with the group. Classes took place every day from 8 am to 12:15 pm, with a 15-minute break at 10 am. During my classroom observations, I sat closest to the instructor, at the lower end of the table arrangement, which was organized in a circular manner and made notes about the context, participants’ behaviour, classroom dynamics or anything else that I felt might be relevant for my research. During lunch breaks, I went over my informants’ course work provided by them and the instructor or upon their request, assisted with the learning material. At my first and second visits, I also had the chance to teach one unit in the presence of the instructor. In addition, I audited as many other IK classes as possible, including alphabetization classes, in an effort to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of how the IK operates. In the same effort, I conducted two lengthy conversations, one with the school manager and another with an experienced teacher leading an alphabetization course. I further had conversations with other instructors, mostly during the lunch breaks or the breaks in-between classes. These conversations were informal, spontaneous and were not recorded. However, they helped me apprehend the dynamics at the school, gain a better understanding of the administrative aspects of the IK, as well as to learn more about the teachers’ working conditions. My personal observations and evaluation of IK practices are reflected throughout the reconstructions of my participants’ narratives, as well as in Section 6.1.
5.4 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Below, I outline the research methodology used for the present study. It involved three stages:

1) Longitudinal data collection
2) Construction of case study narratives / thematic analysis
3) Juxtaposition of the case studies

The first step once the data collection process was completed, was to transcribe the interviews. Although transcribing verbatim is a common way of handling oral data, I decided not to entirely adopt it for my study. There are several reasons for this. Verbatim transcripts often convey a feeling of rawness through repetitions, longer pauses, atypical grammar and syntax as they naturally occur in spoken conversations. These are further amplified when learners do not give the interviews in their first language, as was the case with my informants. My argument against a word-for-word transcribing is that, as Kvale (1996) points out, verbatim quotations can project unfavourable images of the participants when delivered in such raw form. They can further impact the readability of the text and are mostly appropriate in research primarily concerned with linguistic forms. Since my research focuses on content, interactions were transcribed orthographically.

After transcribing the interviews, I organized all available data into groups pertaining to each participant. Since the data were produced and collected in a chronological fashion, they already had an organic beginning-middle-end structure. Once the data were grouped

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58 Verbatim denotes a word-for-word transcribing of the data, which includes non-verbal elements of the interaction.
and organized, I read them several times. This helped me gain a deeper understanding of my participants’ perspectives and what they were trying to say. I then eliminated data that was not pertinent to the research objectives, and at the same time highlighted accounts of particular relevance. My next effort was to convert each of my informants’ narratives into a more condensed, coherent, and readable form, which would allow for juxtaposing them with the other case studies. The task was to not simply tell my informants’ stories on their behalf, but to construct narratives that would tell their stories and at the same time address the issues of my research interests. Hence, the five new narratives resulted from synthesizing the data and organizing it in thematically coherent paragraphs. Going back to Polkinghorne’s distinction between two types of NI research, analysis of narratives and narrative analysis, my writing up of the learners’ accounts can be viewed as a hybrid of both, as it is not merely a re-narration of the collected data, it is also my interpretation of it based on thematical cornerstones. Riessman (2008) calls this approach thematic analysis. In thematic analysis, “data are interpreted in light of thematics developed by the investigator (influenced by prior and emergent theory, the concrete purpose of an investigation, the data themselves, political commitments, and other factors)” (p. 54). This method of analysis does not necessitate a follow-up “cross-case” analysis (Duff 2008) comparing the case studies in search of differences and similarities allowing to draw categorical conclusions and generalizations, because the findings of my study are already to be found in the learners’ narratives themselves. In choosing this methodology, I capture a moment in NI, when the researcher engages in narrative writing as both a method of inquiry (Richardson 1994) and a method of communicating findings (Ely 2007). Due to the rudimentary subjective nature of NI that I already highlighted in Section 5.2.2.3, my
interpretation of the learners’ narratives is already contained in the selection of data. As Benson (2013) summarizes:

“… the value of narrative research does not stand or fall on an assumption of the ‘veracity’ of narratives. In oral history, for example, participants’ recollections are valued, not because they represent the ‘truth’ of what happened at a particular moment of time […] but because they offer alternative perspectives to those found in official documents or contemporary printed accounts, from which their voices are absent. They offer a valuable complementary perspective to established research approaches in applied linguistics, especially in regard to those aspects of language learning that are difficult to access through methodologies which neglect or suppress the voices of those who actually do the learning.” (p.247)

In line with these findings, I strove to strike a balance between giving participants in the German IK a voice and emphasizing the idiosyncrasy of each learning experience on the one hand, and deriving insights in regard to my research interests on the other. For this, in the third phase of this study, I juxtapose the narratives and compare my participants’ experiences to the IK’s pedagogical claims and aims. As opposed to a categorical content analysis, I compare the individual cases only in as much as to be able to draw implications for the IK and its possible role in shaping the interplay between L2 acquisition, identity and attitudes. The result is a clear gap between pedagogical practice and objectives, in that the IK neither stimulates nor equips participants with the required competences necessary to fully engage in informal learning opportunities outside of the L2 classroom.
Chapter 6

Case Study Analysis

In keeping with my methodological approach, which I outlined in the previous chapter, this part of the study is the result of the second stage of my narrative inquiry, namely the construction of case study narratives and thematical analysis. The structure of my narratives replicates the chronological order in which the interviews were conducted, reflecting my attempt to observe and determine changes and fluctuations in attitudes and identities as the IK progressed.

Each section begins with an introduction providing detailed information about the participant’s unique story and the events and circumstances that led to their migration and ultimate participation in the IK. Subsequently, I capture and re-construct their learning experiences and behaviour in and outside of the IK classroom. Specific thematics emerge in the course of the narratives as prompted by my guiding interview questions. Excerpts from the interviews and e-journal entries are intertwined throughout as supportive records. The narratives are preceded by a summary of my own in-class observations. This helps clarify the context and circumstances under which the formal learning processes took place.

6.1 Classroom Observations

My intention of including my personal observations is to further contextualize my informants’ narratives. It also serves the purpose of validating their claims and opinions about IK and OK practices. Although there undeniably is an evaluative component inherent to the present work, it is not my aim to subject the IK to pedagogical assessment, but to
rather supplement learners’ accounts and provide further insights into how classroom practices might have influenced participants’ attitudes, self-perceptions and ultimately learning behavior. My observations were set down in detailed notes I took during the interview sessions.

During all three visits at the Frankfurt language school, I made an effort to audit not only classes with my focus group, but other IK courses at various locations as well. This helped me gain a more comprehensive understanding of the teaching and learning practices applied in the IK. The textbook used in all classes was Berliner Platz Neu 1, 2 and 3. Supplementary material was seldom used in the classes I audited. The instructors mostly adhered to the book, including Susanne and Zorica. According to my knowledge, Susanne never provided any additional handouts, while Zorica sometimes brought photocopied pages from other textbooks. The sessions of my focus group and those of most classes generally followed the subsequent structure:

- Greeting;
- Review of the homework;
- Work with the textbook;
- Assignment of homework and dismissal.

The review of the homework was done in a plenum. The assigned exercises were from the workbook and were discussed one by one with students voluntarily providing the answers. This activity seemed to engage those learners who had completed their homework, but left those who had not completed their homework rather unoccupied. Following the homework review, the instructors assigned exercises from the book one at a time. Participants
completed the tasks individually or in pairs/groups in class, depending on their personal preferences. The discussion of these exercises was again done in a plenum. If a learner could not supply the answer, the instructor usually moved to the next participant without explaining or offering support to that student. This instructional pattern made for a slow-paced and monotonous class, where time was not used efficiently. In general, sessions were dominated by teacher-led grammar exercises and explanations. Occasionally, participants volunteered to go to the front of the classroom to supply answers to fill-in-the gap tasks/sentences written on the blackboard. The grammar explanations were often ‘thin’ and lacked in contextualization and references to other languages. Many also included errors or failed to inform learners about exceptions from the rules. Whenever the instructors in my focus group could not answer a question pertaining to grammar, they encouraged learners to simply memorize the rule as presented. Inductive teaching methods were also absent, as were group or individual projects. In addition, I never witnessed or was told about the creation of discourse space, giving participants an opportunity to share and reflect upon their learning encounters outside of the classroom.

I was generally left with the impression that learners did not receive the support they often required as teaching practices did not differentiate nor consider participants’ age, L1, knowledge of other foreign languages, learning rate or other individual criteria. The need for more student-centred teaching was confirmed during the two sessions which I taught. Prior to these sessions, participants were informed that there would be time to answer individual questions. The number of items that required additional clarification was overwhelming. This was also evident in that participants often clustered around me with questions after each session. It further came to my attention that they sought and relied on
each other’s help if they could not understand something or the instructor seemed unresponsive, which in turn indicated their investment in the learning process.

During my second stay with my informant group, classes were mostly focused on test preparation, which included listening and reading comprehension tasks, writing and conversation. Reading comprehension was done mostly word-for-word, with vocabulary clarifications often being not accessible for many participants, particularly those who struggled with listening comprehension.

The classroom atmosphere and dynamics in my focus group require special consideration because I believe Susanne’s behavior and attitudes towards the participants deviated the professional and acceptable norms, at least in the beginning. While Zorica appeared to conduct classes to the best of her abilities and had a good rapport with participants, acknowledging their efforts and praising achievements, Susanne’s conduct was unfriendly and marked by rather hostile remarks directed at participants, mostly in connection with one’s failure to supply a correct task answer. This, I believe, affected all students as well as the overall class atmosphere. Strict classroom rules, such as the prohibition of cell phone use and loud conversations, in my opinion further deprived participants of speaking practice, exchanging information with peers and looking up vocabulary online. As indicated in the following narrative analyses, IK participants did approach Zorica and the school management, which resulted in Susanne being reprimanded. By the time of my second stay with the focus group, she seemed to have readjusted her behavior, much to the improvement of the classroom atmosphere and dynamics. Her teaching practices appeared unchanged.
Overall, it was my impression that IK sessions were rather teacher-centered, time-inefficient and exam-oriented. Despite all this, it appeared that the program was beneficial to participants in terms of their social integration, as it helped many of them break the social isolation they experienced upon settling in Germany. This was apparent in all IK classes I audited. Many long-lasting bonds and friendships were established during the IK in my focus group and continued on long after the program was over. It is necessary to mention Zorica’s efforts in this respect, as she organized an extracurricular boat trip and several festive events (i.e. a barbeque, a classroom party, etc.), which seemed to positively affect the group as a whole and provided many needed opportunities to practice speaking German.

6.2 Cemre

The first person enrolled in the Integrationskurs to agree to participate in my study was Cemre. Cemre was fluent in English and she filled out the questionnaire (see Appendix A) as well as conducted the interviews in English.

6.2.1 Background and Reasons to Enroll

Cemre was a young woman in her late 20s. She was born and raised in Istanbul and hailed from a wealthy upper middleclass family. She was a proficient speaker of English, which she had learned throughout high school and her years as a university student. She held a major in science and had worked for a prominent engineering company in Turkey’s capital for some years. She later went to a Northern European country\textsuperscript{59} as part of a professional exchange program. There, she met her German husband. After completing the program, she

\footnote{Name of actual country is withheld to protect the participant’s anonymity.}
went back to Turkey and enrolled in an introductory German course at the Goethe Institute. After receiving the A1 proficiency level certificate, she reunited with her husband in Frankfurt. Upon presenting her A1 credentials, the Foreigners Registration Office (FRO) ordered Cemre to fulfill only the 30-hour orientation course as a prerequisite to obtaining her residency permit. This exemption was made due to Cemre’s university degrees. It was Cemre’s own decision to enroll in the full course, because she felt her spoken German was insufficient and she had difficulties speaking. She felt the IK presented an opportunity to receive structured German instruction.

Cemre mentioned two main factors that fueled her desire and perceived need for learning German – her new German family and the job market. She and her husband always communicated in English and they spoke English at home, however, after settling in Frankfurt, she now felt the desire to continue to learn and enhance her German not because of a need for improved interaction per se, but “out of respect for his culture” – a display of appreciation she insisted she owed her husband’s family as well. Although both her mother- and father-in-law spoke English, she wished to improve communication with them and to show respect. She also mentioned the ability to connect effortlessly with L2 speakers in informal settings, such as at the grocery store, the movies or simply on the street as a motivational factor.

Apart from the desire to be able to communicate freely with German speakers, there were also some socio-economic forces at play. Cemre felt the need to improve her German as dictated by her experiences on the job market so far. She viewed herself as an accomplished “young professional” from Turkey and spoke with pride about her career achievements. In this sense, she had acquired valuable symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1991) which she had
planned on transferring onto the German job market immediately upon settling down. Contrary to her expectations though, English fluency was not enough and not having a higher proficiency level in German turned out to be an impediment in her job search. This sudden decrement of her social value possibly laid the groundwork for the identity conflicts she displayed and which are addressed later on.

Cemre enrolled in the IK three months after settling in Frankfurt. Prior to that, she had started her job search first through contacting people in her husband’s network, who were employed in her field of expertise. Despite her qualifications and experience, her applications were not successful due to the minimum requirement of B2 or C1 German proficiency for the positions in question, which she did not have. She had also applied for positions advertised online, but to no avail. Under these circumstances, Cemre felt under time pressure and entered the IK with the need and expectation of speedy linguistic progress. In this sense, it can be claimed that she was poised to invest in the IK. Cemre was convinced that improving her German would increase the value of her cultural capital and help her “get a good return on that investment” (Norton 2000, p.10) in terms of a job reflecting the valuable socio-economic position she inhabited before moving to Germany.

6.2.2 The IK experience

In the first week of my stay with the group, Cemre stood out as the most proactive student in the class. She was eager to participate, supplied mostly correct answers and appeared as a confident and invested learner. She was also very diligent with the homework and on several occasions requested from Zorica additional assignments and exercises, which she
could complete on her own at home. When first asked about her thoughts on the IK, she displayed excitement.

C: I think it is great, of course, that there is this opportunity, that the German government gives the opportunity for learning German, and especially they even pay. I really think it’s great, because you have to learn the language if you want to live here and you want to find job and make good life.

S: So you like the idea of having an integration course for migrants?

C: Yes, yes, I like it, yes, I think more countries should do the same for the, the people who don’t speak their language, because this, the language is the most important. It is impossible to live somewhere, longer especially, if you don’t speak the language, I mean, you can, but it’s hard and you are limited, you are an immigrant for always, which is no good in my opinion. (CI1)

On the one hand, this excerpt displays Cemre’s approval of the program. Her positive attitude towards the IK is manifested throughout the interview. She approved of the intensity of the course, in the sense that it took place every day, hence supported her efforts for sustained learning and practice. To this point in her experience, the only aspect that she felt slightly dissatisfied with, was the speed at which the course progressed, which she described as “a bit slow”. She did not explicitly fault the IK though and rather explained this impression with her knowledge of another foreign language. Her fluency in English was another feature that she perceived helped her, but also set her apart from most of her peers.
German is now what … my third language, and English actually helps me a lot, not so much for the grammar maybe, no, actually for the grammar too, but especially for the vocabulary and just this, this thinking, that things, that people say things in a different way, and that what you say, for example, your sentences in Turkish, they have different structuring in English, I’m used to that, I know it, and it makes me to faster learner, faster than the most people in my group. (CI1)

One more positive aspect of the IK, Cemre mentioned during the interview, was the opportunity to meet other migrants, socialize and make her “own” friends and acquaintances as opposed to relying solely on her husband’s social network. She and Nya, another participant who spoke English\(^60\), had formed a friendship and they had started to meet for coffee after class and occasionally on the weekends. There were three other learners from Turkey in her class, however, Cemre distanced herself from them, both spatially and by language choice. While Ahmed, Darla and Esma had chosen seats next to each other and regularly spent the lunch break together, Cemre had picked a seat at the opposite end of the table and spent the lunch break mostly speaking English with Nya or working on assignments. By choosing to socialize with Nya in English over speaking Turkish with the other three Turkish learners from her class, Cemre positioned herself independently within her IK group\(^61\). The previous two excerpts support this claim and provide first clues into what appears to be a pronounced behavioral pattern aimed at

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\(^{60}\) I did approach Nya with a request to participate in my study, however she declined citing her restricted time schedule;

\(^{61}\) It is important to note that this distancing in the classroom was in no way done in an unfriendly fashion - Cemre consistently displayed a cordial behavior, chatted with all participants and can be described as kind and polite. However, it was evident and was later explicitly addressed by her in our interviews.
differentiating her from other Turkish immigrants, in general. Apart from her positive attitudes towards the IK, the first excerpts also reveal that Cemre connoted negative associations with migrants who fail to acquire the L2. This in turn provides indications about her learning goals, her identity and how she sought to position herself outside of the IK classroom.

Cemre’s rejection of being positioned as “another Turkish immigrant” in Frankfurt became even more prominent in her interactions with Susanne. Cemre was the sole participant who attempted to verbally defend herself against the teacher’s remarks by either replying in English or reversing the situation and speaking Turkish to her. Admittedly, she was the only one in the group who was not ordered to take the course by the FRO. When I asked her to comment on Susanne’s teaching practices, Cemre showed signs of frustration and made it clear that she would not tolerate Susanne’s behaviour or pretend she did not notice.

The problem with Susanne is in her…, I think … I believe she’s a very frustrated person, a very frustrated person, and then she comes here and she thinks, oh, I can say whatever I want to these … Ausländer, because they are all stupid and don’t know anything, but I’m not that person, I’m not like that, and, like, just sit there and let her insult me in my face, I’m not allowing her do that, not me … (CI1)

Cemre clearly rejected the label Ausländer, resisting marginalization. Notably, she did not translate the conflict with Susanne into general negative attitudes towards the IK or experiences outside of the classroom, hence keeping her motivation seemingly unaffected. When asked about informal learning practices, Cemre reported she spent between half and a full hour on homework and exercises daily. In her view, working regularly at home helped
her consolidate the material and to be prepared for the next class. This diligence in the classroom and regarding structured learning was contrasted by her attitude towards speaking German outside of the classroom. Cemre shared that the main language of communication in her household remained English, as she felt her German was not good enough to allow her the same range of expression and depth of communication with her husband, that she could achieve by using English. The following excerpt, however, reveals added underlying reasons.

C: I sometimes ask him, if, if I don’t know a word or something, and he always helps me, but we want to relax after work, so I don’t do much German with him, sometimes, on the weekends, we sit together and he helps me with my homework or if I have questions, also sometimes we try to speak German, but for me, it’s just very strange to speak to him German.

S: I see…

C: I mean, especially because I’m slow and have to think about each word I say and the things like dativ and akkusativ. It feels, it doesn’t feel good … it’s … uncomfortable.

S: What exactly makes it feel uncomfortable?

C: Especially that I’m slow and don’t know the words and think, when I try to speak German I always have to think, think, think, it’s a demand, and when I’m home, I just want to have some nice time with my love, you know, relax and talk, but when I try to speak with my broken German all the time, then he corrects me and that’s not a
conversation, it’s like he’s the teacher and I’m the student, and I don’t really like that …

S: Like what?

C: When he’s teaching me and correcting my speech.

S: Do you generally dislike it when people correct you or is it just with your husband?

C: I don’t have a problem with Zorica correct my speech, no, it’s her job, but when I’m outside, and with my husband, I don’t like it, no. I believe I am a little bit like that, I don’t like doing things that are not perfect, no, I don’t like to embarrass myself. (CI1)

The excerpt reveals that Cemre was concerned about using her “broken” German with her husband, as it may hurt the balance in their relationship and force her to take on identity constructions she is uncomfortable with. She maintained the same stance when communicating with her in-laws and her husband’s friends and explained that “for now” she only used English to speak with them. Although she had access to fluent German speakers as a “community of practice” (Lave and Wenger 1991), she rejected the learner or “apprentice” (ibid.) position and did not take advantage of the learning opportunities that she was presented with. Instead, she preferred to preserve the existing power balance she had established from the very beginning, even if it came at the expense of slower linguistic progress in German. Her choice of language can be seen as an outward projection of the changes happening in her inner self. By using English in her husband’s social circles, Cemre secured participation on equal terms and at the same time created new aspects of her identity. There was undeniable pride in her voice, when she shared that her husband’s
“German-German” friends constantly complement her English fluency. Hence, she believed that using English increased her cultural capital and social value. In contrast, switching to her imperfect German could have annihilated this power balance, positioning her as a learner of German - something that she feared might evoke associations with “regular” Turkish immigrants, a positioning that was in strong conflict with her own identity constructions. Hence, in these encounters with L2 speakers, she preferred to reiterate her view of herself as a progressive and well-travelled global citizen and professional, who happened to live in Germany.

When I focused the conversation on Cemre’s cultural affiliations and her feelings about Germany, it was clear that her attitudes could not be evaluated on a scale. Rather, they were ambivalent, as she held favorable as well as unfavorable views about both her and the host culture. She shared that she was very appreciative of the *Pünktlichkeit* and *Ordnung* she had observed in public and personal encounters, but had difficulties getting used to the comparatively lower temperatures in Frankfurt, which she found went hand in hand with the nature of the locals. At this point, Cemre appeared to hold some non-reflective and stereotypical views of ethnic and cultural traits, pronounced in her understanding that, “the more you go towards warmer weather, the people get warmer too”.

C: When I was in [name of country], you can’t imagine, it was so hard to make a friend, it was like a personal wall, just so hard, nothing, people were cold and very … distanced. But once you get to know someone, and you become friends, this, this friendship is very, very strong. I think it is similar here, maybe a little bit less hard, but very similar.
S: So, you find Germans to be generally cold and distanced?

C: Yes, I think so, but it’s only if you don’t know them. I think, no, I actually know from marrying a German, that they like their privacy a lot. It’s like, when you go on the bus here and nobody is smiling or talking. In my country, you get on the bus and you start talking to people, everybody’s talking, that’s ok. Not here, no, that’s very different from my country and from how I am.

S: And how are you? Do you identify as Turkish?

C: Yes, of course, I am Turkish …but … like, ok, I can’t say that I’m a really traditional person. I can’t say that I have all the Turkish … like … I’m not conservative, I like to be open and I have been many times abroad, I like to learn new cultures, I’m more for the global. It’s how you learn not to prejudice people. (CI1)

The excerpts reveal an establishing of antipodes, which allowed Cemre to position herself as part of the circles that best suited her identity formations. The dichotomies of cold versus warm and conservative versus open emerged as patterns throughout all her narratives. She clearly identified with the Turkish culture and was proud of certain behavioral patterns, which she connoted positively and described as “warm” and “typical” Turkish, such as kissing people on the cheeks and appreciating “small talk on the street”. At the same time, she continued to distance herself from what she believes are most Turkish immigrants in Germany. In general, Cemre never used the words immigrant or Ausländer to refer to herself, but did so when talking about other Turks in Germany. Her rejection of being marginalized took on an outwardly manifestation in the aforementioned interactions with Susanne. With time, the discontent with the conflicts in the classroom began to give space
to a larger one regarding teaching practices. In her first e-journal entry, Cemre wrote that she was “irritated” about how slow the course progressed and that she often felt “bored” in class. She also felt that the course did not support her in her efforts to improve her speaking competences:

Last week for example was very boring. All we did was grammar exercises and some writing, but everybody in my class was slow. I almost wanted to fall asleep and I just asked myself, why can’t they separate us and put us in different groups? […] I want to practice my speech more, but we don’t do that. Instead we always make the exercises from the book and they don’t have opportunity for speaking. (CE1)

At this point, Cemre perceived strong differences between herself and the other participants based on needs and performance as learners of German. The inability of the IK to satisfy her demands translated into a negative assessment.

When I met her during my second visit to the language school in May, we first discussed the changes that had occurred. Cemre had to return to Istanbul due to a family emergency. Upon her return a month after, she had to be placed with another group in order to continue at the same level. She shared with me that she was very satisfied with this arrangement, because it eliminated all contacts with Susanne. When I observed one of her classes, she displayed similar learning behavior as before, as she participated actively and used all opportunities to speak and provide answers to the various tasks. When we met for the interview though, it appeared that her opinion about the IK had shifted.

I don’t understand why they keep us all in one group, I mean, they should separate us.

In my group, there are people who can’t read or write, some of them are really old, and
they don’t speak other languages, but, like, we all sit together … It’s so slow … And I’m the best of my class, that’s why I got the extra additional papers to work with, I otherwise get bored in class, and my time is precious, I can’t just wait for the other people … (CI2)

In the last sentence Cemre refers to her continuous efforts to find a job, her primary motivational factor. A month before our meeting, she had contacted the corporate organization by which she was employed in Istanbul, as it had an agency in Frankfurt; yet, they advised her to contact them again, once she had achieved at least a B2 or C1 level of proficiency, which was a requirement for allowing her to communicate with clients. Since at the time of the second interview Cemre had to complete one more level before she could take the B1 exam, she was already making plans for continuing learning German afterwards. She shared with me that she felt the need to attend a business German class, as this was an area completely not covered by the IK.

C: My focus is the job, all the time. I am very uncomfortable that I still can’t find a job, makes me very nervous. I study for the course, but it’s just not enough, like, what we do there is not enough for me to get to the job I want. (CI2)

It’s apparent that Cemre’s motivation and investment in learning German was tightly related to her desire to find a suitable position, where her identity as a professional and her cultural and social capital would be validated. She continued:

I am motivated so much. Finding a job as soon as possible motivates me, I believe my motivation is always related to my hopes of finding a job. Of course, I’m a human, not a robot, I have downs sometimes, but it’s short, then I think of job prospects again, of
my memories in the office, and the meetings with my clients and I do better, I sit down and memorize my verbs … [laughs]. (CI2)

Cemre’s accounts reveal a strong view of the acquisition of German as a necessary tool to help her obtain a desirable professional and socioeconomic position. It can be claimed that her investment in German, although in conflict with aspects of her identity work, at this point had begun to gain the upper hand. As a result, she had begun to make use of learning opportunities within her immediate environment. Although her attitudes towards the formal learning situation (Gardner 2011) were rather negative, there appeared to be an increase in her integrativeness, particularly in regard to her attitudes towards the L2 community, as apparent from the excerpt below. When I asked Cemre what she did to support the learning process outside of the IK, she reported that she had started making steps towards overcoming her fear of embarrassment and using German more often. She had made it a rule for herself to speak only German at the grocery store and every time she went out to restaurants with her husband or friends. In addition, she had enlisted the help of her mother-in-law, who she now felt comfortable talking German with.

C: I speak German with my Schwiegermutter now, she helps me.

S: How does she help you?

C: She is a Kindergarten teacher, so she knows how to be patient and how to speak slowly, but the bad thing is we can’t do it often, we only meet on some weekend or talk on the phone. If we can meet every day, then I don’t need the course, cuz a person, like, talking to a German person is the best to practice, you learn so much, nothing’s better than a person. (CI2)
Although Cemre clearly saw the benefit of practicing German by engaging with German speakers, she still felt “uncomfortable” using German at home with her husband. She reported that they sometimes tried to speak German, but then as soon as she could not find a word or felt “pressure”, she switched to English. She had initiated some changes though, for example, she had cancelled the Turkish channel she used to have and only watched German TV, feeling that it “definitely helps” with her listening comprehension and vocabulary. In addition, she had begun to read newspaper articles, but remarked that her word pool was still too limited to understand everything.

Cemre further told me that she had joined an amateur Turkish theatre group. She sought out this opportunity because of her personal interest, but also in an effort to expand her current network of Turkish friends, as there were no Turks she felt “close to” in the IK.

C: I went out with Esma and Ahmed and the other ones before, but, like, I didn’t feel, really, close to them.

S: Why? Are they different from the Turks in the theatre group?

C: Yes, you don’t meet, like, regular Turks in the theatre group, but they are all educated, and very open, I can talk about whatever I want with them, they all live here, and are integrated and have good jobs, like one’s a doctor and there’s this one woman, she works for ADHD children, my husband met her and he even said she’s German.

S: Do they all speak German?

C: They all speak perfect German, yes.
S: Do you speak German with them?

C: Nooo, no, I only speak Turkish with them.

S: Why?

C: Ahm, because … I’m not as good, it’s like, it’s not them, no, they don’t look down on me or something, it’s me, cuz I don’t like doing anything if I can’t do it perfect. I’m learning now, and maybe later, when I’m fluent in German, I can also speak German with them, I think I can also join a German theatre, maybe, when I’m more fluent.

(CI2)

This excerpt once again displays the complex interdependence between identity, language learning, investment and learning behavior and confirms Norton’s assertion that identity is a site of struggle (2013). Cemre clearly continued to distance herself from “regular” Turkish immigrants, looking for opportunities and investing in social networks she identified with. And yet, in order to legitimize her participation in the communities of practice of her choice, she abstained from using her “broken” German, anxious that this “imperfection” could possibly hurt her position within these communities. This further suggests that she was adhering to some “ideal” speaker norms. At this stage, she had carved out realms, in which she felt safe to identify as a “learner”, display imperfections and practice her German (i.e., the IK, the grocery store, restaurants, with her mother-in-law, etc.). Although she was aware of the positive impact communicating with L2 speakers had on her linguistic development, she chose to resist learning opportunities presented through her husband, his social networks and her recent Turkish acquaintances, perceiving them as identity-threatening and postponing them for a moment in the future, when her German will be “perfect”. Cemre’s
learning behavior and positioning is reminiscent of that of the tailor and the master, Lave and Wenger (1991) describe in their work, where:

“[it is] the apprentice’s relations to other apprentices and even to other masters that organize opportunities to learn; an apprentice’s own master is too distant, an object of too much respect, to engage with in awkward attempts at a new activity” (p. 92).

It appears that, at this stage, Cemre was still selective in terms of her sources of learning opportunities and of whom she allowed to act as a “master”, choosing to engage in learning situations merely when they did not threaten to diminish her social value. Yet, she took steps towards broadening her channels for language acquisition. At the same time, she displayed negative attitudes towards the learning situation (Gardner 2011) in that she felt the IK failed to support her in developing the competence she deemed most valuable for her goals – speaking. The continuous focus on grammar exercises and on topics, irrelevant to her reality, resulted in her growing dissatisfaction with the IK. When I asked her to elaborate on what exactly prevented her spoken German from being “perfect”, she answered:

C: Vocabulary and especially practice. When I write German, it’s easy, cuz you have more time to think, about the words, and the grammar, but when you speak, you have to think very fast, like, you don’t have time to stop and look for words. But we practice so little speech in the class, it’s only when you read the answers loud, then you speak, but that is not the speaking that you do with real persons.

S: How about the vocabulary that you learn in class?
C: First, they never give you the words in English or in Turkish or in any language, it’s just German, you have to find, like, what it means, the meaning, everything alone, and then, I hear sometimes Germans use different words than what they teach us in this book, ahm, *Berliner Platz*, I know, because I hear my husband when he’s speaking or when I’m speaking with my mother-in-law, or on the TV … (C12)

Despite her motivation to learn, Cemre believed that the IK had failed to support her efforts to improve her communicative skills – those that she needed the most outside of the classroom. Her second e-journal entry, which was towards the end of the language portion of the IK, displayed a sharp turn in comparison to her initial attitude towards the IK. She wrote:

I don’t know who this course could be good for. Maybe it works for people who don’t know anything else and are just starting with reading and writing in German, although it seems to me that everyone is struggling. My goal number one is to become fluent in speech, but we never practice speech in class. Instead, we do grammar exercises and practice writing letters almost all the time. My suggestion is to improve this course by separating the people. People who learn fast should be in one group, these who need more help should be in another. I don’t know who designed this course, but they thought that German is on top and then the people are on the bottom. It should be the opposite. (CE2)

These attitudes, displayed towards the end of the IK, stand in sharp contrast with the views she shared at the beginning. Cemre’s accounts so far, seem to suggest that the practices in the IK had failed to support her in her expectations and learning objectives. Moreover, her
classroom experiences seemed to further fuel her rejection of her position as a Turkish immigrant. This rejection, in turn, did not seem to be beneficial for the learning process, as it ultimately caused her to adhere to a native-oriented “educated Turk” ideal, postponing the use of German in certain social contexts for an unspecified moment in the future, when her German would be “perfect”.

6.2.3 After the IK

When I met Cemre again in September, she had obtained her B1 certificate and had passed the “Leben in Deutschland” test. She had also enrolled in an intense university language course leading to the C1 level, which was about to commence in a week. I asked her to recap her IK experience and she said that although the IK gave her a good start, she also felt that she had lost a lot of “precious” time there. After the DTZ, she even decided to skip the OK, unconvinced she would learn anything new.

This course is for people who are new in the West … I am not a typical Turkish person to begin with … I’m really open for ideas. In this course, for example they talk about woman living with another woman, things like that, but I already know this, not new to me and I don’t need to go to the course to learn it. (CI3)

This fragment further exemplifies Cemre’s affiliation with more progressive social circles and her differentiation from traditional immigrants. It also provides a clear clue about her assessment of the OK’s value for her learning goals. In the weeks leading to the DTZ and “Leben in Deutschland” test, instead of relying on the IK, Cemre had decided to make use of learning opportunities around her. She had established a daily routine during which she would read out loud fairy tales to her husband. With time, she became more comfortable
with his corrections and help, which had further led to longer exchanges in German between them.

C: My husband is actually a great criticizer ... [laughs], he corrects my pronunciation, I really feel a big difference, it has helped me a lot, my vocabulary is much better.

S: So it helped you transition to speaking German to him? You no longer feel embarrassed to speak German with [name]?

C: No, this is funny, the more I learn about the Germans, the less offended I get when they correct my speech. I have this from English, I was always afraid people would laugh and make fun of my mistakes, but then I went to [name of country] and everybody was speaking like me, making mistakes and stupid, stupid sentences all the time, so I stopped worrying and then used English in my practical life and got much better. It was similar with German here, I need time to stop worry and start using the German vocabulary for practical life, like, last week I wanted to say on the wall and I said in der Wand, and then we laughed so much, because it was so stupid [laughs], or when I say something like, Kannst du mir das candle geben? [laughs], and I even put an article to it, and we laughed a lot [laughs]. But before, I didn’t think it funny, I was embarrassed and offended. (CI3)

It appeared that Cemre had ultimately come to terms with her position as a learner and explorer of the language in her family. This was also confirmed by the fact that she now only spoke German to both her mother- and father-in-law and referred to using German in stores or restaurants as “low level exercises”. She was still uncomfortable speaking German
with her husband’s “German-German” friends or in front of the theatre group members though but believed that it would too change “one day”.

After almost a year in Germany, her feelings and attitudes towards German and the Germans had not changed much, although she appeared to make more complex interpretations of behavioral patterns she had observed and experienced. She still strongly identified as a Turk, but was more reluctant to brand Germans as “cold”.

C: I always think that Germans are very cold, and not only the Germans, all the Northern countries in general, but now, I know, I know from marrying a German, people here are more private, they like their private life, and, this makes them more, ahm, shy, yes, not cold, but shy.

S: Has anything changed about the way you see yourself too?

C: Ahm, I don’t know. I’m still Turkish, of course, I will always be Turkish, I mean, you can’t become something that you are not, originally. I mean, I’m not a conservative Turk, I’m not like that type, but I’ll never be something else but Turkish. (CI3)

Cemre’s identity appeared to be firmly rooted in her Turkish ethnicity, but also in the belief that there are two types of Turkish immigrants in Germany, namely some that connote negative associations and others that are “integrated” and on equal terms with the locals. The IK experience seemed to have only reinforced these views. The sustained contacts with Germans, on the other hand, had initiated a more critically-reflective and accommodating view of the locals - Cemre no longer contrasted Germans versus Turks in terms of how cold or warm they were, but rather looked for more complex rationales.
As we concluded our last interview, I asked Cemre to share her thoughts on what would have made the IK a more beneficial experience in her view. She answered that the IK was “perfect” for one week, when there was a substitute teacher, who brought in “life-related” topics and “mostly did speech”.

She gave us articles from normal magazines, from real life. It was so interesting and funny, it wasn’t like, what time the train leaves and when the train arrives; it was interesting and everybody in my class was so happy, they told me, because this teacher never let anyone sleep in her class, never, we were practicing speech and talking about our opinions, it was great, it was perfect…(CI3)

It is apparent that this substitute teacher created a much-needed discursive space in the IK classroom, giving room for the participants’ own narratives, ultimately increasing relevance and engagement, as suggested in Chapter 2. The otherwise “slow” pace and “tired from life”-attitude of the teachers Cemre experienced in her IK classroom, appear to have caused her excitement to decline. More importantly, IK practices gradually lost their relevance to Cemre’s linguistic needs and the realities she experienced outside of class. Fortunately, she had full access to L2 communities of practice outside of the IK, which allowed her to progress and improve her German competences. Her accounts suggest that her attitudes towards the learning situation did not have a dramatic impact on her in-class learning behaviour and overall investment in German. This rather confirmed Macnamara’s (1973) assertion that necessity overtrumps attitudes. Her attitudes towards Germans might be linked to her initial fear of making mistakes in front of Germans though, because she perceived them as “cold” and “direct”. As she mentions herself, the more contacts she had with Germans, the less her anxiety about making mistakes and being corrected, hence the
more comfortable she felt in her identity as a German learner. Her attitudes towards the
Turkish immigrant community had a more profound impact on her learning behaviour and
identity constructions outside of the IK classroom, underpinning the impact of the Turkish
community’s ELV in Germany. While on the one hand, Cemre took advantage of
opportunities to reconnect with her come community, her perceptions of a negative
discourse in relation to Turkish immigrants in Germany caused her to seek to position
herself in contrast to “typical” Turks. The fact that she dichotomised Turkish immigrants
into “conservative” and “open”, allowed her to position herself with the latter. Cemre’s
identity formations as an educated young professional came into conflict with the use of
her “imperfect” German in certain social circles, particularly those of her husband’s friends
and of the Turkish immigrants she identified with, therefore, depriving her of valuable
learning opportunities. It can be claimed that the IK experience did not promote a more
critically-reflective exploration of Cemre’s possible roles as learner and mediator, nor
foster the development of intercultural speaker traits, which would have allowed her to
begin to seize informal learning opportunities earlier. Classroom teaching methods and the
structure of the IK rather forced her to cement her position as a different “type” of
immigrant, opposing labeling and marginalization she experienced within the IK
institution.

6.3 Ahmed

Ahmed was the second IK learner to agree to participate in my study. He did not speak
English and filled out the questionnaire and conducted the interviews in German. He saw a
strong pedagogical value in participating in my project in that it offered him an opportunity
to speak German. He answered questions willingly and in length, while I spoke slowly, articulated clearly and made sure that he understood each question.

6.3.1 Background and Reasons to Enroll

Ahmed was a former professional soccer player in his 30s and he hailed from the Turkish province of Hatay. He held a high-school diploma. He met his German-born wife while she was visiting relatives in his home town. They married in Turkey and after completing the A1 certificate at the local Goethe-Institute, he moved to Frankfurt to live with his wife. Ahmed’s parents and two siblings still lived in Turkey, while his eldest brother and one of his uncles and his family had lived in Frankfurt for a long time. The fact that Ahmed had members of his immediate and extended family in close proximity suggested high ELV, which ultimately impacted his use and acquisition of German. At the time of the first interview, Ahmed had lived in Germany for seven months and his German was at a level that allowed for uninterrupted interviewing.

Ahmed was ordered to take the IK by the FRO and had to provide the B1 certificate in order to obtain his permanent residence permit. He was not currently employed, but planned to work together with his cousin and his uncle, who had long worked at the Frankfurt Airport, once he was in possession of his B1 certificate. The B1 level was a prerequisite by Fraport AG and job applications could not be given consideration without it. Although Ahmed’s participation in the IK was mandatory, he asserted that he would have taken the course anyway, as he needed German in order to gain access to the job market. He also wanted to improve his German so that he would be able to freely communicate with L2 speakers in various settings, mostly in bureaucratic ones, where he currently relied solely on his wife.
Based on the information he provided, I asserted that his investment in learning German was mostly determined by socio-economic factors.

6.3.2 The IK experience

During the first week of my stay with the focus group, I happened to sit next to Ahmed and could observe his work closely. He appeared to be a very diligent and invested learner. He was consistently the first one to arrive in the morning, completed homework regularly, participated and followed instructions. He exhibited some difficulties with listening comprehension and as a result was frequently at a loss to which task the teacher was working on. He tried to correct this by checking in with Youssef and by enlisting my help. It was noticeable that he seldom asked the teachers for clarifications, but rather sought support from his peers, which indicated an uneasiness in communicating with the instructors, confirmed later in the interviews. When I first asked Ahmed about his views on the IK, his face visibly brightened up.

A: Ich finde der Kurs, uhm, den Kurs eine sehr gute Idee... ich bin sehr dankbar, ja, denn ich brauche Deutsch lernen, uhm, für Jobs und sprechen und so... ja, Gottseidank! ... uhm, der Kurs ist gut und sehr wichtig, uhm, meiner Meinung, dieser Kurs ist uhm, besser als Deutschkurs in Türkei, ja...

[I find the course to be a very good idea...I am very grateful, yes, because I need to learn German, for jobs and speaking and such...yes, thanks God! ... the course is good and very important, in my opinion, this course is better than the German course in Turkey, yes...]

62 All transcript excerpt translation have been translated to English by me;
S: Warum?

[Why?]

A: Uhm, hier, die Lehrerin spricht, uhm, nur Deutsch. In Türkei, die Lehrerin spricht Türkisch, das war, uhm, nicht so gut. Für mich ist Deutsch wichtig, uhm, sehr wichtig, ich will nur Deutsch machen, ja, denn ich möchte lernen.

[Here, the teacher speaks only German. In Turkey, the teacher speaks Turkish, this was, not so good. For me, German is important, very important, I want to do only German, yes, because I want to learn.]

S: Und warum ist Deutsch so wichtig für dich?

[And why is German so important to you?]

A: Uhm, ich möchte gut sprechen, ja, ich möchte eine, uhm, gute Arbeit, bei Fraport, habe ich erzählt, aber, ich brauche Deutsch auch für andere Sachen, ja, mit Deutschen sprechen, ja, auch ich möchte ... uhm ... frei, uhm, bagimsiz [unabhängig], ja ... ohne meine Frau, uhm, denn meine Frau machen, uhm, sie macht jetzt alles, alles – uhm, Haus, Auto, Papiere, alles, uhm, und ich mag nicht, uhm meine Frau alles macht ...

[laughs] (AI1)

[Uhm, I want to speak well, yes, I want a good job, at Fraport, I explained, but, I need German for other things as well, yes, speaking with Germans, yes, and I also want to be free, [independent], yes, without my wife, because right now my wife does everything, everything – house, car, documents, and I don’t like, when my wife does everything ...]

The excerpt is revealing not only of Ahmed’s positive views about the IK, and his willingness to face learning challenges, but also about his position within his new family and why he perceived the IK as an opportunity. Ahmed viewed learning German as a path
to reversing the power relations in his household and escaping his dependency on his wife, whom he had been continuously relying on to deal with the bureaucratic aspects of his resettlement in Germany. When we explored the topic in more detail, it was evident that Ahmed’s learning behaviour was strongly influenced by power relations within the family and his identity constructions and positioning within the circle of his relatives. Although he spent considerable amounts of time working on the IK assignments at home, Ahmed was reluctant to take advantage of the fact that his wife was fluent in German. He consciously forewent the opportunity to practice with her, all the while he was fully aware that “mit Deutschen sprechen ist [die] beste Übung” [speaking with Germans is the best exercise]. In addition, he never sought her expertise for homework or other linguistic matters and voiced concerns that it could further increase the perceived asymmetry in their relationship. Consequently, at home, they only spoke Turkish.

A: Uhm, ja, ich habe probiert, [mit meiner Frau Deutsch sprechen], aber, uhm, es war nicht gut, denn ich bin langsam, uhm, sehr langsam, uhm ich muss denken und Wort suchen und ich sage, uhm, etwas, und sie antworten, aber schnell, so lublublublublub und ich verstehe nicht und wieder so und so fragen ... aber das ist langweilig für meine Frau, uhm, sehr langweilig ... uhm, dann ist Türkisch, uhm, besser ... Meine Frau muss uhm, sowieso, uhm, viel helfen für mich. Sie, uhm, sie geht mit mir nach Ausländerbehörde ... uhm, manchmal ich fühle wie ein Kind, weißt du ... [laughs]

[Uhm, yes, I’ve tried [speaking German with my wife], but it wasn’t good, because I am slow, very slow and I have to think and search for word and I say something, and she replies, but quick, like lublublublublub and I don’t understand and then again, I have to ask... but this is boring for my wife, very boring, in that case Turkish is better....my wife has to help me a lot anyway. She comes with me to the foreigners’ registration office...sometimes I feel like a child, you know...]

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Ahmed clearly viewed himself as a dependent and hence inferior because of his inability to speak fluently. He was anxious that he might bore his wife with his slow German and thus expose himself to the danger of further losing face in his family – burdening his wife with the administrative tasks already felt identity-threatening to him. Thus, he rejected the learner position at home. This sense of inferiority surfaced also when he was faced with situations where he had defend himself, like those initiated by Susanne, although here, he accepted her positioning in order to avoid conflict, which he feared could threaten his successful completion of the IK.

Each learner in the IK had a different way of coping with Susanne’s teaching methods, as she generally spoke fast and did not provide lengthy clarifications. Ahmed believed he had most difficulties with listening comprehension, so whenever Susanne was the instructor, he felt it extra strenuous to stay on track and follow the discourse and activities. This was my impression as well. Since the textbooks used in class were monolingual, it was up to the individual learner to ask for clarifications and translations if s/he did not understand a word. This seemed to slow Ahmed down in two ways. On the one hand, he confessed he didn’t dare ask Susanne to explain the vocabulary, on the other, whenever she did explain words upon the request of other participants, she spoke too fast for Ahmed to grasp the meaning.
He told me he tried to compensate for this by studying with a dictionary at home. He created his own cue cards, which he then carried around with him. He reportedly spent at least one hour memorizing vocabulary each day. It has to be noted that although Ahmed appeared more apprehensive to ask questions in Susanne’s classes, he was generally shy to seek the teacher’s assistance and preferred to rely on his peers. This, I believe, had to do with his overall perception of the IK instructors as gate keepers.

The following excerpt demonstrates that although Ahmed did not understand everything the instructor said, he was able to use parallel information (Perdue & Klein 1993), e.g. the context, eye contact, voice intonation, etc. in order to make sense of the situation and to at least discern that she made offensive comments. His self-perception as inferior due to his lack of fluency was manifested not only in his comments, but also in his refusal to make attempts to defend himself; he did not visibly object to Susanne’s attempts to marginalize him and hence accepted the lesser-value position of an immigrant. Therefore, it can be speculated that his experiences in the IK classroom reinforced his perceived inferiority as a learner of German, as it made him more aware of his listening comprehension difficulties, lack of fluency and the imbalance of power.

A: Uhm, ja, Susanne … uhm, die, uhm, das große Problem ist, uhm, sie sehr schnell spricht … ja, uhm, nie langsam, und uhm, auch, sie nicht gut erklären, Grammatik, Akkusativ und Dativ, und Wort und so … uhm, ich nicht, uhm, ich kann nicht alles verstehen, manchmal, ich, uhm, nichts verstehen … das ist schlecht Unterricht, für mich…

[Uhm, yes, Susanne, the biggest problem is that she speaks very fast, yes, never slow, and also, she doesn’t explain well, grammar, accusative and dative and such, so I
don’t understand everything, sometimes, I don’t understand anything, that’s bad lesson, for me...

S: Du verstehst also nicht was sie sagt?

[So you don’t understand what she’s saying?]

A: Uhm, ich verstehe, manchmal, uhm, aber nicht alles, uhm, nein, oft, nur ein bisschen, das macht Unterricht schlecht für mich, und danach sie ist nicht nett... ja, du weißt auch, sie sagt auch, uhm, so, nicht gut, sie sagt böse zu uns... sie schimpft, ja...

[I understand, sometimes, but not everything, no, often only a little bit, this makes lessons bad for me, and in addition, she isn’t nice, yes, you know it too, she also says, such, not good, she says evil to us, she scolds us, yes...]

S: Ja, ahm, woher weißt du es, wenn du nicht alles verstehen kannst? Woher weißt du, dass sie böse Sachen zu euch sagt?

[Yes, but how do you know she is scolding you if you say don’t understand everything? How do you know she says evil things to you?]

A: Uhm, ich weiss, [laughs], ich habe Augen, uhm, auch Youssef und uhm, die anderen verstehen alles, uhm und wir sprechen, und Cemre... Cemre, uhm, sie haben, uhm, sie hat Stress mit Susanne, ja, uhm, sie hat Türkisch zu Susanne geschimpft, ja...

[laughs]...

[Uhm, I know, I have eyes, also Youssef and the others, they understand everything, and we also talk, and Cemre, she’s gotten on Susanne’s case, she railed against her in Turkish, yes...]

S: Aber du sagst nichts... ich meine, du sagst nichts zu Susanne...?

[But you don’t say anything, I mean, you never say anything to Susanne...?]
A: Nein, nein, nein, ich sage nicht, uhm, warum sage ich? Ich kann nicht, uhm, ich bin Kanake ... [laughs], ich keine Deutsche, keine Englisch, nur Türkisch..., uhm, ich kann nicht machen, Susanne, uhm, Susanne ist Deutsche, sie lublublublublub... sie kann schnell sprechen, uhm, ich bin langsam... und ja, uhm, Susanne ist Lehrerin..., uhm, ich möchte nicht, uhm, ich möchte nicht Streß mit Lehrerin...[laughs]... (AII)

[No, no, no, I don’t say, why should I? I can’t, I am a dago, I don’t speak German or English, only Turkish, I can’t do anything, Susanne, she is German, she lublublublublub, she can speak fast, and I am slow, yes, Susanne is a teacher, I don’t want to have issues with the teacher...]

The presence of the word “Kanake” in Ahmed’s vocabulary is a sign that he had already been made aware of prevailing discourses and ideologies surrounding immigrants in Germany. He was also aware of where these discourses situated him as a Turkish immigrant. He also clearly felt deprived of the linguistic tools he needed to position himself differently. His self-identification with “Kanake” indicated that he was aware of the uneven power relations between him, an immigrant and the teachers, native Germans and ultimate gatekeepers, who had the power to decide over success and failure in the IK. Like some of Norton’s informants (2000), Ahmed was marginalized and silenced, and not only at his workplace, but also in the IK class, the very place that claimed to facilitate an identity-supporting environment by bringing in his perspectives and experiences. Notably, as apparent from the next quote, this experience did not seem to affect his investment in learning German, but fed into his attitudes towards Germans as a whole. At the time of our first interview, Ahmed brought up the subject of his social isolation and expressed some ambiguous views about Germany and the L2 community.
A: Uhm, vor Deutschland, vor Deutschland leben, uhm, ich habe, uhm, ich habe eine
gute Meinung zu Deutschen, uhm, aber jetzt, uhm, ich weiß nicht ... Deutschland ist
wunderbar, uhm, wunderbar für Arbeiten ... Krankenhaus ... uhm, Autobahn ... alles
sauber, uhm, sehr Ordnung und pünktlich, uhm, auch schnell, aber so uhm, Spaß
haben, nicht so gut ... [laughs]

[Uhm, before Germany, before living in Germany, I had a good opinion about the
Germans, but now, I don’t know...Germany is wonderful, wonderful for working,
hospital, autobahn, everything is clean, a lot of system and punctuality, also fast, but
having fun, not so good...]

S: Wie meinst du das, Spaß? Kannst du mir ein Beispiel geben?

[Could you explain what you mean with fun? Can you give me an example?]

A: Uhm, ja, Beispiel, ich wohne Frankfurt-[name of neighbourhood] und, uhm, 5 Uhr
die Straßen leer, alles leer, alles ruhig. Ich möchte, uhm, Leute treffen, immer Deutsch
sprechen, aber leider, uhm, niemand, weißt du, uhm, die Deutschen sind, uhm, sie gut
arbeiten, aber uhm, so, Spaß in den Menschen, geht nicht, so, uhm, gezmek
[spazierengehen] geht nix...ich vermisse sehr, ja...

[Uhm, yes, example, I live in Frankfurt-[name of neighbourhood], and at 5 the streets
are empty, everything’s empty, everything’s quiet. I want to meet people, always speak
German, but unfortunately, nobody, you know, the Germans are, they are good at
working, but having fun with other people, it’s not working, so gezmek [go out for a
walk] isn’t working, I miss that, yes...]

S: Aha...ist das anders in der Türkei?

[I see...is this any different in Turkey?]
A: Jaa, sehr anders, ja, die Türkei ist sehr anders, ich treffe immer Leute, im Bus, Straße, Hause, so, uhm, gehen in Wohnung, sitzen, lachen ... Besuch, uhm, ja, viele ... Leute überall ... ja …

[Yes, very different, yes, Turkey is very different, I always meet people, on the bus, street, at home, like, going to an apartment, sitting, laughing, visiting, yes, many people everywhere, yes …]


[And do you meet people here? I mean, do you have contacts to people, to Germans here in Frankfurt? Do you speak German with anyone? I mean outside of the German class?]

A: Nein, niemand, nur Deutschkurs, uhm, keine Kontakte, aber ich möchte Deutsch sprechen, ich möchte sehr, aber ich, uhm, keine Deutsche kenne ... die Deutschen sind uhm, so, wie sage ich ... uhm, ist schwierig mit Deutschen Kontakt machen, ja, uhm, sie sind, uhm, sehr schwierig, ja, Beispiel Susanne, ja, sagt, nicht lachen!, nicht sprechen!, kein Spaß, nur Arbeit und Grammatik, Grammatik, Grammatik ... uhm, Zorica macht besser, aber sie, uhm, sie ist nicht Deutsche ... uhm... die Deutsche, uhm, manchmal ich denke die Deutschen haben Angst, uhm, Angst für andere …

[No, nobody, only in the German class, no contacts, but I want to speak German, I want it a lot, but I don’t know any German...the Germans are, how shall I put it, it is difficult to make contact with Germans, yes, they are difficult, yes, for example Susanne, yes, she says don’t laugh!, don’t speak! No fun, just work and grammar, grammar, grammar…Zorica does it better, but she is no German...the Germans, sometimes I think the Germans are afraid, afraid of others...]

S: Wie meinst du das, Angst? Kannst du mir erklären?
A: Ja, ich erkläre, uhm, letzte Woche, ich gehe zu Hause ... [laughs] ... nach Hause, und ich sehe ein Mann, uhm, ich weiß der Mann wohnt, uhm, fünfte Etage, uhm, und ich, ich sage „Guten Tag!“, ja, aber er, uhm, er nichts sagen, uhm, keine Antwort, er geht wo, weg ... ja ... uhm, ich bin nicht verrückt [laughs], ich möchte nette, ich möchte nett, uhm, so ein bisschen Deutsch üben, aber ... uhm, nein, geht nicht... uhm, in Türkei, ich gehen, ich gehe in ein Bus und ich sage Hallo, Hallo, Hallo alle Menschen, aber ich kenne nicht! Aber hier, uhm, hier ... nein. (AI1)

[Yes, I'm explaining, last week, I was going home, and I see a man, I know where the man lives, on the fifth floor, and I say “Good day!”, yes, but he doesn’t say anything, no answer, he goes away...I’m not crazy, I want to be nice, practice a little German, but it’s not working...in Turkey, I go on a bus and I say Hello, Hello, Hello to all people, but I don’t know them! But here, here no...]

Judging from his accounts, in the seven months that Ahmet had been in Germany, his contacts with German speakers have been restricted to gatekeeping encounters (Erickson 1976, Schiffrin 1994), the IK instructors and a couple of other incidents similar to that in front of his apartment building. It is my impression that he was still exploring and trying to apprehend his new environment. Faced with the cultural norms of his new society, that in his views were very much different from the ones he knew in Turkey, he was trying to make sense of his encounters with German speakers. Since none of them appear to be particularly constructive, he seemed to merge experiences and bring Susanne’s characteristics – the German speaker that he has had the most contact with - in line with his overall observations and shape a mental representation of Germans as cold, reserved and not responsive to spontaneous contacts. Moreover, the last excerpt shows that he explained Zorica’s behaviour and teaching practices, which he contrasted with Susanne’s, with her non-
nativeness\textsuperscript{63}. It is safe to claim that in Ahmed’s case, experiences in the IK rather created and reinforced his negative attitudes than fostered intercultural competences and critically-reflexive learning and exploring of his environment. Ahmed’s lack of contacts with L2 speakers outside of the IK and his decision not to speak German within his family, left the IK as his only source for linguistic input, which could explain his diligence and investment in the learning process there. He kept his eyes open for learning opportunities though and the proof came when he inquired (right after the interview) if I would be willing to tutor him or if I know someone who would. I agreed to stay briefly after class and clarify concepts for him. These sessions confirmed my impressions from the classroom that Ahmed had many deficiencies in listening comprehension and was often not able to understand the grammar and vocabulary explanations provided by the instructors. In an effort to help himself, he also began to regularly watch German TV and listen to a German radio station every time that he was driving in his car.

When I observed the group on the first day of my second stay, Ahmed’s progress was noticeable. He appeared to be more outspoken in class and seemed to be better able to follow the teacher-led activities. He continued to be very diligent with both attendance and homework and proudly told me that he now had a drawer full of index cards, which he studied “mindestens eine Stunde” [at least one hour] each day. My observations and his comments made it clear that he continued to be strongly invested in the learning process.

In term of class dynamics, he had established a friendship with Youssef, Darla, Esma and another Turk from an IK class that ran parallel to theirs. They occasionally met outside of

\textsuperscript{63} Zorica migrated to Germany with her family when she was 9 years old.
the IK as well and, provided that Youssef was present, they spoke German. Ahmed saw a good social and pedagogical value in sustaining his relationship with Youssef because it gave him a rare opportunity to speak German outside of the IK classroom, in particular, and it broke his social isolation, in general. He told me that the people he met at the IK almost became his new family because he had the most contact with them. This was since, as Ahmed explained, most of his family members and friends worked full-time and in shifts, so that he was often “einsam” [lonely] during the week. It was striking that he (jokingly) referred to himself and his friends as “alle Ausländer” [all immigrants] speaking “Kanak Deutsch”64, which suggested that he continued to be aware of larger social discourses and contexts and was increasingly accepting of the position of Ausländer65 in his new home. It also indicated that Ahmed had understood the label “immigrant” as someone who does not speak the language well and is hence linguistically and socially inferior to the natives. Despite this, Ahmed continued to seek contact with Germans outside of the IK classroom. He reported going to amateur soccer games twice a week to keep in shape, but also because he hoped it would present a chance to meet other people, German speakers in particular – “Ich warte, ich warte jedes Mal für Deutsche Leute” [I wait, I wait every time for German people]. Indeed, these soccer meet-ups provided him with access to fluent German speakers. It appeared that in these encounters, Ahmed felt on more equal terms with the native Germans thanks to his skills and experience in professional soccer. He reported that, in the beginning, he always ended up on the team where there were more Turks and other foreigners. Over time though, the more senior German players began to choose him for

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64 Ahmed makes a reference to “Kanak Sprak”, a German sociolect created by Turkish youth in Germany in the late 1980s.
65 In Engl.: “Foreigner”.
their team, and this was, according to Ahmed, because he was a “guter Fußballspieler, mit Erfahrung” [good soccer player with experience]. This gave him some confidence and he felt compelled to participate more often in the conversations arising after the games. He also confessed he noticed that the little speaking practice he had on the soccer field was beneficial to his linguistic progress.

A: Uhm, am Anfang, ich habe nicht viel gesprochen, nein, weil ich wusste nicht wie, uhm, wie so, das Wort heißt ... so Fußballsprache, uhm, so Tor, schießen, das wusste ich, ja, aber nicht mehr, weißt du, aber danach uhm, danach ich habe gehört, was die anderen so sagen und jetzt kann ich, so, viel Fußballsprache ...

[S: Zum Beispiel?]

A: Beispiel ... uhm, ballern, ja, uhm ... Lupfer, weißt du Lupfer? und ja, uhm, Bankwärmer ... [laughs], niemand will Bankwärmer [laughs]

[S: Ja, [laughs] und sprichst du Deutsch mit den anderen Spielern, so nach dem Spiel?]

A: Ja, ja, ich spreche ... nicht soo viel, aber ja, ich spreche über Spiel und so, ja, auch über Eintracht und Offenbach [laughs], so, uhm, meistens Fußball [laughs] ... ja, und
Ahmed further explained that initially, he eavesdropped on the locker room conversations, paying attention to linguistic features. This information complements my impression of him as a very invested, attentive learner, who carefully listens to his interlocutors and attempts to analyse and internalise the linguistic features that he encounters. He was also the only participant in the focus group who was constantly aware of his own speech and often repaired his own errors, as apparent from the excerpts above. Ahmed’s accounts made it evident that the more he enriched his soccer-related vocabulary, the more confident he felt about abandoning his passive listener position and actively participating in the soccer-related conversations. On the other hand, this was only possible because his interlocutors were more willing to actively listen to what he had to say, as they apparently valued his experience and him as a player. Overall, by seeking out communities of practice where his cultural and symbolic value would be recognized, he secured himself the “right to speak” (Norton 2013). The confidence Ahmed had in his soccer skills translated over to his communicative skills, ultimately enabling him to take advantage of learning opportunities. When I attempted to relate these positive encounters to the IK teaching objectives, Ahmed was reluctant to credit the IK.
ist ein Problem für mich, in diesem Deutschkurs, uhm, wir machen viele Grammatik, und Übungen, ja, und das ist wichtig, aber ich mache mehr sprechen im Interview, [laughs] ja, ich möchte, wir machen mehr sprechen, uhm, und auch mehr Spaß natürlich, mehr interessant ...

[Uhm, I don’t know, how did the German class help, yes, I believe for the grammar maybe, but we don’t do much speaking, you know it, this is a problem for me in this German class, we do lots of grammar and exercises, and this is important, but I do more speaking in this interview, yes, I wish we did more speaking and also more fun, of course, more interesting stuff...]

S: Wie meinst du interessant?

[What do you mean interesting?]

A: Uhm, ich finde das Buch nicht interessant, wie sage ich ... uhm, die Übungen, nein, sie sind nicht interessant für mich, ja, manche vielleicht, aber uhm, viel nicht.

[Uhm, I find the textbook not interesting, how do I put it, the exercises, no, they are not interesting for me, yes, some maybe, but not many...]

S: Was wäre denn interessant, ahm, was ist interessant für dich?

[What would be interesting to you then, what is interesting to you?]

A: Uhm, für mich interessant ist das Leben, uhm, so Dinge in mein Leben, weißt du, mit anderen, uhm, auf Deutsch von Leben sprechen, uhm, habe ich die Präposition, uhm, ist das die richtige?

[Uhm, for me, life is interesting, things from my life, you know, talking of life with others in German, did I get the preposition right?]

S: Sprechen über, also über das Leben, so den Alltag sprechen?
[To talk about something, you mean to talk about life, about everyday life?]

A: Ja, Alltag, ich möchte über Alltag sprechen, aber ich kann nicht gut, uhm, mein Deutsch ist schlecht und, uhm, langsam, ja, ich möchte schnell sprechen, so wie, uhm, Deutsche, ja, aber wohin soll ich sprechen? Im Deutschkurs ist kein sprechen, nur Grammatik und Briefe schreiben ... (AI2)

[Yes, everyday life, I want to talk about everyday life, but I can’t do that well, my German is bad and slow, yes, I want to speak fast, like a German, but where shall I speak? There’s no speaking in the German class, just grammar and letter writing...]

The lack of sufficient oral skills practice and the perceived low-relevance of the IK learning materials were reoccurring aspects of criticism since Ahmed’s first e-journal, where he shared similar concerns. Nevertheless, he continued to dedicate at least an hour a day to homework and regularly watched German TV and listened to radio news and programs, convinced that it helped him improve vocabulary and listening comprehension skills. He credited these extra-curricular activities with allowing him to understand the instructors in class. Ahmed believed that Susanne still spoke fast, but that his learning strategies outside of the IK had helped him overcome this difficulty, at least partially. He further found her to be reserved and attributed it to her “Germanness”. In this second interview, he was also more forthright about his own cultural affiliations and ethnic belonging, which he now clearly juxtaposed to what he perceived as “typical German”.

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66 Ahmed refers to the part of the DTZ- Exam which contains a letter writing task.
A: Ich bin türkisch, ja, sehr türkisch, natürlich, uhm, ich bin immer türkisch, immer, ich meine, uhm, meine Sprache Türkisch, meine Familie Türkisch, mein Essen, alles Türkisch ... mein Herz auch Türkisch ... [laughs]

[I am Turkish, yes, very Turkish, of course, I am always Turkish, always, I mean, my language is Turkish, my family is Turkish, my food, everything’s Turkish...my hear is Turkish too...]

S: Ist türkisch sein anders als deutsch sein?

[Is being Turkish any different than being German?]

A: Jaaa, sehr anders! uhm, Türken sind sehr freundlich, weißt du, sehr offen alles, wenn du in Türkei bist, in der Türkei, viele Menschen sind auf Straße, alle sprechen, alle lublublublublub, viel Laut, sie lachen, uhm, Spaß haben, essen, trinken, so ... ich finde das ist nicht so hier, ja, uhm, vielleicht sie haben Spaß zuhause, wenn sie alleine, ich weiß nicht, ich nie eingeladen, uhm, zu Besuchen, aber draußen, ja, die Deutschen sind sehr ruhig, immer, so, viel Platz machen, nicht neben sitzen ... uhm

[Yes, very different! Turks are very friendly, you know, very open and everything, when you are in Turkey, many people are on the street, everyone’s talking, everyone’s like lublublublublub, lots of noise, they laugh, have fun, eat, drink, so...I find that this is different here, yes, maybe they have fun at home, when they are all by themselves, I don’t know, I was never invited to visit, but outside, yes, the Germans are very quiet, always, like leaving lots of space, never sitting right next to someone...]

S: Du meinst Abstand, dass es Abstand gibt zwischen den Leuten, so Distanz?

[Do you mean that there’s distance between people?]

A: Ja, ja, viel Distanz...

[Yes, yes, a lot of distance...]

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S: Uhm ... du sagtest gerade, die Türken sind freundlich. Sind die Deutschen dann etwa nicht freundlich?

[Uhm, you just said that the Turks are friendly. Does this mean that the Germans are not friendly?]

A: Ja, uhm, wie sage ich...., weißt du, ich habe, uhm wir haben letzten Monat gelernt, zwei Wort, zwei Worte?

[Well, how should I put it...you know, we learned a word last month, two word, two word?]

S: Wörter...

[Words...]

A: Ja, ja, zwei Wörter, wir haben, freundlich und höflich, uhm, es ist Unterschied ...
Türken sind freundlich, Deutschen sind höflich, verstehst du? [laughs] (A12)

[Yes, yes, two words, we learned friendly and polite, there is a difference...Turks are friendly, Germans are polite, you understand?]

This excerpt offers some evidence that Ahmed has begun to establish a dichotomous Us-vs.-Them thinking that allowed him to position himself in his new environment. While at the time of the first interview, he indicated that his identity was rooted in the Turkish culture, he did not explicitly oppose both cultures and the respective traits he assigned to them, but was rather at an explorative stage. Whereas during the second interview, he seemed more conclusive and more articulate about it. While such dichotomized thinking is not uncommon in the European migration context (see Hofer 2016), it certainly is not the desired outcome of modern L2 instruction for migrants. Considering that Ahmed had very little contact with German speakers and that half of his day was spent at the IK, it can be

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assumed that the IK must have played a role in the formation or at least in the maintenance of such attitudes. At least, it is certain that in Ahmed’s case, IK practices could not prevent the formation of static, opposite-based views, which were not conducive to L2 acquisition. Ahmed’s growing tendency to identify as a Turkish immigrant became further evident when I inquired about the language of communication at home and he reported that he still only spoke Turkish with his wife. Ahmed asserted that this probably was not going to change, as long as “ihr Deutsch ist besser als mein Deutsch” [her German is better than my German], suggesting that he was still unwilling to take on identities that could underscore his linguistic inferiority in relation to his wife. On the other hand, he continued to say that “Wir sind Türken, wir sprechen Türkisch zu Hause”, [we are Turks, we speak Turkish at home] implying that the use of German at home could hold yet another identity-threatening aspect – that of undermining his Turkish-ness, which Ahmed now seemed to have embraced since he had not been presented with any other alternatives.

6.3.3 After the IK

When I met Ahmed for our third interview, he had already passed the DTZ and the “Leben in Deutschland” test. He had also achieved his plans of working at the Frankfurt International Airport. He told me he was a member of a crew that provided cleaning and maintenance services for airplane cabins. One of his cousins was employed on the same team.

During the third interview, I first inquired about Ahmed’s experience at the OK and he began by confessing that he could not recall much of the subject matter anymore, which speaks to the program’s capacity to provide learners with in-depth knowledge. The course
lasted for only a little over two weeks and Ahmed felt everything went by very quickly. He also shared with me that the language used in the textbook was too advanced for him. He felt linguistically overwhelmed and spent hours with his dictionary at home, trying to figure out exactly what the different socio-political terms referred to. He was startled, because he had never come across the majority of the vocabulary used in the OK textbook either on TV or in other daily encounters. In addition, he was unfamiliar with several of the concepts that the teacher introduced in class. This became evident also from his second e-journal.


(AE2)

[The Orientation Course is going well, but very difficult. We read a lot about German politics this week. The topic is Politics in the Democracy. I learned many new words, for example representative, federal president, federal government and more. We also do the Basic Law, but I only know social insurance and pension fund, because I have already filled out my medical insurance form.]

This excerpt suggests that Ahmed was somewhat at a loss with the content discussed in class. It is unclear how he related the German constitution to social and health insurance, but it is my interpretation that he was trying to associate the information he received in class with his own experiences. During the interview, he confessed that in an effort to decipher the labyrinth of socio-political terminology, he even enlisted the help of his wife; however, it turned out she wasn’t knowledgeable enough to assist him. This occurrence seems to have briefly boosted his self-esteem, evident in his comment that “endlich ich
weiß mehr wie sie” [I finally know more than her]. This signaled that Ahmed still perceived his relationship with his wife as asymmetrical. Ahmed’s remark can also be read as an indication of the advanced level of knowledge required from participants by the OK curriculum. During the interview, I remained persistent in my efforts to find out what Ahmed had learned during the OK. Apart from some information about the events surrounding WWII and the consequent division of the country, Ahmed did not seem to be able to recall much of any of the content from the OK. Eventually, he admitted that most of the questions were too difficult for him to understand, so for the test he focused on memorizing the answers, instead. When I inquired about the reasons he found the historical events around WII engaging, he confessed he was fascinated by the swift economic recovery experienced in the former Federal Republic of Germany.

Uhm, ja, ich habe gelernt, die Ost und West nach dem Krieg, wir haben gesehen, Frankfurt, zum Beispiel, uhm, sie haben Fotos gezeigt, und ja, es war alles kaputt, alles…war kraß, und, aber, sie haben alles neu gemacht, alles, Haus, Kirche, Straße, Autobahn….alles neu, danach nur 50 Jahre schnell, ja, sehr schnell und uhm, ich habe Respekt… uhm, sehr gute Arbeit, sehr schnell…die Deutschen sind gut arbeiten, ja, sehr gut... [laughs]... (AI3)

[Uhm, yes, I learned about East and West after the war, we saw Frankfurt, for example, they showed us pictures, and yes, everything was broken, everything…it was extreme, but, they did everything new, everything, house, church, street, autobahn, everything new, quick and in only 50 years, yes, very fast and I have respect…very good job, very fast…Germans are good at working, yes, very good…]}

What seems to have impressed Ahmed the most was the speed at which Germany was able to recover from the ruins after the war. This seems to mirror his overall positive evaluation of the working ethics that he ascribed to Germans and which were palpable already at the
first interview and which he found confirmed at his new job, where his foreman was German. Ahmed spoke with respect of his manager, but admitted he had difficulties understanding him. Ahmed told me that his foreman came from the South of Germany and I gathered that his speech was probably influenced by Swabian German. Ahmed admitted that initially he could almost understand nothing and relied entirely on his cousin to explain work-related instructions to him. Over time, though, Ahmed got used to his manager’s linguistic features and asserted that it did not trouble him anymore. He also admitted he barely spoke German at work, mainly because of the nature of his occupation. Whenever he experienced difficulties understanding or had a job-related inquiry, he turned to his cousin, who helped him. The rest of Ahmed’s coworkers were mostly immigrants like himself, which he claimed was the reason why his German had stagnated since leaving the IK. When I asked if he had ever talked to his manager, Ahmed shook his head with a smile, “Neeein, nein, ich nur hören, nicht viel sprechen” [Noo, no, I only listen, don’t talk much]. This revealed that, similar to the IK classroom, Ahmed saw himself in an asymmetrical relationship where he was inferior due to his lack of fluency. He further admitted he was anxious to speak in front of his foreman, because he did not want to reveal his linguistic deficiencies and appear unqualified for the position. He tried to offset this by working diligently “wie ein Deutsche” [as a German]. Ahmed’s idea of a diligent “German” worker, he explained, included arriving 10-15 minutes earlier to work, bringing a snack in a container and never extending the breaks. The instances where he spoke German at work were limited to occasional interactions with the other immigrant members of his crew. The encounters with his manager appear to have been rather passive and one-directional, marked by Ahmed’s struggle to make sure he understood what he was being told. When I
inquired whether he believed his manager should try to use simplified standard German in order to facilitate conversations with his crew members, Ahmed appeared hesitant.

Ja, uhm, ich weiß nicht, er sollte Hochdeutsch sprechen?, uhm, ich weiß nicht, ich glaube, er muss nicht, uhm, verstehst du, er ist Chef ... [laughs] ... und ich bin Ausländer, ich Schnauze halten und arbeiten [laughs] ... keinen, Spaß, uhm, ja, ich habe Job, weißt du, Frau, uhm, mein Auto [laughs], ja, uhm, ist gut so ... (AI3)

[Yes, I don’t know, he should speak High German? I don’t know, I believe he doesn’t have to, you see, he is the boss...and I’m a foreigner, I keep my gob shut and work, no joke, yes, I have a job, you know, a wife, my car, yes, it’s ok the way it is...]

Ahmed’s comments testify to his self-perception as subordinate. His relationship to his foreman mirrors the way that he positioned himself and was positioned in relation to his German instructors too, that is as a person of a lesser value with no right to speak. Ahmed accepted being silenced in both contexts, anxious his linguistic inferiority might threaten his access to the very economic resources that guaranteed his existence in Germany. In order to counterbalance and secure his successful completion of the IK and his job respectively, he showcased virtues he considered “German”, e.g. punctuality, assuming these virtues would be recognised by the gatekeepers. In a sense, he used them as “rules of entry” (Block 2007) to the communities of practices he was trying to access. Since these only granted him peripheral participation, he fell back on his identity as a Turkish immigrant, which was further facilitated by the high ELV of his community and the fact that his needs for social contacts were met by his own and extended family members. Because Ahmed’s encounters with L2 members conveyed little opportunity for mobility between groups and rather presented him with an Us-vs.-Them dichotomy, it can be claimed he chose the only position he saw available for himself, that of an uneducated, unqualified
immigrant living in a parallel society. Ahmed recalled a recent short trip to Turkey that made him aware of some changes, confirming my contention.

Ich weiß nicht, aber, uhm, das ist komisch, uhm ... wenn hier, ich kein Deutsche, wenn in Türkei, ich kein Türke ... manchmal ich fühle, weißt du, uhm, ich bin ein nichts ...

[laughs] (AI3)

[I don’t know, but, this is weird, when I’m here, I am no German, when I’m in Turkey, I’m no Turk ... sometimes I feel, you know, I am nothing...]

Ahmed’s comment referred to the way he felt he was perceived and positioned in his new and old home countries, respectively. His adoption of “German” traits, such as Pünktlichkeit [punctuality], that he considered necessary for his employment security in Germany, were recognized as non-Turkish in his homeland. This triggered a feeling of foreignness and inbetween-ness that he clearly experienced as negative, as it was identity-threatening to him. His encounters in social contexts dominated by antipodes, led to Ahmed’s restrictive understanding of self as inherently linked to one ethno-cultural belonging. A critically-reflexive analysis of his experiences and encounters with L2 speakers, could have possibly presented him with alternative perspectives and revealed the potential and power implicit in multiple identities (Kramsch 2009, Norton 2013) and symbolic competences (Kramsch & Whiteside 2008), which allow learners to not only use the language, but also “to reflect on their experience” (Kramsch 2013, p.62) and to see themselves “both from the inside and from the outside” (ibid.).

When I asked Ahmed to recap his IK experience, he displayed ambivalent feelings about it.
A: Ja, der Deutschkurs, uhm, ich glaube der Deutschkurs war sehr gut, ja, ohne Deutschkurs, was?, ich habe kein Job ohne Deutschkurs, weißt du, ja, auch meine Freunde, uhm, ich habe viele Personen kennenlernen im Deutschkurs, uhm, wir haben Spaß, ja, war gut...

[Yes, the German class, I believe the German class was good, yes, without German class what? I have no job without German class, you know, yes, my friends too, I met a lot of people in the German class, we had fun, it was good...]

S: Meinst du also du hast viel im Deutschkurs gelernt? Hast du genug im Deutschkurs gelernt?

[So do you think you learned a lot in the German class? Did you learn enough in the German course?]

A: Uhm, genug, ich weiß nicht, uhm, ich habe nicht genug sprechen gelernt, uhm, du, uhm, du hörst, [laughs]..., da war, uhm, wir haben geschrieben, uhm, die Briefe schreiben, das war nicht, für mich das war langweilig, uhm, ich brauche nicht, wohin Brief schreiben hier?; ich keine deutsche Freunde, aber ohne Kurs, ich kann nicht vorstellen, was?... (AI3)

[Uhm, enough, I don’t know, I didn’t learn enough how to speak, you can hear that, there was, uhm, we wrote the letters, that wasn’t, for me that was boring, I don’t need it, where shall I write a letter here? I know German friends here, but without the course, I can’t imagine, what?]

In hindsight, Ahmed’s memories of the IK were positive, as he credited the program with breaking the social isolation that he experienced in the first months after his arrival in Germany. He also acknowledged the IK with giving him a good linguistic base and facilitating his integration into the German job market. Considering that he did not make much use of German at work though, one could possibly contend that the IK certificate
simply allowed for the fulfillment of some proforma prerequisites. What IK practices did accomplish in Ahmed’s case was to reinforce his belief that silence was the best strategy to ensure sustained access to symbolic and material resources (Norton 2000). Because Ahmed accepted and identified with the inferior position of a Turkish immigrant and perceived Germans as polite but reserved, he eventually stopped seeking learning opportunities. Added to this was the time constraint imposed by his work and the high ELV of his community, which apparently curbed Ahmed’s need for sustained contacts with L2 communities of practice.

Uhm, wohin Kontakte mit Deutsche?, das ist sehr, sehr schwierig...uhm, zuerst keine Zeit, danach, uhm... meine Freunde alles Türkisch...meine Familie, alles Türkisch, wohin ich Deutsche kennenlernen?... ja und, uhm.... warum? (AI3)

[Uh, where contacts with Germans? This is very, very difficult...for one, no time, then, my friends are all Turkish, my family, all Turkish, where to meet Germans?...yes, and why?]

The last excerpt reveals that Ahmed did not deem it worth investing more time and effort into creating learning opportunities through contacts with Germans, as he did not believe it would increase his social value. This stood in sharp contrast to the initial eagerness to speak German that he expressed during our first interview. It is my assertion that Ahmed’s accounts confirm Potowski’s (2001) claim that societies and classrooms can ”give us strong messages about whom we can be and to what we can aspire” (p. 241).
6.4 Youssef

The third participant in the IK I could recruit for my study was Youssef. He was fluent in Arabic and French, and spoke English and German well. He conducted the interviews in German. Youssef was working two jobs while taking the IK, yet he made time for the interviews, because he believed our conversations would offer an opportunity to practice his German.

6.4.1 Background and Reasons to Enroll

Youssef was an accountant in his late 20s. He hailed from a middle-class family settled in Morocco’s capital and held a university degree. He was fluent in both Arabic and French and also spoke some English, because he had taken entry levels classes while in college. He had moved to Germany five months prior to beginning the IK. Youssef migrated to Frankfurt as part of the family reunion program. He had met and married his wife in Rabat. She was of German and Moroccan descent, but she did not speak Arabic. Her first language was German and she spoke some French and English. Youssef did not have any family members or relatives residing in Germany and lived alone with his wife. He was ordered to complete the entire IK by the FRO as a prerequisite for obtaining his permanent residence permit. He had completed the A1 level at the Goethe-Institute branch in Rabat.

Youssef was employed in two part-time positions parallel to taking the IK. He had worked several years as an accountant in Morocco; however, his experience and credentials were not recognized by the authorities in Germany. Youssef had contemplated his career and
development options in Germany and settled on a *Ausbildung zum Elektroniker*\(^67\), which he planned to commence after completing the DTZ and obtaining his B1 certificate. His choice of the aforementioned career was based on several factors. Youssef explained that he believed his academic strength was math. One of the current jobs he was holding included the maintenance and repair of office coffee machines. He had come to this position through an extended family member, who was employed there. Youssef was hoping that his math skills and a reference from the current employer would enhance his apprenticeship application. In addition, he had found out that the local *Handwerkskammer*\(^68\) had a program for the integration of young immigrants and Youssef planned to apply and receive subsidies for the duration of the training. This, he hoped, would allow him to take care of his family while working on his professional future. Although Youssef enjoyed his profession as an accountant in his home country, he decided against it in Germany. His inquiries indicated lower employment opportunities compared to those for an electronics technician. Because Youssef had laid out the trajectory for his future in such detail and had researched all available opportunities, he left me with the impression that he was a very determined, proactive and resourceful individual, very much invested in acquiring all necessary skills.

When asked about his reasons for enrolling in the IK, he mentioned the order from the FRO and the socio-economical factors outlined above. In addition, taking part in such a course would improve communication with his wife and satisfy his personal interest and appreciation of Germany and the German language and culture.

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\(^{67}\) In Engl.: Apprenticeship for an electronics technician;  
\(^{68}\) In Engl.: Chamber of Crafts;
6.4.2 The IK Experience

During my first stay with the focus group, it came to my attention that Youssef did not attend IK sessions regularly. He was often late and was absent on one day of the second week. He appeared otherwise engaged in the learning process, consistent with homework and knowledgeable about his coursework. His linguistic progress was swift, because at the time of the first interview, he proved surprisingly fluent for the short period that he had been learning German. He also displayed remarkable listening comprehension skills, both in the classroom and during the interviews. When I inquired about his learning strategies and behaviour, he emerged as a highly invested autonomous learner. Youssef always carried with him a pocket-size dictionary and his vocabulary book. He reported because of the two part-time positions he had, his time for studying German was significantly limited. This was also the reason why he sometimes had to leave earlier or arrived late for class. To offset this, Youssef reported he took advantage of every learning opportunity he encountered.

Ehm, zum Beispiel, ich sitze im Bus und ich gucke, alles, Strassenschild, Schild im Bus, draußen, Namen, so Bäckerei, Apotheke, alles, ich will verstehen, wenn nicht, ich gucke in mein Wörterbuch und dann alles hier schreiben. (YI1)

For example, I sit in the bus and I look at everything, street signs, signs on the bus, names, like bakery, pharmacy, everything, I want to understand, if not, I look in my dictionary and then I write down everything in here.

Indeed, Youssef’s vocabulary book was full of his notes and translations. In addition to this, he constantly read German literature and poetry. He showed me the book he was
reading at that time – a softcover anthology of Goethe’s poems published by Reclam. He explained that he owned numerous Reclam books, because their format allowed him to carry them with him. Since Youssef lived in the outskirts of the city and did not have a car, he made use of the hours spent on public transportation to study and read German, as well as to complete his homework assignments. This further cemented his profile as a highly invested learner of German.

Y: Ich lerne Deutsch überall, ja, überall, für mich Deutsch sehr, sehr wichtig, das wichtigste...

[I learn German everywhere, yes, everywhere, for me, German is very, very important, the most important]

S: Warum ist Deutsch so wichtig für dich?

[Why is German so important to you?]

Y: Warum? Ich möchte in Deutschland leben, mein Leben jetzt hier, und, ich muss Deutsch sprechen, ehm, gut Deutsch ... weißt du, in Deutschland ohne Deutsch du kannst nichts machen, du kannst nur, nur Körperarbeit ... aber ich will Ausbildung, so, ich muss sprechen super Deutsch (YI1)

[Why? I want to live in Germany, my life is here now, and I have to speak German, good German...you know, in Germany, without German you cannot do anything, you can only do bodywork..., but I want to do my training, so I have to speak excellent German...]

Youssef’s determination to achieve his goals becomes once again clear in this excerpt, where he spoke about learning German and the driving forces behind it. It was apparent

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69 Reclam is a German publishing house, particularly known for its paperback editions of literary classics for school and education;
that his motivation to master the German language was closely related to his career prospects – he invested in the acquisition of German as he viewed it as the necessary precondition for obtaining a wide range of symbolic and material resources (Norton 2013). His investment can further be linked with his position and identity as the family’s breadwinner, as he explained that his wife was still in college and relied on him financially. In addition, Youssef supported his parents in Morocco.

Ja, ja, meine Frau, sie geht immer noch zu Uni und, ehm das heißt ich muss verdienen, natürlich ... ehm, ich bin der Familienoberhaupt jetzt ... [laughs], alle warten, alle gucken nach mir ... [laughs] (YII)

[Yes, yes, my wife is still attending university and this means that I have to make money, of course...I am the head of the family now... everyone is expecting, everyone is looking at me...]

The strength of Youssef’s resolve became even more evident in his willingness to expose himself to uncomfortable situations and to take on the learner position, even at the risk of feeling out of place. He reported that he spoke exclusively German with his wife and that he was not afraid to seek contacts with German speakers outside of the IK classroom. Although difficult at times, he considered it his best chance to master the language quickly.

Y: Zu Hause? Nur Deutsch, nur!, manchmal sehr schwierig, aber, ich verstehe alles, alles ... wenn ich nicht sagen kann, dann Körpersprache ...

[At home? Only German, only! This is very difficult sometimes, but I understand everything, everything...If I can’t say something, I use body language...]

S: Hast du denn keine Angst vor Fehlern? Hast du nicht Angst ...

[Aren’t you afraid of making mistakes? Don’t you have fear of...]
Y: Ja, ja ich verstehe Frage, nein, keine Angst. Warum Angst? ehm, ich lerne jetzt, so ich mache Fehler, das ist normal ... meine Frau weiss ich lerne und auch meine Freunde, sie helfen, sie lachen nicht ... Deutsche lachen nicht ... (YII)

[Yes, I understand the question, no, no fear. Why fear? I am learning now, so I make mistakes, that’s normal...my wife knows that I am learning and so do my friends, they help, they don’t laugh...Germans don’t laugh...]

Youssef’s last remark is in reference to his previous experience with learning a second language. Although fluent in French, he confessed he loathed speaking it, because of Morocco’s French colonial past and his memories from learning French at school. He insisted he had a “Trauma” from his adolescent years when the French teacher used to mock his accent and pronunciation. Youssef had been to France several times too, visiting relatives. He admitted though that he felt very uncomfortable during these stays as he felt he was the subject of discrimination and prejudice.

Kannst du dich vorstellen? Andere Leute können lachen, ja, aber, ehm, die Lehrerin!, die Lehrerin lache zuerst, ja...ich habe die Lehrerin gehaßt, und Französich auch...und heute auch!, ich reise nach Frankreich und ich sprechen und sie hören mein, ehm, mein Akzent und sie lachen...ja...weil marokkanisch ... (YII)

[Can you imagine this? Other people can laugh, yes, but the teacher! The teacher was the first to laugh, yes...I hated the teacher, and French as well...and even today! I travel to France and I speak and they hear my accent and they laugh...yes...because it is Moroccan...]

Youssef’s aversion to French was so strong that he refused to speak it at home with his wife and only resorted to it when absolutely necessary. This came to the advantage of German in several respects. Youssef’s negative experiences in France, served to support his perceived favourable position in German society, which he found did not have biases
against Moroccan nationals, specifically. In addition, he was never mocked for his accent and his efforts to learn German were appreciated and complimented by his extended family members and friends. As apparent from the quote below, he viewed Germans as rather private, reserved and polite in comparison to the French, whom he said were more straightforward and “arrogant”. Since speaking German did not attract any negativity on the side of his interlocutors, it was a precondition enough for Youssef to engage in conversations with fluent L2 speakers.

Ehm, die Deutsche sind nicht wie Franzosen, weißt du, sie korrigieren dir nicht, sie lachen nicht für deine Fehler....ehm, die Deutsche sind sehr höflich und auch, wenn ich Deutsch spreche, sie finden gut...kein Problem... (YI1)

[Germans are not like the French, you know, they don’t correct you, they don’t laugh at your mistakes...the Germans are very polite and also, whenever I speak German, they find it good...no problem...]

Youssef’s sustained positive learning experiences with German speakers outside of the classroom can account for his willingness to identify as a learner and to continue seeking learning opportunities. This could further explain why he viewed Susanne as an isolated case and attributed her rancor rather to her private circumstances.

Y: Ja, Susanne, ich mag Susanne nicht, natürlich, sie ist schlecht Lehrerin, sehr schlecht ... aber was kann ich machen? Ich kann nichts machen, ich brauche Deutschkurs, ja, ich brauche Zertifikat Deutsch ... manchmal ich bleibe nach Hause lernen mit meinem Buch und mit Frau, wenn Susanne im Deutschkurs, ist besser so, ich lerne mehr ... ja, sogar mehr...
[Yes, Susanne, I don't like Susanne, of course, she is a bad teacher, very bad...but what can I do? I can't do anything, I need the German course, yes, I need the language certificate...sometimes when Susanne is in the German course I stay at home and study with my text book and my wife, it's better this way, I learn more, I learn even more...]  

S: Kannst du mir sagen, uhm, was genau macht Susanne zu einer schlechten Lehrerin, so, deiner Meinung nach?

[Could you tell me what exactly makes Susanne a bad teacher, in your opinion?]

Y: Meiner Meinung nach sie erklärt nicht gut, ehm... alles zu schnell mit Susanne, auch, sie hat kein Bock, ja, Susanne macht Grammatik schnell, schnell und alles langweilig, halbe Klasse schlafen, ja... und dann noch schimpfen, immer schimpfen...

[In my opinion, she doesn't explain well...everything is too fast with Susanne, she also can't be bothered, yes, Susanne does the grammar quickly, quickly and everything is boring, half of the class is asleep, yes...and then the scolding, always scolding...]

S: Warum meinst du macht sie das? Warum schimpft sie mit euch?

[Why do you think she does this? Why does she scold you?]

Y: Ehm, ich glaube... ich glaube ich habe, ich weiß eine Antwort... ich glaube, Susanne denkt Deutsch ist gut, Ausländer ist schlecht, verstehst du?, Susannes Leben kaputt, so Kleidung schmutzig, Haar so... nichts gut in Susanne und sie denkt, ja, Ausländer schuld... (Y11)

[I believe...I believe I have, I know an answer...I believe Susanne thinks that German is good and foreigner is bad, you understand? Susanne’s life is broken, her clothes so dirty, hair so...nothing is good in Susanne and she thinks, yes, it’s the foreigners’ fault...]

This excerpt is revealing on several levels. On the one hand, it shows that Youssef was aware of the instructors’ positions as gatekeepers. This can explain why he avoided
defending himself and engaging in direct confrontations with Susanne. It does not imply that he passively accepted and tolerated this imposed identity though (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004). Youssef and Cemre were the two participants who approached Zorica and demanded that she report Susanne to the school management. His decision to occasionally skip class when she was the instructor and study at home was another of his strategies to cope with the situation. It seemed though that because Youssef had enough exposure and positive encounters with L2 community members outside of the IK classroom, the IK experience did not have a negative impact on his overall investment in learning German and merely affected his investment in the class. His motivation to learn German was more dependent on his role and self-conception as his family’s main provider, which he felt left him without a choice – he had to learn German, as apparent from the previous excerpts.

When I inquired about Youssef’s views about his new home country, he displayed vivid interest in the topic and delved into lengthy elaborations, revealing the complexity of his motivational work. Youssef professed that he held a deep interest and appreciation of the German language and culture.

Y: Ich weiß nicht warum, ich liebe einfach, schon in Marokko in Schule, ich interessiere Deutsch...ehm, aber...ehm...wir keine Deutsch, keine Deutschlehrer, verstehst du?

[I don’t know why, I just love it, I was interested in German already at school in Morocco..., but...we had no German, no German teachers, you understand?]

S: Uhm, meinst du es gab, ... uhm, du hattest keine Möglichkeit, uhm, Deutsch zu lernen, an deiner Schule, richtig...?
[Do you mean there was...you had no opportunity to learn German at your school, correct?]

Y: Ja, ja, weil keine Deutschlehrer, ... aber Deutsch immer meine Lieblingssprache, auch Bücher, ich viel deutsche Bücher auf Arabisch gelesen, wirklich, so, ... und jetzt ich lese auf Deutsch, alles, Goethe, Heine, ... viel Goethe aber, viel, ich liebe Goethe, ehm, er manchmal ein bisschen schwer, aber mit meiner Frau, mit meiner Frau mir helfen, ich lese und verstehe... (YII)

[Yes, yes, because there were no German teachers, ...but German was always my favourite language, also books, I’ve read many German books in Arabic, really, so...and now I read in German, everything, Goethe, Heine, ... lots of Goethe, a lot, I love Goethe, he is sometimes a bit difficult, but with my wife, with my wife helping me, I read and I understand...]

Youssef’s admiration for German literature seemed to further extend to some virtues, which he admitted he considered typically German. His attitudes towards Germany and the Germans appeared to be ambivalent though.

Y: In Deutschland ich mag, die Leute sehr fleißig, ja, sehr fleißig und viel arbeiten, alles sauber, ... ehm, viel Ordnung, ich mag das, hier, ich arbeite fleißig, ja, ich lerne, dann ich habe ein gutes Leben, ein ruhig... in Morokko ist nicht so, viele Probleme in Morokko...hier, alles gut, aber ... ich habe nur ein Problem, ja, nur ein Problem...

[I like that in Germany people are very diligent, yes, very diligent and they work hard, everything’s clean, ...lots of orderliness, I like that here, I work diligently, yes, I learn and then I’ll have a good life, a smooth one...it’s not the same in Morocco, there are many problems in Morocco...here, everything’s fine, but...I have only one problem...]

S: Was ist das für ein Problem?

[What is the problem?]
When asked to elaborate on this, Youssef explained that it was his overall impression from the encounters he had have so far, mostly at work, but also incidents on the bus, in stores or on the street, that initially, strangers met him with fear. He further said that his wife and her Moroccan father had had similar experiences, which confirmed and strengthened Youssef’s perceptions. Moreover, he and his family followed the political debates about immigrants and often had discussion about it at home. It became apparent that during the short period Youssef had been in Germany, he had become aware of the larger social structures dominated by an Ausländer – Nicht-Ausländer polarity and the fact that being a Muslim automatically allocates one to the latter group. He had also recognized that the social meaning of Ausländer was that of a person inferior to ‘native’ Germans due to a presumed lower level of skills, education and German fluency. For Youssef, this resulted in “manchmal, nicht immer” [sometimes, not always] feeling foreign in a country that he was determined to make his home. He admitted that he did not anticipate this prior to coming to Germany.

Vor Deutschland, ich höre nur wunderbar, wunderbar, aber jetzt in Deutschland, ich bin in Deutschland, ich finde viele Sachen sind wunderbar, aber Problem mit Muslim nicht so gut...also, in Frankreich, immer schlecht, eine Katastrophe, ehm, Franzosen
hassen Marokkaner, also Deutschland besser für mich, aber, aber, hier, die Deutsche haben Angst mit Muslim und ich bin Muslim... verstehst du... (YI1)

[Before Germany, I hear only wonderful things, wonderful, but now in Germany, now that I am in Germany, I find many things to be wonderful, but the issue with Muslims is not so good... well, in France, it is always bad, a catastrophe, the French hate Moroccans, so Germany is better for me, but here, the Germans are afraid of Muslims and I am a Muslim ... you understand...]

It appears that Youssef has experienced a rift between his anticipated experiences in Germany and his lived reality and is in a phase of readjustment and reorientation. He also continues to juxtapose his experiences in France with those in Germany. These processes inevitably affected his self-perceptions. When we talked about it during the first interview, Youssef insisted he identified strongly as a Moroccan and as a Muslim:

Ich bin hundert Prozent marokkanisch, ja, meine Sprache arabisch, mein Gesicht marokkanisch, mein Kopf marokkanisch, alles marokkanisch... [laughs]... und, ich bin Muslim... (YI1)

[I am hundred percent Moroccan, yes, my language is Arabic, my face is Moroccan, my head is Moroccan, everything’s Moroccan ... and, I am a Muslim...]

Yet, at the same time he was reluctant to identify as a Muslim in the way that he believed Muslims were portrayed in the mass media and viewed by many in the host society. He explained this perceived hostility against Muslims with the prevalence of negative stereotypes.

Y: Viele denken, Muslim sind gefährlich, ehm... sie sind bescheuert, keine Bildung, nichts, sie sprechen nicht gut Deutsch und so... manchmal ich denke die Deutschen
ehm, haben im Kopf sie sind die besten und die anderen sie sind nicht ... ehm, nicht
die besten wie die Deutsche, verstehst du?

[Many believe that Muslims are dangerous...they are dumb, no education, nothing,
they don’t speak German well and the kind...sometimes I believe the Germans have
this idea in their heads that they are the best and the others are not...not the best as
the Germans, you understand?]

S: Aham...

Y: Aber, ich bin nicht blöd, meine Frau auch nicht blöd, mein Schwiegervater auch
nicht blöd ... aber die Leute sehen [points at face and body] und sie sofort... ja, Araber,
Muslim...nicht gut... (Y11)

[But, I’m not stupid, my wife’s not stupid either, my father in law isn’t stupid
either...but people see [points at face and body] and immediately...yes, an Arab,
Muslim...not good ...]

This excerpt is evidence that Youssef was aware of where society positioned him, but also
that he was dismissive of this positioning. On the one hand, he strongly identified himself
as an Arab and a Muslim, however this conflicted with the prevailing view of Muslims as
uneducated and subsequently inferior. The IK classroom experience seemed to rather
confirm his impression of the persisting social and ethnic dualism, as is evident in the
excerpt below. However, learning to speak the language well and getting a job were seen
by Youssef as a way to defeat such stereotypes, hence his investment in L2 learning
remained strong. When I inquired about the role of the IK specifically in supporting him in
his efforts to learn German, Youssef appeared ambivalent.

Y: Ehm, ich weiß nicht, ja, der Deutschkurs ist gute Idee, ich meine das, ja, auch sie
bezahlen, aber...für mich, ich möchte mehr, ich möchte besser...der Kurs oft sehr
langweilig, und manchmal, ich habe Frage, aber die Lehrerin, die Lehrerin nicht gut, ehm, sagen, ich, zum Beispiel mit Dativpräposition, ich fragen wann ich sage an und wann ich sage auf, aber sie kann nicht...ehm, ehm...

[I don’t know, yes, the German course is a good idea, I mean that, yes, they also pay it, but...for me, I want more, I want better...the course is often very boring and sometimes I have a question, but the teacher, the teacher isn’t saying well, I, for example with dative prepositions, I ask when to say ‘an’ and when to says ‘auf’, but she can’t...]  

S: Erklären…

[Explain...]  

Y: Ja, sie kann nicht erklären, überhaupt nicht...und manchmal, weißt du, ich denke für sie egal, weißt du, wir sind alle Ausländer, für sie nicht wichtig alles gut erklären...  

[Yes, she can’t explain, not at all ... and sometimes, you know, I believe she doesn’t care, you know, we are all foreigners and it is not important for her to explain well...]  

S: Verstehe... und was machst du dann? Fragst du, kannst du jemand anderen fragen?  

[I see…and what do you do then? Can you ask someone else?]  

Y: Nein, ich muss dann alles selber, weil meine Frau Deutsche, aber sie kann nicht Grammatik, weißt du, sie kann nicht erklären, ich muss dann suchen, im Buch suchen erklären... (YII)  

[No, I have to do everything all by myself then, because my wife is German, but she doesn’t know the grammar, you know, she can’t explain, I have to search myself, search for an explanation in the textbook...]
In addition to vague grammatical explanations, Youssef mentioned the lack of speaking practice in class, which he deemed extremely important.

Für mich, sprechen ist sehr wichtig, ja, sehr wichtig, denn ich möchte gut Eindruck machen, so, ehm, mit Frau, mit Freunde, mit Jobinterview und später für Ausbildung, aber wir machen nicht im Unterricht... (YI1)

[For me, speaking is very important, yes, very important, because I want to give a good impression, with wife, friends, at a job interview and later for my training, but we don’t do that in class...]

Youssef’s statements are conclusive about his views on the IK – it is evident that he was appreciative of the IK as an opportunity for receiving structured language instruction and because it was subsidized. At the same time, he felt the program often failed to respond to his linguistic needs and to support his interests. He continued to express his wish for more varied exercises and materials and more classic German literature, like the ones he attempted to read on his own. He even went on to compare his learning experiences at the Goethe Institute in Morocco and in Germany, saying that in Morocco in-class instruction was excellent, but he had nowhere to apply his knowledge. Here, he had access to communities of practice outside of the classroom, but found in-class instruction inadequate to support him in his aims. Youssef’s critique regarding insufficient speaking practice was corroborated by all participants, but the way he framed it revealed some specific and personal aspects of why he deemed it important – he had encountered recognition of his efforts to learn German, which stood in sharp contrast to his experiences with learning French. Youssef seemed to appreciate and notice when his interlocutors complimented him on his German skills or even seemed slightly bewildered by the strong interest in and knowledge of German culture and literature he displayed. This appeared to increase his
motivation to learn and improve. While Youssef’s desire to know more about the Germans and Germany represents an example of strong integrative orientation (Gardner 2011), it is also related to his identity formations and positioning in his new environment. Appearing as an educated individual would give Youssef a perceived advantage over other Muslim immigrants and he felt that it helped him defeat the stereotypes that he believed Germans held against Arabs. This does not mean that Youssef’s interest in the German language and literature was not genuine, quite the opposite. It also certainly was beneficial for his language achievements, because he said his intense explorations and translations of German texts helped him expand his vocabulary and improve his reading comprehension. It was rather a side effect that his relative fluency after such a short period in the country, in addition to his literary interests garnered him the acknowledgment of German speakers, which he otherwise was not used to. In a sense, fluency and knowledge of German culture were Youssef’s forms of appropriate cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977, 1984, 1991) to ensure he could move from peripheral to full participation (Lave & Wenger 1991). In reference to the supportive environment, Youssef found it outside of the classroom. Due to his L2 speaking wife and extended family, he was exposed to a “mutual engagement with other members, to their actions and their negotiation of enterprise, and to their repertoire in use” (Wenger 1998, p. 100). This most certainly helped him improve his language skills. When I met Youssef for the second interview, further details and accounts emerged to support my interpretations.

Youssef reported that he continued to study German intensively at home and in class. His progress was audible. My in-class observations confirmed that Youssef continued to study
and appeared to be more outspoken in comparison to my first visitation. The latter may be attributed to the salient improvement in the classroom atmosphere.

Ja, ja, es ist viel besser jetzt, kein Streß mehr, alles ruhiger, aber, ehm ... sie ist nicht bessere Lehrerin geworden, weißt du ... [laughs] ... der Unterricht is so wie früher, so langsam und langweilig für mich, ja, manchmal sehr langweilig ... aber jetzt kein Streß...

[Yes, yes, it is much better now, no more stress, everything’s more quiet...but she hasn’t become a better teacher, you know...classes are as before, slow and boring for me, yes, sometimes very boring...but now there’s no stress...]

While discussing his use of German outside of the classroom, he told me about a man he had met and befriended through his mother-in-law. He was a native German and Youssef made his acquaintance at a social gathering he attended with his family. Hartmut was completing his major in German literature and the two had a conversation about a book Youssef had recently been reading. Youssef was visibly pleased to recall the moment when he took Hartmut by surprise with his command of German and knowledge of literary contexts and works.

Y: Ja, er war sehr überrascht, so die meisten Deutsche, wenn sie sehen, wenn sie mich so sehen [points at body and face], sie glauben ich kann kein Deutsch und ich weiß nichts...also er war auch überrascht und hat mir gratuliert, ja...

[Yes, he was very surprised, as are most Germans when they see, when they see me like this [points at body and face], they think I don’t speak German and I don’t know anything...so he was surprised too and he congratulated me...]

S: Passiert dir das immer noch oft, ... dass dir die Leute Komplimente machen, wie gut du sprichst?
[Does this still happen to you often... that people compliment you on how well you speak?]

Y: Ja, ja, das ist fast immer, manchmal sie glauben nicht, dass ich sieben Monate hier bin, sie denken so zwei drei Jahre... [laughs]...

[Yes, yes, almost always, sometimes they can't believe that I've only been here for seven months, they think two or three years maybe...]

S: Warum glaubst du das so..., dass sie so denken, ...warum denken sie, dass du kein Deutsch kannst?

[Why do you think this is the case... that they think... why do they think that you don't speak German?]

Y: Ehm, warum, ... weil deutsche Leute haben Vorurteile, weißt du, das, das ist meine Meinung, und auch die Deutsche immer denken, ehm, sie haben das im Kopf so, sie sind besser, sie machen alles besser... besser Autos, besser Bücher, alles besser....ehm, und dann Ausländer, sie sind zweite Klasse... und in den Ausländer sie haben auch erste Klasse Ausländer und zweite Klasse Ausländer...

[Why... because German people are biased, you know, this is what I think, and also the Germans always think, they have it in their heads that they are better, they do everything better ... better cars, better books, everything better...and then foreigners are second class... and among foreigners, they have first class foreigners and second class foreigners...]

S: Wie meinst du das?

[What do you mean?]

Y: Ich meine das, Personen aus europäische Länder, zum Beispiel, sie sind erste Klasse, aus Nord, ehm, zum Beispiel Norwegen oder England oder Frankreich, das ist erste Klasse Ausländer hier, aber andere Ausländer, so wie Araber, ich bin vierte, nein
fünfte Klasse Ausländer, das heißt, sehr schlecht...und dann ich mache etwas gut, und sie glauben nicht, dann kommt Überraschung... [laughs] (Y12)

[I mean that people from European countries for example, they are first class, from the North, for example Norway or England or France, that’s first class foreigners here, but other foreigners, such as Arabs, I am fourth, no, fifth class foreigner, this means very bad... and then I do something good, and they can’t believe it, then comes a surprise...]

It is evident that Youssef was aware that not all immigrants in Germany experienced racism the same way and that some were accepted more than others, the ethnic group he belonged to, being the “lowest”. The excerpt is further evidence that despite this, Youssef continued to seek contact with German speakers outside of the classroom and he continued to attempt to combat stereotypes by displaying high fluency, knowledge and interest in the German language and culture. This ensured that he was not positioned within the same realms as other Muslim immigrants. Youssef’s desire to distinguish himself from other Muslims was apparent also in the ways he viewed his contact with co-workers at work. In addition to work at the coffee machines repair service, he also worked shifts at a warehouse. During our conversation, it became clear that he did not recognize contact with co-workers as learning opportunities and expressed slight irritation about the fact that he could not practice German in either of his positions.

Y: Warum?, ja, ich erkläre, zum Beispiel im Lagerhaus, dort arbeiten nur Ausländer, aus Eritrea, ... Ägypten, noch Albanien, Kongo, ein aus Portugal, aber wir sehen nicht, ja, denn ich gehe, ich mache meine Arbeit, und dann fertig nach Hause...die andere Job, ich spreche mehr mit den Leuten, mit Kollegen, ich muss, ... aber ich... ehm...ich spreche nicht zu viel, ich will nicht zu viel sprechen ... [laughs].... ich habe bißchen Angst.... [laughs]
[Why? Yes, I explain, for example in the warehouse, there work only foreigners, from Eritrea... Egypt, also Albania, Kongo, one guy from Portugal, but we don’t see each other, yes, because I go, I do my work, and then done, I go home... the other job, I speak more with the people, with colleagues, I have to... but I... I don’t speak too much, I don’t want to speak too much... I’m a bit anxious...]

S: Wie meinst du das? Wovor hast du Angst?

[What do you mean? Anxious about what?]

Y: Ehm... sie haben alle sehr schlechte Grammatik, weißt du, ... sie sprechen sehr schlecht Deutsch, manche, ehm, sie haben, ehm, sie nehmen falsche Wörter und so... ich will nicht die Fehler von anderen lernen, verstehst du, so... ich spreche mit Kollegen, ja, manchmal ich muss, aber ich lieber nicht, wegen Deutsch... (YI2)

[They all have very bad grammar, you know... they speak German very bad, some of them, they have, they take the wrong words and such... I don’t want to take over other peoples’ mistakes, you understand, so... I do speak with colleagues, yes, sometimes I have to, but I prefer not to, because of German...]

Youssef’s reluctance to speak to other immigrants whose German he did not consider good suggested he placed high value on his linguistic skills and the efforts that he put into acquiring them. It appeared that he was not so anxious to be associated with other immigrants – Youssef was accepting of his position as an immigrant, as he certainly had not been presented with another option – but was concerned with maintaining his distinction as a fluent and knowledgeable immigrant. The mere fact that he had to perform unqualified work appeared as a nuisance to him and he was looking forward to completing the IK and commencing his apprenticeship.

Ich will endlich mit Ausbildung beginnen, ja ... so Normaljob haben und Normaldeutsch sprechen... [laughs] (YI2)
I want to finally start my apprenticeship, yes... just have a normal job and speak normal German...

This quote reveals Youssef’s view that he was currently in a transitional phase, moving towards his final ‘destination’. His current occupations were a necessary means to support his family; however, they presented some identity-threatening aspects, which he was eager to avoid. For Youssef, being fluent in German was the key to social participation and ultimately “symbolic and material resources” (Norton 2013). For that reason, he seemed to guard his knowledge eagerly and invest in learning opportunities with the same commitment with which he avoided situations that weren’t conducive to learning.

6.4.3 After the IK

My third meeting with Youssef was after his successful completion of both the GLC and the OK. At the time of the third interview, he had already started his electronics technician apprenticeship. When I asked him to elaborate on his experiences in the OK and the value and quality of instruction there, he appeared somewhat derisive.

Y: Ja, das war so, typisch Deutschpropaganda... drei Wochen sprechen von Deutschland und wie ist alles wunderbar und großartig in Deutschland... und die Deutschen sind die besten... [laughs]... die meisten wieder halber Kurs geschlafen und der Lehrer, wie war Name, ehm, Klaus, ja... er hat keine Ahnung meiner Meinung nach...

[Yes, that was so typical German propaganda... three weeks talking about Germany and how everything is wonderful and amazing in Germany... and the Germans are the best... and again, half the class was asleep and the teacher, what was his name, Klaus, yes... he has no clue in my opinion...]

S: Warum?
It was Youssef’s impression that the OK was very much focused on presenting information about Germany that lacked in depth and was very fast-paced. He did not feel challenged by learning the material as he said that he already knew most of it. His overall stance on the IK continued to be of a mixed nature. On the one hand, he believed it was certainly a necessary program; on the other, he found a lot of the course to be “Zeitverschwendung” [waste of time]. He felt grateful that he met some friends there, but was unsure whether they would be able to sustain the contact now that the IK was over and everybody was caught up in their lives and responsibilities. In reference to his practice of German outside of the IK, Youssef reported that he continued to speak German at home with his wife and extended family as well as at his new position. Through Hartmut, he had also joined a “Lesegruppe” [book club] that met biweekly and where he was the only immigrant. He clearly viewed the latter as an achievement and recognition at the same time.

Y: Ja, ich bin der erste Ausländer in Gruppe, und auch Muslim, aber das ist klar... sie sind nur Deutsche ... denn du musst sehr gut Deutsch sprechen und lesen, und auch natürlich du musst Interesse haben, ehm ... Romane lesen, und Literatur überhaupt...
[Yes, I am the first foreigner in the group, and also Muslim, but that’s clear... they are only Germans... because you need to speak and read German really well and of course you need to be interested... read novels and literature overall...]

S: Hilft dir die Lesegruppe fürs Sprechen, ist es gut für dein Deutsch, ahm..., was meinst du?

[Does the book club help you with speaking, do you think it’s good for your German?]

Y: Der Club ist wunderbar für mein Deutsch!, denn schau mal, zuerst ich muss das Roman lesen, danach ich denke viel, ich mache Notizen, ja, und danach wir treffen und wir sprechen, ich spreche über meine Meinung, meine Deutung und ich höre die anderen sprechen... meine Lesegruppe ist wie Deutschgruppe, tausend mal besser als der Deutschkurs, tausend mal ... und auch weil nur Deutsche... (YI3)

[The club is wonderful for my German!, because look, first I have to read the novel, then I think a lot, I make notes, yes, and after that we meet and we speak, I talk about my opinion, my interpretation and I listen to the other guys talking... my book club is like a German class, thousand times better than the German class, thousand times... and also because they are all German... ]

Youssef’s description of the book club activities reads like the desirable design of any L2 class – the fact that participants contribute with their perspectives and interpretations turns it into an interactive experience that stands in sharp contrast to the OK classroom for instance, where topics were mostly briefly covered in an effort to satisfy the curriculum requirements and pass the final exam. While Youssef’s book club apparently offered an environment conducive to natural language acquisition, the IK appeared as an isolated capsule, where happenings did not seem to bear much relevance to life taking place outside of the course. Throughout the interviews and my observations, although consistent and well prepared, Youssef seemed in a sense detached from the course. He was so invested in his
learning and many positive linguistic encounters outside of the IK classroom, that the course itself seemed to be secondary and only served to fulfill the requirements set by the FRO. This was also evident in Youssef’s lengthy comments about his experiences outside of the IK and his rather limited answers when asked about the program. Therefore, I conclude that he was less invested in the IK because he considered it a learning opportunity of lesser value, particularly in comparison to other learning opportunities he considered more beneficial to his linguistic progress, such as contact with his family and the book club. Ultimately, it seemed for Youssef that his hard work had paid off – thanks to his constantly improving fluency, knowledge and unwavering will to make contact with L2 speakers. He had managed to gain access to communities of practice, which provided him with further opportunities to learn. Through his wife and friendships with others, referred to by Lave and Wenger (1991) as “old-timers”, he was able to gain access to social circles, where his knowledge and literary interests were appreciated and recognized by other community members. This secured him the right to speak and to be heard (Norton 2013). Throughout this process, though, Youssef often saw himself compelled to defeat stereotypes concerning Muslims. This did not discourage him; on the contrary, he managed to turn attempts of marginalization into learning opportunities. An affirmation of this was an occurrence that he told me about at his new job, where he felt he was initially met with scepticism by one of his foremen.

Ja, er fragte mir sofort, ehm ... kannst du gut Deutsch?, verstehst du mich so, oder soll ich langsam, so extra langsam für dich sprechen?, ich weiß nicht, ob er meinte das böse, weiß du, ehm... aber er dachte ich kann nicht gut Deutsch, so, weil ich
dunkel bin und wie Ausländer, ja, aber dann, ehm, dann habe ich mit ihm gesprochen
und er hat gesehen, ich kann gut und ich verstehe alles...

[Yes, he asked me right away... can you speak German well? do you understand me like this or shall I speak slow, like extra slow for you? I don’t know if he meant this in an evil way, you know... but he thought I don’t speak German well, because I am dark and as a foreigner, yes, but then, then I spoke with him and he saw, I speak well and understand everything...]

S: Aham, ja, und dann?

[Yes, and then?]  

Y: Ja, dann, wir sind jetzt ok [laughs] ... wir arbeiten zusammen, manchmal, ehm, man muss zeigen, man muss zeigen, dass man kann und ehm, auch man will lernen ...
... dann Deutsche sagen ok.... [laughs]... (Y13)

[Yes, then, we are ok now... we work together, sometimes you have to show, one has to show, then one can... and that one is willing to learn...then the Germans say ok...]  

This last excerpt exemplifies “the social nature of learning and knowing” (Lave & Wenger, 1991). It further completes Youssef’s profile as an invested learner, who made use of his knowledge to foster more learning opportunities and to ensure legitimate peripheral participation and hence access to symbolic and material resources. His strong integrative orientation displayed through his interest in German literature proved effective in the sense that it helped him create and take advantage of informal learning opportunities.

6.5 Monica

Monica was the fourth participant to be recruited for my study. Her mother tongue was Italian. She had learned English at school and Latin and Old Greek at university. She filled out the questionnaire in English but decided to conduct the interviews in German.
6.5.1 Background and Reasons to Enroll

Monica was a university graduate in her early-twenties. She hailed from a middle-class family in Northern Italy. She held a degree in International Law from an Italian University. Since she could not secure a job in Italy after her graduation, she had decided to move to Germany. She later indicated that circumstances of an affective nature also contributed to her decision to leave her home town and look for “ein neues Leben” [a new life]. In Frankfurt, Monica planned to learn German and then enroll at a German university with the goal of obtaining a Master’s degree in International Law. Her brother had already lived and worked in Germany for five years before her arrival there and this was a major factor that influenced Monica’s decision to move to Frankfurt. She stayed with him and he also supported her financially. As a citizen of a EU member country, Monica was not legally required to take the IK. She had applied and signed up for the program voluntarily because she wanted to obtain the C1 level as a prerequisite to later apply to German universities. At the time of our first interview, Monica had resided in Germany for more than one year except for a five-month return to Italy. She was assigned an IK spot shortly after her initial arrival in Germany; however, she had to quit only after three months because of an emergency of a private nature back in her home country. There, she continued learning German once a week with the support of a private tutor. Upon her return to Germany, she again applied for an IK placement. Since her participation in the program was partially subsidized, she had to wait for an available spot and was eventually assigned to my focus group, where I met her during my second visit. Monica’s short term plans included
obtaining the IK certificate and then continuing with the B2 and C1 proficiency levels at a local *Volkshochschule*\(^{70}\).

When asked about her motives to enroll, Monica first stated her interest in the German language and culture and then her plans to study and obtain a degree in Germany. She further elaborated that it was a necessary act of “Respekt” [*respect*] to acquire the language of the country one resides in.

### 6.5.2 The IK Experience

When I audited the first IK session during my second visit to the language school, my attention as a SLA researcher and GFL teacher was immediately caught by Monica due to the striking absence of a foreign accent when she spoke German. Although an Italian influence was audible in the prosody of her speech, her articulation was very clear and close to standard High German. Added to this was a highly accurate syntax, which could be explained by her in-depth knowledge of Latin and Old Greek. Overall, Monica appeared to be the most advanced learner in the group\(^{71}\). She had the most experience with learning languages and was well-versed in using grammatical terms when posing questions to the instructors or when referring to parts of the sentence. During my stay, she attended regularly, was very diligent with the homework and participated willingly in all activities. When we sat down to conduct the first interview, she provided lengthy comments and was visibly enjoying the opportunity to speak. Since at that point, she had been enrolled in the

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\(^{70}\) In Engl.: “adult education centre”;

\(^{71}\) Monica’s advanced level in comparison to the other IK participants can also be attributed to the fact that she did not write a second placement test upon her return from Italy, where she had continued to study German, but rather opted for the first available spot in the program. It is my speculation that she was misplaced and was too advanced for the course she was in.
IK for a while, I could not trace a development in her views of the IK and had to rely on her recollections and accounts of them at the time of the interview. Asked about her experiences with the program, she pointed out some strengths as well as some shortcomings. What became apparent from her comments was that she valued the course mostly for being affordable and for helping her expand her social contacts. She did, however, criticize the quality of grammar instruction and, as the rest of the interviewed participants, complained about the lack of speaking practice.

M: Der Deutschkurs ist eigentlich gut, ich, ich kann nicht klagen, vor allem wenn Zorica ist im Unterricht, wir haben Spaß ... ich hab nicht viele Freunde hier in Frankfurt und der Kurs ist gut für mich, denn ich hab Leute getroffen ... viele Leute hier und was natürlich auch sehr gut ist, der Kurs ist sehr billig für mich ... [laughs] ... was mir nicht gefällt ist, wie sie manchmal die Grammatik, also sie können die Grammatik manchmal nicht erklären ... und dann sagt Zorica, ja, das müssen wir so auswendig lernen ... [laughs] ... na ja, und wir machen auch wenig Sprechen hier, sehr wenig... wir machen meistens Grammatik und das ist sehr wichtig, ich liebe Grammatik, aber Sprechen, ja, das kann mehr sein...

[The German course is actually good, I can’t complaint, particularly when Zorica is teaching, we have fun...I don’t have too many friends here in Frankfurt and the course is good for me, because I met people...lots of people here and something else that is very good of course is that the course is very affordable for me... what I don’t like is how they sometimes handle grammar, well sometimes they can’t explain the grammar... and then Zorica says, well, we have to memorize this... oh well, and we do little speaking here, very little... we do mostly grammar and that’s important, I love grammar, but speaking, yes, it could be more... ]

S: Ist dir Sprechen wichtig?

[Is speaking important to you?]
M: Ja, Sprechen ist das wichtigste, natürlich! ich bin jetzt hier, ich lebe in Frankfurt, ich muss Deutsch sprechen...

[Yes, speaking is the most important, of course! I am now here, I live in Frankfurt, I have to speak German...]

S: Warum?

[Why?]

M: Warum? wie meinst du warum?

[Why? What do you mean why?]

S: Warum musst du unbedingt Deutsch sprechen?

[Why do you have to absolutely speak German?]

M: Ja, das it eine komische Frage... für Studium, für Arbeit... aber nicht nur, ja, auch aus Respekt für die Deutschen, ist klar... ich hasse die Leute, die hier wohnen, aber kein Deutsch sprechen oder kein Deutsch lernen... ja, das ist vielleicht verrückt, aber ist so... also, ich sage nicht sie müssen auf C2 Niveau sprechen, aber sie können immer bis B1 Niveau machen, egal wie viel Arbeit sie haben, so langsam, langsam kann man immer machen... (M1)

[Well, this is a weird question... for my studies, for work... but not only, yes, also out of respect for the Germans, that’s clear... I hate the people, who live here, but don’t speak German or don’t learn German... yes, this might be crazy, but it is so... well, I’m not saying they have to speak on a C2 level, but they could always do up to B1 level, no matter how much work they have, so slowly, slowly, one can always make it...]
Monica continued to tell me that she similarly disapproved of the many foreigners and refugees in Italy who had no command of the language and refused to learn it. She deemed it again “respektlos” [disrespectful]. In her opinion, learning the language of a host country was a must and in that sense, she believed it was good the IK was compulsory for immigrants to Germany. Apart from her opinion of the IK, the excerpt above provides insights into Monica’s attitudes towards immigrants and how she “placed duties” (Moghaddam & Harré 2010, p. 3) on them as newcomers in a foreign country. It further signaled a view of society’s makeup as grounded in an Ausländer-Nicht-Ausländer binarism, further subdivided into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Ausländer. Her attitudes towards learning German were the source of continuous disputes with her brother, who despite having lived in Germany for more than five years, she said, did not speak any German and made no attempts to.

Du kannst dir nicht vorstellen, er spricht kein Wort Deutsch, nichts... die ganze Zeit nur Italienisch, auf der Arbeit Italienisch, mit Freunden Italienisch, immer, immer, immer nur Italienisch... wir haben sehr gestritten, denn ich sage, ich frage ihm, willst du so sein wie diese ausländische Leute in Italien, du weißt, die kein Italienisch können? ... denn er ist genauso hier und er sagt immer er hat zu viel Arbeit, aber das ist keine Entschuldigung, ein bisschen Deutsch kann jeder lernen... (MI1)

[You can’t imagine, he doesn’t speak a word of German, nothing... the entire time only Italian, in the office Italian, with Friends Italian, always, always, always only Italian... we’ve had lots of fights, because I say, I ask him, do you want to be like those foreign people in Italy, you know, who can’t speak Italian? Because he is just like that here and he always says he has too much work, but this is no excuse, anyone can learn a bit of German...]
This excerpt signals Monica’s disparaging attitude towards immigrants in her country and at the same time has informative value as to how she sees herself as an immigrant in the new country. It further becomes apparent from the above excerpts that Monica’s attitudes and beliefs about immigrants mirrored the ongoing public discourse, where the responsibility to adjust to and integrate into the receiving society is placed rather on the immigrants (see Hofer 2016). Judging from her utterances, her attitudes appeared to have already been formed prior to her resettlement to Germany. Monica clearly distinguished between “gute” [good] and “nicht so gute” [not so good] immigrants and these attributives were reoccurring in reference to newcomers throughout her narratives. Considering that the expression of attitudes can be viewed as an act of positioning and identity formulation (see Liebscher & Dailey-O’Cain 2013), it became apparent that Monica sought to be perceived as the ‘good’ kind of immigrant when it came to knowledge of German. She seemed very invested in learning the language, both inside and outside of the classroom, and reported that she dedicated approximately an hour a day to reviewing the material covered in class. In addition, she regularly watched German TV. Her favourite shows were popular soap operas, such as “Unter Uns” and “GZSZ” because she said that she found the language to be authentic and reflected everyday German use. She turned watching TV into linguistically beneficial exercises by writing down interesting expressions and vocabulary, which she later attempted to use in her own speech. In addition, Monica listened to a lot of German music. Her learning strategy involved repeated readings of the lyrics and subsequently singing along. She shared with me that it was a way to offset the lack of practice in the IK and she believed it also helped her the most with her pronunciation.
Uhum ... ja, ich mach das, weil ich sonst nicht Deutsch spreche, ja, wir machen im Kurs sehr wenig Sprechen, nur in der Pause unterhalte ich mit den anderen... und auch wenn ich mit [names of other IK participants] ausgehe... Lieder singen ist auch sehr gut für meine Aussprache, wirklich, ich höre zu und wiederhole alles paar Mal, ja... uhum... (M11)

[Yes, I do that, because I otherwise don’t speak German, yes, we only do a little bit of speaking in the course, only during breaks do I get to talk to the others... and also whenever I go out with [names of other IK participants] ... Singing songs is also very good for my pronunciation, really, I listen carefully and repeat everything a couple of times, yes...]

When I inquired how important pronunciation was for her, Monica claimed she only wished to speak clearly enough to be understood. However, it was evident from my observations and her efforts that she placed high value on achieving native-like pronunciation, higher than she maybe wished to admit. Monica’s learning behaviour and strategies appeared in general to adhere greatly to a native-like orientation, this being evident in the frustration that surfaced whenever she made an error in class. When I addressed an incident that I had witnessed in class that day, she explained:

M: …Ich weiß nicht warum... ich hab so Angst... ich will mich nicht blamieren...

[laughs] ... ich möchte alles richtig machen, richtig sagen...

[I don’t know why... I am so afraid... I don’t want to embarrass myself... I want to do everything right, say everything right...]

S: Willst du also so gut wie eine Deutsche sprechen?

[So do you wish to speak as well as a German?]
M: Jaa [laughs]... also, ich werde nie so gut sprechen wie die Deutschen, aber ich will schon sehr gut sprechen, ja ... und ... wenn ich einen Fehler mache, oder die falsche Antwort, das ärgert mich total... und mit Susanne das ist schlimmer, denn ... ich hab Angst vor ihr, ehrlich, sie ist gemein und wenn sie uns korrigiert, dann ist sie so barsch, so... ich weiß nicht, ich glaub sie mag nicht Ausländer...

[Well...well, I will never speak as well as a German, but I want to speak very well, all right... and... whenever I make a mistake, or give the wrong answer, that totally irks me... and this is worse with Susanne, because... I am afraid of her, really, she is mean and whenever she corrects us, she is so harsh, so... I don’t know, I believe she doesn’t like foreigners...]

S: Uhm, hast also mehr Angst bei ihr?

[So, you mean you are more anxious whenever she’s teaching?]

M: Ja, ja, ich habe sehr viel Angst, viel mehr Angst zu sprechen, wenn Susanne den Unterricht macht als mit Zorica... mit Susanne, ich denke am besten Schnauze halten...

[laughs] ... (MI1)

[Yes, yes, I am very anxious, much more anxious to speak whenever Susanne leads the class in comparison to whenever Zorica does it... with Susanne, I believe it is best to keep my lips zipped...]

The above quote also indicates how she perceived the learning group, herself included, as foreigners versus Susanne as the native, with the former being in a disadvantaged position. Although an excellent speaker of German and an otherwise outspoken person, Monica was clearly intimidated by the native German instructor, Susanne. This could be attributed to several factors – on the one hand Susanne clearly did not encourage learners to partake in instruction (see Chapter 6 Section 6.1), which led to participants being generally less voluble in her class. On the other hand, Monica appeared to hold beliefs about the German
language that were rooted in native-speaker ideals. These curtailed her attempts to engage with fluent German speakers in particular, because she believed they could detect her errors and attempt to correct her – an embarrassment she tried to avoid, even in the IK classroom. Monica’s anxiety about making mistakes could also be related to her general view of Germans as rather harsh and distanced.

M: Ich finde es sehr schwierig Kontakte mit Deutschen zu knüpfen, sehr schwierig... sie sind sehr distanziert, finde ich, so zurückgehalten... und noch was aber ich weiß nicht ob ichs sagen soll... [laughs]...

[I find it really difficult to establish contacts with Germans, very difficult... they are very distanced, I find, like restrained... and one more thing, but I’m not sure whether I should say it...]

S: Natürlich kannst du es ruhig sagen, die Studie ist doch anonym, du weißt...

[Of course you can say it, the study is anonymous, you know that...]

M: Ja... [laughs]... die sind so steif, so kein Humor... und kalt, ja... wie Susanne... Susanne, sie ist für mich eine typische Deutsche, kalt und streng und... ja...

[Yes... they are so stiff, like no humor... and cold, yes... like Susanne... Susanne is for me a typical German, cold and harsh and... yes...]

S: Kennst du auch andere Deutsche außer Susanne?

[Do you know other Germans apart from Susanne?]

M: Ja, ich hab gekannt... ich hab gekannt paar Deutsche an der Arbeit, aber sie waren genauso... sie haben nie gelacht... und ich konnte keine Konversation mit ihnen machen, hat nicht geklappt... nein...
[Yes, I knew... I knew a few Germans at my work, but they were just like that... they never laughed... and I couldn’t have a conversation with them, it didn’t work out, no...]

S: Und hattest du denn auch Angst vor ihnen Deutsch zu sprechen?

[Were you then maybe afraid to speak German in their presence?]

M: Jaa, ich hatte... [laughs] ... ich hab gedacht sie werden mir korrigieren... [laughs]

(MI1)

[Yes, I was... I thought they would correct me...]

Although Monica did not have close contact with Germans other than her ex-colleagues and the bi-weekly encounters with Susanne as her German instructor, she appeared to have formed opinions about what constituted a ‘typical’ German. It is challenging to discern whether she held these attitudes about Germans prior to migrating and then found them confirmed or whether they emerged after resettling because of her experiences. Her own comments appear to support the first hypothesis.

Ja, also... vor Deutschland ich hab gewusst, die Deutschen sind natürlich sehr ordentlich... Ordnung und Pünktlichkeit sind hier sehr wichtig, ja... und das finde ich eigentlich gut, aber sie sind auch kalt und auch langweilig, ja... tut mir leid... [laughs]

... (MI1)

[Well... before Germany I knew the German are of course very orderly... orderliness and punctuality are very important here, yes... and in fact I like that, but they are also cold and boring, yes... I’m sorry...]

Whatever the source of Monica’s beliefs might be, they can be characterized as generalizing, one-dimensional and rooted in stereotypes. Her comments further reveal a
focus on cultural surface phenomena largely based on a *culture-language-nation* equation (see Hu 1999). This was also reiterated in the views she held of Italians, in general, and Italian immigrants to Germany, in particular.

M: Die Italiener, die hier leben sind meistens schrecklich… sie sprechen schlecht Deutsch, wenn überhaupt! aber sie denken trotzdem sie sind was besseres… ja, Italiener sind so... uhum...

[The Italians, who live here are mostly horrible... they speak bad German, if any, but they nevertheless think they are something better...yes, Italians are like this...]

Hast du Kontakt zu Italienern hier?

[Do you have contacts to Italians here?]

Nein, um Gotteswillen! nein, nur mein Bruder... ich will gar nichts mit Italienern zu tun... sonst werde ich wie er [laughs] ... nein, es gibt zu viele Italiener hier und das kann gefährlich sein... ich will hier Deutsch lernen... wenn ich mit Italienern zusammenkomme, dann werde ich nur Italienisch sprechen und niemals Deutsch lernen... wozu bin ich dann hier?? [laughs] ... dann kann ich auch in [name of hometown] bleiben... (MI1)

[No, for the love of God, no, only my brother... I don’t want to have anything to do with Italians... or I’ll become just like him, no, there are way too many Italians here and this can be dangerous... I want to learn German here... if I came together with Italians, then I’m going to speak only Italian and never learn German... why am I then here? I could have easily stayed in [name of hometown] then...]

Monica’s accounts provide a lot of insight into how she attempted to position herself in her new environment. For one, she held firm beliefs about immigrants’ obligations towards the receiving society, which were informed by the larger social contexts in her home country
and reaffirmed in Germany. Hence, she wished to adhere to them and to appear as a ‘good’ immigrant. This can explain why she was so invested in learning German. This investment was further supported by her intentions to apply to German universities. In Gardner’s terms (2011), she displayed a mix of integrative and instrumental orientation, supplemented by her interest in learning foreign languages, which was apparent in the learning strategies she used at home and in her ability to draw on Latin, Old Greek and English to support her learning. Her attitudes towards the L2 community, however, conflicted with her overall integrativeness, because she appeared to perceive Germans as rather harsh and cold. This along with her native-ideal orientation curtailed her attempts to establish contacts outside of the classroom. As a result, Monica was highly invested when learning at the IK and at home, but forewent opportunities to practice what she felt she lacked the most in the IK – speaking. This conflict restricted her contact with German speaking individuals to her IK peers. Monica had formed a close friendship with Karim and another female IK participant from Poland before our interview. She insisted that she preferred contact with them to having contact with other Italian immigrants in Frankfurt, which she felt could threaten the few opportunities she had to practice German and reverse her language achievements. Her reluctance to communicate both with Germans and Italian immigrants was further revealed in her remarks made in relation to a previous job she held. While waiting for her initial placement application to be processed, Monica began working as “Aushilfe” [general helper] in an Italian-owned bistro. She stated the main reasons for applying for the position were to secure some additional income, fill her time with something to do and break the social isolation that she otherwise found herself in at home. Due to her minimal knowledge of German at the time, she was assigned only duties that did not involve contact with clients.
Monica’s encounters in the bistro might have influenced her attitude formation and subsequent learning behaviour in informal situations because she still appeared perplexed about how little German her co-workers spoke. Although some of them were recent immigrants, there were also several German-born Italians, including the owner, who preferred to converse in Italian.

M: Ich war schockiert, ehrlich... ich hab nicht... also ich konnte mir nicht vorstellen, dass sie so lange in Deutschland gelebt haben oder hier geboren sind und dass sie so wenig Deutsch gesprochen haben... also [name of owner] und paar andere konnten natürlich fließend Deutsch, aber sie haben nur Italienisch gesprochen... nur... ich hab Angst bekommen, ehrlich ... [laughs]

[I was shocked, really... I have never... well I couldn't imagine that they had lived in Germany for so long or were born here and that they spoke so little German... well [name of owner] and a few others of course were fluent in German, but they only spoke Italian... only... I got scared, really...]

S: Warum hattest du denn Angst? ... [laughs] ...

[Why were you then scared?]

M: Ja, ich hab Angst bekommen, dass ich auch so werde wie sie... hundert Jahre in Deutschland und immer noch kein Deutsch... [laughs] ... aber das ist so, weil sie die ganze Zeit nur mit Italienern machen, ja, nur mit Italienern treffen und sprechen ...

[Yes, I got scared that I might become just like them... hundred years in Germany and still no German... but it is so, because they do with Italians all the time, they only meet and speak with other Italians...]

S: Uhum... aber mit den Kunden haben sie Deutsch gesprochen ja?

[But they spoke German with the patrons, correct?]
M: Ja, ja… die Kellner haben alle Deutsch gesprochen… aber hinten alle nur Italienisch… auch die zwei Deutschen haben Italienisch gesprochen … (MI1)

[Yes, yes … the waiters all spoke German… but in the back only Italian… even the two Germans spoke Italian]

The two Germans Monica refers to in this excerpt are the two ex-colleagues she mentioned when earlier asked if she had had any contact with native speakers. They were both much older than her and it appeared she had close to no contact with them because they mostly worked in the front of the bistro. However, she did remember her first and last attempt to communicate with one of them in German.

M: Also, ich wollte wirklich sehr Deutsch sprechen und dann hab ich ihn einmal gefragt, ob ich die Tische für ihn so, sauber machen soll und dann hat er mir angesehen und so, er hat erstmal nichts gesagt und dann auf Italienisch mir gesagt, ich verstehe nicht, so … was willst du … dann hab ich ihm auf Italienisch erklärt... naja ...

(MI1)

[Well, I really wanted to speak German and then I once asked him, whether I should wipe the tables for him and then he looked at me and then he didn’t say anything at first and then he asked me in Italian, like… I don’t understand… what do you want? Then I explained it to him in German… oh well…]

Monica was assigned a spot in the IK shortly after this and quit the job at the bistro. It seems though that her encounters there and the lack of critically-reflective examination of her experiences led to the formation of some stereotypical views and self-consciousness, which caused her to struggle to position herself.

M: Uhm, ich weiß nicht… also wenn ich in Italien bin, ich bin eine Italienerin… ja, und ich bin natürlich überall eine Italienerin, ich habe einen italienischen Pass, ich
bin da geboren... aber hier in Deutschland, ich fühle, ich bin mehr eine Europäerin...
ja, ich fühle mich nicht wie Italienerin hier... (MI1)

[I don’t know... when I’m in Italy, I’m an Italian... yes, and I’m an Italian everywhere of course, I have an Italian passport, I was born there... but here in Germany, I feel, I am more of an European... yes, I don’t feel like an Italian here...]

It can be claimed that Monica’s identity work was caught in-between her negative attitudes towards Italian immigrants in Germany and her desire to learn German and avoid being seen as an integration-refusing immigrant. Although she consistently expressed her desire to have contact with Germans, her accounts reveal that she was often fearful and more self-conscious with native speakers than with her IK peers, which had an impact on her attempts to create spontaneous learning opportunities.

6.5.3 After the IK

When I met Monica for our second interview, she had successfully completed the DTZ and OK exams and appeared to have made many changes, both in her appearance and life outside of the IK. As usual, she spoke slowly and articulately when answering my questions. She was currently awaiting the beginning of the B2-level course at a local adult education centre. In the meantime, she had accepted a part-time position as a caregiver for a German-Italian family. She and another female caregiver looked after the couples’ three children in alternating shifts. This job did not translate into more learning opportunities for Monica, because she was hired to speak Italian with the children. In addition to this job, she had made the acquaintance of an elderly German lady, who wished to improve her speaking fluency in Italian. The initial arrangement where they were supposed to practice half an hour of German and then half an hour of Italian did not work out as planned. Monica
felt that they spent most of the time speaking Italian and because of the lady’s pronounced difficulties with grammar and vocabulary they were slowed down. Monica eventually ceased contact with this lady because of this.

In our interview, we first discussed her experiences in the OK and she seemed very pleased with her high scores on both the GLC and OK tests. Her lengthy comments on the tests and strategies she used to write an assigned email (a written task in the DTZ) were reflective of the teaching practices and goals set in the OK. Monica’s comments also revealed that she was appreciative of the factual information about Germany and German culture she received during the IK and she was less interested in exploring the complexity of cultural phenomena and the historical conceptualization of cultural objects covered.

M: Ja, es war alles sehr einfach für mich, ja, sehr... ich hab fast alles gewusst, aber es war auch interessant, vor allem die politische Terminologie, das war wichtig für mich, für mein Jurastudium, und ja, sie haben von Deutschland erzählt und auch ich habe über Italien erzählt und wir haben verglichen, so zum Beispiel das ist in Deutschland so, und in Italien das ist so... es war gut, ja, wir haben Spaß gehabt... [laughs]...

[Well, it was all very easy for me, yes, very... I knew almost everything, but it was also interesting, most of all the political terminology, that was important for me, for my studies in law, and yes, they told us about Germany and I also told them about Italy and we compared, like for example this is like that in Germany and this is like this in Italy... it was good, yes, we had fun...]

S: Wie war der Test so?

[What was the test like?]
M: Der Test war super einfach, ich musste nicht schreiben oder denken, nur ankreuzen... ich alles richtig gehabt... (M12)

[The test was super easy, I didn’t have to write or think, just check a box... I had everything correct...]

This excerpt is a further evidence that OK teaching practices promoted an understanding of culture and interculturalism as nation-based, running the risk, as Hu (1999) frames it:

“durch essentialistisch-statische Annahmen über kulturelle und sprachliche Identität die Schülerinnen und Schüler einem Prozess der Ethnisierung zu unterziehen, Stereotypisierungen zu fördern und Fremdheit zu schaffen“ (p. 294) 72.

Since Monica had already displayed attitudes based on stereotypes during the first interview, it could be asserted that the IK experience was not able to foster a more critically-reflective approach to cultural otherness that could assist Monica in perceiving cultural phenomena in their complex contextuality. It was then rather unsurprising that she continued to express judgemental opinions about immigrants not able to speak German, signaling her view of them as inferior and less intelligent. These became most obvious in her comments about other IK participants.

M: Ich hab bestanden, aber es gab viele, die nicht, also die den Deutschtest nicht bestanden haben... aber das war klar, sie waren auch im Unterricht schlecht, so manche konnten auch am Ende immer noch nicht richtig lesen, war schrecklich ...

72 In Engl."to subject students to a process of ethnicization, to foster stereotyping and create foreignness through essentialist-static assumptions about cultural and linguistic identity";
[I passed the test, but there were many who did not, who did not pass the German test... but it was obvious, they were bad in class too, like some still couldn’t read properly at the end of the course, it was horrible...]

S: Wer war das?

[Who was that?]

M: Das waren diese Afrikaner [names of participants] und auch der [name of participant] aus Vietnam... aber das war klar... sie haben nicht bestanden glaube ich, aber sie haben, sie waren auch im Unterricht schlecht, sehr schlecht... sie haben nicht gelernt und sie haben auch nie was gesagt...

[Those were these Africans [names of participants] and also [name of participant], the guy from Vietnam... but that was obvious... I believe they didn’t pass, but they were bad in class too, very bad... they didn’t study and they never said anything...]

S: Woran hast du dann erkannt, dass sie schlecht waren?

[How could you tell then that they were bad?]

M: Ja, das haben doch alle gesehen, nein? ... sie haben schlecht gesprochen einfach, so schlechte Aussprache und ich konnte nichts verstehen und auch sie haben nicht viel gemacht... uhum ... (MI2)

[Well, that was obvious for everyone, no? They simply spoke bad, like with a bad accent and I couldn’t understand anything and they also didn’t do much...]

The quote is evidence of how Monica continued to view and position immigrants as inferior because they were unsuccessful (to her standards) in acquiring German. It was also apparent that she found reasons for these immigrants’ assumed failure in their own learning
behaviour. At the same time, she blamed the stagnation of her German on the difficulty to establish contacts with fluent German speakers, explaining it through their unapproachability. She raised the topic whether I thought her German had worsened now that she had finished the IK and had no further formal instruction. My reply that she appeared to use less varied vocabulary seemed to upset her.

M: Ohnein... ohnein... ich habs gewußt aber, ich habs gewußt... ja, ich spreche jetzt sehr wenig Deutsch, fast kein Deutsch... uhum...

[Ohno, ohno, I knew it, I knew it... well, I speak very little German now, almost no German...]

S: Warum das? warum sprichst du jetzt weniger Deutsch, was hat sich geändert?

[How so? Why do you speak less German, what changed?]

M: Ja... der Deutschkurs ist vorbei... ich hab da am meisten Deutsch gesprochen mit den anderen, so mit Karim und [name of participant] ... und wir sehen uns jetzt nicht mehr, also wir sehen uns, aber nicht jeden Tag wie früher... uhum...

[Well... the German class is over... I spoke the most German there with the other guys, like Karim and [name of participant] ... and we don’t see each other anymore, well, we see each other, but not every day like before...]

S: Hast du denn keine anderen Kontakte zu Deutschen, oder zu Leuten, die Deutsch sprechen?

[Don’t you have any other contacts to German, or to people who speak German?]

M: Nein, nein, leider nicht... ich spreche ein bisschen mit der anderen Babysitterin, wenn ich sie sehe, aber nicht mehr... ich hab ein paar mal versucht am Spielplatz, so mit den anderen Eltern, aber das war nicht viel... ich hab eine andere Mutter begrüßt...
[No, no, unfortunately not... I speak a little bit with the other babysitter, whenever I see her, but no more than that… I tried a couple of times on the playground, like, with the other parents, but that wasn’t much… I greeted another mother…]

S: Wo war das nochmals?

[Where was that again?]

M: Auf dem Spielplatz, mit den Kindern...

[At the playground, with the children...]

S: Aham...

M: Und da, ich hab also einmal eine Mutter angesprochen, aber sie hat nicht viel gesagt und so hin und her und dann sie musste weggehen... [laughs]... Ja, ist schwierig, sehr schwierig Kontakte mit Deutsche zu machen... sie sprechen nicht gern mit Unbekannten... [laughs] ... (M12)

[And there, I once chatted up a mom, but she didn’t say much and so back and forth and then she had to go... Yes, it’s difficult to make contacts with Germans... they don’t like talking to strangers...]

It is necessary to read the contradictions evident in Monica’s comments – she blames other immigrants for not speaking sufficiently well, while she herself experienced difficulties in creating learning opportunities - as her attempts to position herself favourably. Her desire to be perceived positively was further evident in her visible delight whenever someone complemented her on her knowledge and pronunciation of German. The cases I witnessed were in the IK classroom when Zorica repeatedly praised her enunciation and syntax. Monica told me that when she interviewed for the babysitter position, the parents initially believed she was German. Similar was the case with the elderly lady, whom she used to
meet for language exchange. She told me they all could not discern her Italian origin at first, attributing it to her clear articulation and newly dyed blond hair. “Leider” [unfortunately], she could not sustain this impression further into the conversation due to the surfacing of some errors. This again signaled Monica’s belief that sounding and even looking like a native speaker was a positive and desirable outcome of language acquisition. Her native-ideal orientations were additionally reinforced through praise in the IK classroom. This certainly fueled her motivation to continuously enhance her knowledge and pronunciation. The downside, however, was that it made her very vulnerable to criticism, causing her to be self-conscious and anxious when interacting with native German speakers.

6.6 Karim

Karim was the fifth and final participant that I could recruit for my study. His mother tongue was Arabic and he was fluent in French. He spoke German well and conducted the interviews in German.

6.6.1 Background and Reasons to Enroll

Karim was a male in his mid-twenties. He was born and raised in Tunisia’s capital and came from a middle-class family. He was fluent in Tunisian, Arabic and French, both orally and in writing, but indicated that Arabic was his L1 and that he felt most comfortable speaking it. He studied Computer Sciences in his home country but could not secure a job after graduation that would have allowed him the lifestyle he imagined for himself. This led him to explore opportunities outside of Tunisia. Karim applied for a visitor’s visa to Austria and together with some other friends left for Austria’s capital. There, he worked in the food service industry, although he did not have a work permit. He later took on a more
lucrative job and moved to a small town near an Alpine ski resort. His second job was again in “Gastronomie” \textit{[catering trade]}. At that time, his visa had expired and he was residing in the country illegally. Karim met his German wife while still in Austria. They moved to Frankfurt as part of their plans to marry and settle down. However, Karim had no legal status in Germany. Hence the pair had to travel to Tunisia where they married. This gave Karim the possibility of re-entering and settling down in Germany as part of the family-reunification program. The outlined difficulties with the authorities seemed to have had a lasting effect on Karim’s attitudes towards German bureaucracy, as will become evident from the narratives below. Once his legal status in Germany was established, he was ordered to take a placement test and enroll in the IK by the FRO. Karim hadn’t had any formal instruction in German, but he had lived in German speaking regions for two years by this time. He passed the A1 level on the placement test and was assigned to my focus group where I met him during my second stay.

In Frankfurt, Karim lived together with his wife and brother-in-law in a house on the outskirts of the city. His parents-in-law lived in the house next door. In addition, he and his brother-in-law had established a small “Wohnungsauflosung” \textit{[estate sale]} company, which they ran jointly. Although this ensured that Karim had constant exposure to German, it was not the only language of communication, as his wife was fluent in French. Karim’s reasons for enrolling in the IK were the order from the local FRO and his desire to improve communication with his new family and with clients at work.
6.6.2 The IK experience

During the first days of my stay with the focus group, Karim stood out as a learner with very good communicative skills. Although he attended regularly, he seldom arrived on time and he did not always complete his homework assignments. He also displayed very different learning behaviors with the two instructors. While he appeared very spontaneous with Zorica where he consistently volunteered to supply answers to various tasks, he was rather constrained and on guard with Susanne. He also often contested her explanations, broke her silence rule and refused to keep his cell phone in his bag as she had requested of participants. Although there were no direct altercations between them, the tension was palpable which he also admitted and addressed during our interviews.

When first asked about his thoughts on the IK, Karim displayed approval, albeit with reservations.

K: Der Kurs ist gute Sache... es hilft, aber es hilft nicht alleine...

[The course is a good thing... it helps, but it doesn’t help alone...]

S: Wie meinst du das?

[What do you mean?]

K: Ist gut für Grammatik... ich hab Grammatik nicht gelernt... ich hab nur gehört... was Leute sagen und dann ganze Satz wiederholt... aber verstehen warum... das war nicht... der Deutschkurs ist jetzt gut für Grammatik... aber... Vokabular und so... ist besser sprechen mit deutschen Leuten...
It’s good for grammar, I haven’t learned grammar... I only listened... to what people would say and then I repeated the entire sentence... but understanding why... that wasn’t the case... the German course is now good for grammar... but... vocabulary and such... it’s better to speak to Germans...

S: Du meinst du lernst mehr, wenn du mit Deutschen sprichst?

[You mean you learn more when you talk to Germans?]

K: Ja ... ja ... (KII)

[Yes ... yes ...]

Karim continued to tell me that he definitely would have taken the course even if he had not been ordered to do so by the FRO. He admitted he sometimes lacked motivation to do “was richtig ist” [the right thing] and described himself as “faul” [lazy]. When I inquired about the importance of speaking German and the factors that motivated him to learn the language he first stated the relevance of German for his everyday life, but also, it’s significance for his sense of self and his new position in his new surroundings.

K: Das ist wichtig für mich ...

[It is important to me...]

S: Warum?

[Why?]

K: Weil ich hier lebe... ich muss das wissen... wenn ich mit andere Leute rede... mit deutsche Leute... ich will dass sie denken... da... er ist guter Ausländer und er hat gut integriert... und er leistet was... nicht er benutzt uns... (KII)
Karim’s distinction between ‘good’ foreigners and ‘bad’ foreigners was the leitmotif of our conversations throughout both meetings and interviews. It seemed to govern his outlook and attitudes towards almost everything in his new home. The groundwork of his dualistic perceptions appeared to have been laid during his stay in Austria where Karim felt he was almost traumatized by the hostility experienced from the locals. Karim’s first job did not involve direct contact with clients, due to his lack of fluency, so he mostly helped out in the kitchen. He worked along other Tunisians and Arabs, which he felt eased his feelings of homesickness and isolation, but on the other hand reduced his chances of learning German. At his second job, he eventually began assisting the barkeepers, which he said provided him with the opportunity to listen and internalise some German. While it helped him acquire some vocabulary and phrases from merely eavesdropping on conversations between the barkeepers and the customers, it also provided him with contact with locals, which seemed to have impacted his attitudes towards Austria and the Austrians in a negative way.

In Austria... that wasn’t good... first, they are racists... all of them... second... they don’t speak good German... in [name of small town] they only spoke dialect, only... I didn’t understand anything... zero... that was really bad... I sometimes had tears... I was frustrated... (KII)
Karim further went on to explain the feeling of helplessness that he often experienced when he attempted to speak German at work. The mostly negative reactions that he received ultimately caused him to feel extremely anxious when he had to use German.

K: In Österreich ich hab große Angst, große Angst... weil... ich will etwas sagen und er da steht und gar nichts... und er guckt mich... was willst du? kannst du Deutsch? was?... und dann weg ...

[In Austria, I was very anxious, very anxious... because... I want to say something and he is standing there and nothing... and he is looking at me...what do you want? Do you speak German? What?... and then he’s gone...]

S: Wie hast du dich dann gefühlt? ... wenn du nichts verstaden hast und nicht antworten konntest?

[How did you feel then? Whenever you couldn’t understand anything and you couldn’t answer?]

K: Schlimm... sehr schlimm... und klein... sehr klein... wie ein Kind... ohne Hilfe.... in Österreich niemand will mit dir reden... niemand... (KI1)

[Bad... really bad... and small... very small... like a child... no help... in Austria nobody wants to talk to you... nobody...]

Karim’s accounts provide insights into the struggles of being speechless and not able to make oneself understood which millions of immigrants around the world can relate to. It also highlights the impact this has on self perceptions and the inevitable feeling of inferiority and powerlessness that not being able and not being allowed to speak entails. Karim’s accounts, some 20 years later, echo Broeder’s et al. (1996) findings that the responsibility for achieving mutual understanding and maintaining the flow of conversation generally falls on the shoulders of the immigrant and that migrants are often “neither
prepared nor ready to take on this responsibility” (Block 2014, p. 77). It further highlights how newcomers’ interlocutors often seem to behave according to prevailing discourses about immigrants, which position them as inadequate interlocutors (Block 2014, Hofer 2016) and hence silence them.

Karim shared several accounts where he was confronted with the locals’ hostility and indifference in Austria, but the one that seemed to have made the most lasting impression on him was when he and a couple of other Arabs were asked to leave a venue where they had gathered for a casual dinner. Apparently, the service had overheard them speaking Arabic which prompted the owner to personally come to their table and ask them to immediately leave, stating that the only acceptable language in his restaurant was German. This incident cemented Karim’s conviction that Austrians were “Rassisten” [racists]. However, his negative experiences in Austria seemed to have positively influenced his perceptions of Germany and the Germans, as he inevitably compared life in both countries.

In Deutschland die Leute wissen es gibt gute Ausländer und schlechte Ausländer... und sie gucken... bist du ein gut oder ein schlecht... aber in Österreich... was habe ich gefunden... alles Ausländer sind schlecht, alles... Ausländer bleibt immer Ausländer... ich konnte in Österreich nichts machen... und hier... gibt es viele Sachen... kannst alles machen wann du willst... studieren, wann du willst arbeiten, wann du willst lernen alles... für mich, Österreich ist mehr hart als in Deutschland... (KI1)

[In Germany, people know that there are good foreigners and bad foreigners... and they check... are you a good one or a bad one... but in Austria... what did I find there... all foreigners are bad, all... a foreigner is always a foreigner... I couldn’t do anything in Austria... and here... there are many things here... you can do anything you want... study, if you wish so you can work, if you wish so you can learn, everything... for me, Austria is much harder than Germany...]
It is apparent that Karim was appreciative of Germany because there at least he had the option of positioning himself favourably, as opposed to Austria, where he felt inexorably marginalized by larger social structures, without the option of ever becoming an equal member of society. In a sense, Karim’s background and the fact that he was a Muslim, a priori stripped him of the opportunity for legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger 1991). This seemed to have influenced Karim’s investment in learning German because he said that he barely made any attempts to use or learn it anymore, not at least until he met his wife. The excerpt further highlights Karim’s understanding that fluency is a salient marker of one’s right to claim legitimate peripheral participation, confirming Bourdieu’s assertion that “those who are not speakers of the official language or standard variety are subject to symbolic domination, if they believe in the legitimacy of that language or variety” (Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004, p. 15). Karim did believe in the legitimacy of German and he apparently believed in the legitimacy of immigrants being assigned an inferior position until they could prove they were of the ‘good’ kind. This is apparent in his anxiety to speak in front of German speakers he did not know. He reported that since moving to Germany, his German had improved significantly due to his exposure to it. His most trusted ‘teachers’ were his brother- and his father-in-law. Karim had formed a particularly close relationship with the former and their learning strategy included the brother-in-law patiently listening until Karim was done speaking and then pointing out errors and Karim repeating the correct sentences. They also watched TV together and his brother-in-law explained all vocabulary that was new to Karim. He also listened very carefully when his brother-in-law spoke to him and was comfortable with interrupting him and asking for clarification of vocabulary. Karim’s strategy with his father-in-law was
similar, although there he felt under more pressure to perform and assert himself as a ‘good’ immigrant. Karim admitted that initially he was met with scepticism from his in-laws, mostly, he believed, because he was Muslim.

K: Die meiste Leute sagen nicht direkt sie hassen Muslim... aber auf Umwege... ein Beispiel... mein Schwiegervater ist gegen radikale Islamisten... aber wenn er redet findest er ist gegen alle Islamisten...

[Most people won’t say straight out that they hate Muslims... but would do it by a devious route... an example... my father-in-law is against radical Islamists... but once he starts talking, you find out he is against all Islamists...]

S: Warum glaubst du mag er keine Islamisten?

[Why do you think he doesn’t like Islamists?]

K: Er ist wie viele Deutsche... sie denken Islamisten sind aggressiv... und strikt... das sehen sie in Medien, in Fernsehen... (KI1)

[He is like many Germans... they think Islamists are aggressive... and strict... that’s what they see in the media, on TV...]

Karim continued to explain that this was how most Germans saw Muslims, mostly because this is how they have been portrayed in mass media. He said that the family would often sit together at dinner and discuss current events and debates, including the Sarrazin-induced public discourse. Karim’s father-in-law would often signal that it was Karim’s obligation to prove the media image of Muslims wrong and to integrate completely – this was a viewpoint that Karim seemed to entirely agree with.
Ich will zeigen... Beweis... ich bin besser... weil es gibt viele Araber, intelligente Leute, Karriere gemacht... aber im Fernsehen sie zeigen nur Terroristen... ich hasse das... (KII)

[I want to show... proof... I am better... because there are many Arabs, intelligent people, made careers... but on TV, they only show terrorists... I the that...]

Karim’s efforts to learn German and his swift progress were praised and acknowledged by the entire family and he claimed that his anxiety to speak had been diminishing, since he felt more and more comfortable leaving the circle of friends and family and speaking with others, exposing his learner identity. When I asked him if he was comfortable being corrected, his answer indicated a positive progress compared to his time in Austria.

Kommt darauf an... wann er korrigiert weil er weiß ich bin Ausländer und er musste korrigieren, wann er lacht, ja, du bist kein Deutscher, das akzeptiere ich gar nicht... nicht mehr... aber wann er musste er hilfe, er mir Hilfe, OK, ich akzeptiere das und ich sage danke... (KII)

[It depends... if he corrects me, because he knows that I am a foreigner and he had to correct me, if he laughs, yes, you are no German, this I don’t put up with at all... not anymore... but if he had to help me, OK, I accept this and I say thank you...]

Karim clarified that the majority of his encounters with Germans outside of his circle of family and friends had been very positive to that point and that his efforts to speak German had mostly been positively acknowledged. The only exception was Susanne, whom he said reminded him of the time in Austria.

K: Ich mag Susanne nicht...

[I don’t like Susanne...]
S: Warum?

[Why?]

K: Ich mag nicht wann sie alles korrigiert... Susanne für mich ist wie die österreichischen Leute ... für sie alle Ausländer schlecht ... Susanne du kannst nie zufrieden machen…

[I don’t like it whenever she corrects everything... to me, Susanne is like the Austrians... for her, all foreigners are bad... you can never make Susanne happy...]

S: Mir ist aber aufgefallen, dass du ihr widersprichst, dass du keine Angst vor ihr hast

[I noticed though that you take issue with her, that you are not afraid of her...]

K: Ja, ich hab keine Angst vor sie... ich hab in dieser Hinsicht geändert, sehr, ich kenne Recht ist Recht hier... ich hab mein Recht... ich bin selbsständig jetzt mit Geschäft... ich zahle Steuer... und ich such mein Recht jetzt... (KII)

[Yes, I am not afraid of her… I’ve changes a lot in this respect, a lot, I know rights are right here... I have my rights... I am self-employed now with a business... I pay taxes... and I defend my rights now...]

The previous two quotes and Karim’s attempts to defend himself in the classroom indicate a shift in his self-esteem and self-perception in comparison to his time in Austria. His new identity as an independent small business owner, his relatively good command of the language and the access to communities of practice translated into an increase in his symbolic and material resources, further allowing him to reject marginalisation and attempts at being silenced. It was then only alarming that these attempts stemmed from one of his German instructors.
Another context where Karim felt out of place and in a disadvantaged position were his encounters with German bureaucracy. He pointed out that he was lucky to have his wife and in-laws take care of all the necessary paperwork related not only to his settlement in Germany but also to his business. This, he said, was gradually in conflict with his sense of independence and responsibility for his new family. At the same time, it motivated him to learn and improve his German.

Ich möchte sehr mehr verstehen... mehr Vokabular... manchmal ich bekomme Briefe, für Geschäft, und ich lese und mein Kopf... alles ulahulalu... dreht... ich verstehe die Worte nicht und dann muss ich mein Schwager oder meine Frau fragen, übersetzen... das irritiert manchmal.... und ich denke... ich brauche viel, viel Zeit und lernen, mehr lernen und dann gehe ich ein Buch lesen oder Hausaufgaben machen... [laughs]. (K11)

[I want to understand more so badly... more vocabulary... sometimes I would get mail, regarding the business and I read it and my head... it all goes ulahulalu... spinning... I don’t understand the words and then I need to ask my brother-in-law or my wife to translate... this irritates me sometimes... and I think... I need more, much more time and to learn, to learn more and then I go and read a book or do my homework...]

Karim felt the need for linguistic progress and added that, in this respect, he was appreciative of the GLC, as it forced him to allot time for structured language instruction. He felt that if it were not for the IK’s compulsory character, he probably would have spent his time on other endeavours at the expense of German. He further appreciated the opportunity to meet people who did not belong to his wife’s or brother-in-law’s circle of friends, allowing him to establish his own social network.
6.6.3 After the IK

For my second interview with Karim, he and his wife invited me to dinner at their home, where they had prepared several Tunisian dishes. This prompted him to admit that one of the few aspects where he could never fully ‘integrate’ and align with German traditions were his culinary preferences. Although he said that his father-in-law often tested his “Integrationsbereitschaft” \textit{[willingness to integrate]} by making him drink beer and eat mashed potatoes, he managed to convince his wife to learn to prepare Middle-Eastern dishes. This led our conversation to the OK and what he had learned about Germany and the German culture there. His answer was rather short.

K: Ein bißchen Geschichte von Deutschland ...

\[A \text{ bit of Germany’s history…}\]

S: OK ...

K: Politik war anstrengend für mich… es war viel zu viel und System… ich verstehe nicht dieses System… Bundesland, Bundeskanzler, und jede Region hat andere Sachen und alles… war viel… (K12)

\[Politics \text{ were tedious for me… it was too much about the system… I don’t get this system… Federal State, Federal Chancellor, and every region has different things and all… was a lot…}\]

Similar to the other informants in the present study, Karim’s remarks point to the fact that he was not provided with in-depth knowledge and understanding of Germany’s history and
political system during the OK. His comments below further indicate that in-class instruction was mainly focused on passing the final test and that the test continued to fail to assess what it was supposed to assess.

S: War der Test dann schwierig für dich?

[Was the test hard for you then?]

K: Nein... war sehr leicht, weil wir haben alles im Kurs gemacht, die Fragen und ist nicht schwer, überhaupt nicht schwer... eigentlich ich war nicht so viel im Orient-, wie heißt Orient-

[No… was very easy, because we had done everything in class, the questions and it wasn’t hard, not at all hard… in fact, I didn’t sit that much in the Orient-, what’s the name, Orient-]

S: Orientierungskurs...

K: Ich war nicht viel im Orientierungskurs... ich war vorher eine Prüfung, eine Prüfung B1 ist größer, ist wichtiger für mich wie diese Sache und danach ich denke von mein Urlaub und das war sehr anstrengend und alles und diese Prüfung war klein und bei mir, Beispiel, sie haben geholfen... Ahmed und Youssef... sie haben alles gemacht, ich hab nur zwei drei Fragen von fünfundzwanzig glaube... ich habe drei oder vier gemacht alleine und danach... Ahmed hat alles gemacht... (K12)

[I didn’t sit much in the Orientierungskurs... I had another exam before that, a B1 exam is bigger, is more important to me than this thing and after that I thought about my vacation and it was all busy and all and this test was small and for example, they helped me... Ahmed and Youssef... they did everything, I only had two three out of twenty five, I believe... I did three or four on my own and then... Ahmed did all the rest...]
It was evident that although Karim did not attend the OK regularly, he still managed to pass the test with some help from other OK participants. This automatically annihilates the evaluative worth of the OK exam in his case, although it would count as “bestanden” [passed] in BAMF statistics for that year. His comments further emphasize that he strongly prioritized linguistic instruction over learning about the country and that he felt the OK was not related to language acquisition. It even appears that the OK was linguistically challenging for him and the language used in class presented a barrier to understanding the complex political system taught in class. His experience in the course, in fact, steered Karim’s attention towards the fact that he had to continue learning and improving his German.

S: Warum glaubst du musst du mehr lernen... warum willst du besser Deutsch sprechen?

[Why do you think you have to learn more... why do you want to speak German better?]

K: Ich hab große Angst... immer noch... große Angst... ich will etwas sagen und die Person versteht nicht...

[I am very anxious... still... very anxious... I want to say something and the person doesn’t understand...]

S: Kannst du mir ein Beispiel geben?

[Can you give me an example?]

K: Ja, ich habe ein Beispiel heute... heute ich brauche Zement... und ich weiß dieses Wort französisch, auf Französisch heißt ciment [cement] ... und da hab ich nicht
gefunden im Baumarkt und da hab ich gefragt wo könnte ich ciment oder wie heißt...

Was? Wie bitte? Was willst du genau? ... uhm, uhm, uhm... die hier... Bodenfarbe? ...
nein, nicht Bodenfarbe, andere Sache… Tut mir leid, ich verstehe nicht… ja, wie willst du sagen… (KI2)

[Yes, I have an example from today... today I needed cement... and I know this word in French, in French it’s called ciment... and then I couldn’t find it in the local Baumarkt and then I asked where can I find ciment or whatever it’s called... What? Excuse me what? What exactly do you want?... uhm, uhm, uhm... this here... Floor paint? ... no, no floor paint, another thing... I’m sorry, I don’t understand... yeah, well, how should you say it?]

Karim solved the problem by calling his wife and asking for the right word. Nevertheless, the incident ‘irritated’ him because he felt helpless. What is remarkable about this story is that this time Karim at least did not feel he was met with hostility by the sales person. He continued to say that the sales assistant was trying to help him and Karim did not feel he was condescending. His view of Germans as polite and not prone to patronizing strangers, allowed him to at least attempt to speak. His anxiety was rather grounded in the image he projected by not speaking fluently. Although Karim explained he felt angry with himself for not knowing the word, and did not care what the sales person thought about him, his further comments indicated that he was still very much caught up in the dichotomy of ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ foreigners and did see himself as a representative of a minority, whose image he felt he had to improve.

K: Beispiel ich kenne jemand er will nicht Integrationskurs machen und er hat sechs oder sieben Jahre hier...

[For example, I know someone who doesn’t want to do the Integrationskurs and he’s been living here for six or seven years… ]
S: Vielleicht braucht er das nicht...

[Maybe he doesn’t need it…]

K: Nein, er redet nicht gut Deutsch ...

[No, his German’s not good…]

S: Und vielleicht braucht er kein Deutsch ...

[Maybe he doesn’t need German…]

K: Ja... warum?

[Yes... but why?]

S: Ja weil er sechs sieben Jahre hier gut gelebt hat ohne Deutsch zu sprechen... warum nicht?

[Well, because he’s been living here for six seven years without speaking German... why not?]

K: Ja weil du brauchst eigentlich Deutsch... eigentlich wir sind Besucher hier, in Deutschland, wir müssen auch ein bisschen respektieren diese Land... wann du gibst ein Respekt von den andere Leute, sie geben dir ein Respekt...

[Well, because you actually need German... actually we are all visitors here, in Germany, we have to also respect this country a little bit... when you give respect to other people, they give you respect in return…]

S: Uhum …
K: Wenn du sagst (expletive-)egal für mich und ich suche nur Geld oder ich mach nur Geld von diesem Land, ist normal sie sagen, ah guck mal, die Ausänder sind schlecht... aber ich bin nicht so... (KI2)

[When you say I don’t give a (expletive) and I’m only after money or I just make money off this country, it’s normal that they say, oh look, foreigners are bad... but I am not like that...]

Our talking about the image of immigrants in Germany seemed to make Karim emotional. He appeared to find the idea of someone not willing to learn German and integrate incomprehensible and provocative. He almost seemed to understand why German society viewed immigrants, Muslims in particular, negatively and he held ‘bad’ immigrants’ accountable for that. Karim’s efforts to appear as a ‘good’ immigrant had also led him to avoid contacts with other Tunisians, at least until his German had become “perfekt”. He further reported having adopted some German ‘values’, mostly in relation to his small business. These included “Pünktlichkeit” [punctuality] and a German ‘dress code’ – “Hemd und Hose, nicht T-shirt und Jeans” [shirt and pants, not a T-shirt and jeans]. When I further inquired what he felt was ‘perfect” German, his answer indicated the emergence of a more critically-reflective view on his linguistic goals.

Eigentlich nein… nicht perfekt… perfekt für mich... ich hab gefunden die Deutschen sprechen auch nicht perfekt, sie machen auch Fehler, mein Schwager, meine Frau... wann sie sprechen... auch sie haben Problem mit deutsches System... ein Beispiel, meine Frau kann Steuererklärung auch nicht machen... zu kompliziert alles... (KI2)

[Actually not... not perfect... perfect to me... I have found that the Germans don’t speak perfectly either, they make mistakes too, my brother-in-law, my wife... when they speak... they too have issues with the German system... an example, my wife can’t file her taxes... everything’s too complicated...]
This excerpt is evident that Karim’s full participation in communities of practice had led him to perceive the native-speaker ideal as non-existent and unrealistic. This allowed him to set new goals for himself which included his desire to be able to fully participate in conversations at social gatherings and be himself.

Wann du sitzt mit acht oder zehn Leute und sie sprechen und du verstehst nichts... das ist schlimm, total schlimm... und du weißt meine Personality ist so, ich will reden... aber es gibt keine Wort... das ist für mich sehr schlimm... ich bin nicht ich... ich kann nicht ich sein... (KI2)

Identity-challenging experiences like these seemed to have motivated Karim to improve his fluency. He reported his favourite learning strategy now involved reading a series of crime novels based in Frankfurt. He insisted that his familiarity with the geographical context of the books eased comprehension. A similarly effective strategy was watching movie series in German that he knew well in French. This way, he said, he was able to immediately decode the German speech because he knew how the same events were articulated in French. Still, Karim felt that this was not enough. For this reason, he signed up for a B2 language course at an adult education centre commencing a couple of weeks later.

In hindsight, his views of the IK were positive. He credited the program with helping him expand his social network and providing him with formal instruction which he felt had helped him with grammar. However, he criticized the large group and diversity of learners...
which he felt did not allow any room for considering each learner’s individual needs. Because of that, he believed the program did not live up to its potential.

Ich glaube der Deutschkurs ist besser wann weniger Leute... ich hab gelernt, so Akkusativ Dativ, das war gut, aber ich kann auch mehr lernen, aber das geht nicht ... weil andere sie waren sehr langsam... sehr langsam... (K12)

[I believe the German course can be better if there were fewer people... I learned, like, accusative, dative, that was good, but I could have learned more, but that didn’t work out... because the others were very slow... very slow...]

Karim believed, however, that his exposure to German within his family had made up for any shortcomings in the instructional practices of the IK, allowing it to be one of his learning environments.
Chapter 7

Summary of Results and Conclusions

In this last chapter, I attempt to synthesize the findings of my study and to summarize the implications that my findings have for the relation between attitudes, identity and learning behavior and the IK’s role in the shaping of these relations, followed by an outline of the limitations of the study and other areas for future research.

7.1 Findings of Case Study Analyses

What I hope my informants’ accounts, laid out in Chapter 6, expose in the first place, is the idiosyncrasy and singularity of each and one migrant learner’s experiences. Their individual circumstances and learning goals created unique frameworks for the acquisition of German, with the IK being the only learning context that they had in common. A core objective of narrative inquiry is to place the voice of participants and the researcher on an equal level (see Barkhuizen 2014, Benson 2014, Norton 2013). It is therefore not the aim of my work to compare and group the data in the quest of generalizations with universal informative value. It is rather my goal to preserve the uniqueness of my informants’ experiences, while allowing for insights about the complex nature of L2 acquisition in adult migrant contexts to emerge. The employment of topic-oriented interviews and classroom observations as research tools illuminated interrelationships between the IK as the formal learning setting and the plethora of individual informal learning conditions. In the following, I attempt to clarify the correlations pertaining to attitudes, identity and the IK.
7.1.1 Attitudes and Identity

The very impulse that led to the conceptualization of the study at hand was the realization of the vulnerability of immigrant learners (Norton 2013, Perdue 1993) and the inevitable impact the crossing of national borders has on the individual’s self-perceptions. As Block (2014) points out, “in this situation, individuals must reconstruct and redefine themselves if they are to adapt to their new circumstances” (p. 5). Similar to Norton’s five women, each of my informants experienced a break with their L1 mediated pasts, which immediately meant a break with their previous social class subject positions. Faced with the new social and cultural orders, they had to carve out new positions for themselves and this in contexts, where social relationships of power designated immigrants as inferior to the dominant community. In this respect, my study aligns with Norton’s and the ESF studies, confirming the universality of some of the issues migrant L2 learners face. One of these major issues is the difficulty of establishing contact with L2 speakers outside of the classroom - albeit for different reasons - and therefore the lack of opportunities for informal learning. As shown in the narratives in the previous chapter, the reasons for this can be many and of various nature and not even immigrants married to native L2 speakers are guaranteed contacts to the L2 community and language. Two of these examples in my study were provided by Cemre and Ahmed. Through her husband, Cemre had direct access to her husband’s circle of native German friends, consisting mostly of young professionals like them. However, she felt that her participation on equal terms was facilitated by the fact that they all spoke the same language, namely English. Cemre felt that switching to German before her German was “perfect” might jeopardize her position and put her at disadvantage by diminishing her cultural capital within this particular community of practice. Hence,
even though she had access to fluent German language speakers, she could not benefit from it linguistically. Here, she sacrificed linguistic progress in order to retain her position as an equal member of this community of practice, and felt that others might have questioned this positioning if she was not able to communicate properly with them. Cemre was fully aware that displaying insufficient knowledge of their native language might have lead them to reevaluate her standing in their community of practice and eventually diminish her cultural capital. In the face of prevailing prejudices about Turkish immigrants in Germany, she distanced herself by making use of her proficiency in English, often complimented by some of her new German friends. In the case of Cemre, her proficiency in English turned out to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, being acquainted with the English syntax, grammar, and vocabulary allowed her to faster assimilate German structures, as well as aided her vocabulary retention. On the other hand, it allowed her to freely communicate within her family and circle of friends. Her need to communicate was met by means of English, which made German redundant for her daily life and social contacts. Acquiring German was much more relevant as a pathway to finding a suitable job. Consequently, although Cemre experienced legitimate peripheral participation by engaging in activities in the communities of practice, this did not immediately translate into linguistic progress in German. Only gradually did she shed her anxiety to take on a learner identity within her family, allowing her to benefit linguistically. This process unfolded along with her changing attitudes towards Germans, which came as a result from her ever increasing contacts with German speakers.

In comparison, the potential benefit for L2 acquisition inherent to being married to a native L2 speaker was never realized by Ahmed. The use of German in his home would have
meant a perceived complete loss of face, as he already felt inferior and dependent on his wife due to her fluency in German. Admitting to a learner identity at home would have meant disturbing the power relations between Ahmed and his partner, or at least he saw it this way. The high ELV of the Turkish community in Frankfurt was another factor that reduced potential opportunities for Ahmed to establish contact with Germans, as the close proximity of several family members and their wide circle of friends fulfilled his needs for social interactions. On the other hand, it appears that Ahmed did not see himself presented with another choice. Ever since moving to Germany, he was repeatedly made aware of the public discourse as pertaining to immigrants, which a priori imposed on him the identity of an *Ausländer*. His difficulties to establish stable contacts with German speakers, along with his perceived insufficient command of German contributed to his acceptance of this positioning and the consolidation of his view of Germans as reserved. Once Ahmed had settled down and found a stable job, the time constraints imposed by working shifts further limited both the chances and need to look for new contact with Germans which, in his opinion, led to a stagnation of his German.

By comparison, Youssef did not see himself presented with alternatives to speaking German. His aversion to using French was strong enough to fuel his motivation to learn German as quickly as possible, with rapid results. In a sense, Youssef’s account indicated that although inconvenient in a variety of ways, having no choice but to learn in order to realize even basic communicative needs was the fastest way of achieving linguistic progress. This, however was facilitated by his exposure to German and contacts with fluent German speakers within his family. Youssef’s willingness and efforts to acquire the language were rewarded with the support, praise and acknowledgement of his wife, in-laws
and friends which seemed to motivate him even more. It further secured him participation in communities of practices, which proved beneficial to his linguistic development, such as the book club. Youssef’s linguistic progress was additionally accelerated by his intense and purposeful examination of German literature. His learning strategies outside of the classroom, in combination with his constant exposure and willingness to speak, resulted in the development of excellent communicative skills in a relatively short period of time. In summary, it can be said that Youssef’s positive attitudes towards German speakers, along with his integrative orientation and past experiences in learning foreign languages allowed him to embrace his identity as a learner and to create and seize variety of informal learning opportunities.

Karim’s case was similar to Youssef’s in many ways, particularly with respect to their previous negative L2 acquisition experiences which had a positive impact on their attitudes towards Germany and the Germans. Karim too enjoyed access to L2 communities of practice due to his German wife, although in his case, his wife was partially a mediator between Karim and her family, as she spoke French, a language he considered his second mother tongue. Still, the fact that he inhabited the same space as his brother-in-law and that his in-laws lived so close by, secured Karim’s constant exposure to German, with family members acting as teachers. Karim’s positive experiences in Germany compared to those in Austria, led him to embrace a positive view of Germany and the Germans. This allowed him to take risks and create and make use of informal learning opportunities. His professional goals and the desire to be independent, similarly to Ahmed, prompted him to develop various learning strategies to support his learning outside of the IK classroom, such as reading and watching German TV.
The importance of immigrants’ learning strategies outside of the classroom was also evident in the case of Monica. Her focused and elaborate engagement with German at home was reflected in her flawless syntax and clear pronunciation. It is necessary to point out though that she was the only learner in the focus group (and in her IK group), who could extensively rely on a detailed knowledge and understanding of Latin and Old Greek. This eliminated one of the greatest hurdles in learning German – its grammar. At the same time, Monica was the only participant in the study who was not married to a fluent L2 speaker. This, and the fact that she perceived the high ELV of the Italian community in Frankfurt as a threat to her linguistic development, limited her options for practicing German through her connections with other IK participants. Monica struggled to establish contacts with Germans, which would have allowed her to more frequently practice German in conversation. These struggles can be largely attributed to her adherence to native-speaker orientations and her fear of being corrected. This fear, in turn was based on her strong integrative orientation and her perception of Germans as cold and direct.

The five case studies in the present work suggest that whether learning opportunities will be materialized depends at least partly on the individual’s identity work. Cemre’s accounts, for example, highlight the aspect of confidence and how it relates to one’s own identity and positioning within a community of practice when taking advantage of learning situations outside of the classroom. Her desire for perfectionism and her reluctance to use German as the language of communication with her husband can be related to her concerns about potentially losing her legitimacy, power and the position that she had secured for herself from the very beginning within their relationship. These feelings extended to contact with the in-laws and her husband’s circle of friends. However, Cemre’s main concern in using
German was that she might be recognized as a ‘regular’ Turkish immigrant. Using the words of Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), the identity of a Turkish immigrant was an imposed and negotiable identity for Cemre. It was imposed on her by larger social structures and by practices in the IK, but she contested it both inside and outside of the classroom. This was only possible because Cemre had the necessary tools at her disposal. What immediately set her apart from most of the other leaners in the group was her education, her excellent command of English and the fact that she was married to a German. Like her, the other three Turks in her IK class had moved to Germany as part of family reunification; however, they all married second generation Turkish migrants and used Turkish as the main language at home. Cemre was aware that her deviation from this pattern distinguished her from the “other Turkish people” in her class, whom she described as “conservative”. At the same time, she made no attempts at concealing her Turkish identity or at trying to come across as a German, as experienced by Marx (2002). This was also not an option due to her own view of her physical features not being typically German and to the fact that she had a distinct accent when speaking German. Because she was not forced to take on jobs below or not corresponding to her qualifications, she rarely found herself in situations where she felt threatened and had to renegotiate her identity in order to maintain power relations at par with her interlocutors. The only instance where she found herself in a disadvantaged position vis-a-vis a native speaker was in the IK classroom. But even then, Cemre attempted to defend herself by using English or by reversing the situation by using Turkish. Similar to Cemre, Monica had tools at her disposal which allowed her to negotiate her identities. Her main concern was not to be identified as an Italian immigrant, as this, in her view, evoked negative associations. Her strategies to avoid this involved, similar to
Marx’ account (2002), adjusting her physical appearance and accent to resemble those of the dominant L2 community. Unlike Cemre and Monica, Ahmed had no means at all to contest the identity of a Turkish immigrant, which he felt was imposed on him. This gradually caused him to make it his assumed identity both in his personal and professional realms. He merely sought to mitigate the negative associations which ‘Turkish immigrant’ evoked by adopting behavioral patterns he considered ‘German’. Likewise, Youssef and Karim experienced the imposing of identity – that of an Arab and a Muslim – and they both sought to negotiate the negative connotations attached to these identities in German society, consequently assuming the identity of knowledgeable and educated Arab Muslims.

What is striking for all five participants is that they all – each in their own way – were caught in contexts where they had to position and constantly uphold themselves against immigrant stereotypes put forward by the prevailing discourse and ideologies in Germany. From Cemre, who was afraid to be seen as a regular Turkish immigrant, to Ahmed - the diligent Turkish immigrant, to Youssef - the erudite Muslim, to Karim - the entrepreneur immigrant to Monica, the German looking and sounding Italian. They were all branded Ausländer and they all sought to overcome this label and assert themselves as worthy of participation in the big community of practice called German society. Their accounts suggest that not only did their IK experience curtail the emergence of such social positioning dilemmas, but it also consolidated them. This, as I elaborate below, should be attributed not to individual instructor’s actions or competencies but to the larger framework of the IK.

Attitudes appeared to play a role in these processes only in relation to learners’ beliefs regarding whether they considered German speakers likely to correct them or not. The
prospect of being corrected was problematic, because it had the potential result for the individual being recognized as an immigrant learner of German. This was an undesirable outcome for my informants simply because they all believed that fully confessing to an immigrant identity would position them as inferior to the dominant majority. The kind of contextual clues they had found in and outside of the L2 classroom signaled that “the social meaning of immigrant was not newcomer with initiative and courage, but uneducated, unskilled minority” (Norton 2013, p 117). They all sought to exclude themselves from this description, albeit in very different ways.

The analysis of my informants’ accounts, hence, can not establish a straight causational relationship between attitudes and language achievement. It appears rather that attitudes and identity formations constantly influenced and co-constructed each other which in turn impacted learning behavior. It is the investment in an identity that appeared to override attitudes. It further appeared that attitudes played a more significant role in informal learning contexts. In the following, I summarize my study’s implications for the correlations between attitudes, identity and learning behavior.

- **Necessity trumps attitudes.** The cases studies outlined in Chapter 6 seem to confirm Macnamara’s (1973) assertion that necessity usually overrides attitudes. This seems to hold true particularly in the context of formal L2 instruction, where language courses conclude with a test and test results have an implication for individuals’ legal status. Participation in the IK was mandatory for Ahmed, Youssef and Karim and all three of them made sure to invest enough time and effort in it to make sure that they passed the tests. Although not mandatory for Cemre and Monica, participation was equally important to them, as they considered it vital to receive formal language instruction in order to obtain the linguistic
prerequisites necessary to realize their career and educational plans. Therefore, it can be claimed that the gate-keeping character of the IK motivated learners to set aside the views they held about the German language and society and invest in the program.

- **Holding unfavourable attitudes towards the L2 community could block beneficial learning behavior.** This conclusion could be made in light of all my informants’ accounts. Cemre, Monica and Ahmed forewent learning opportunities in informal contexts because they perceived Germans as rather distanced and straight-forward. For them, this entailed the possibility of being ‘corrected’ when speaking German, something that they associated with being positioned as inferior to their interlocutors and hence identity-threatening. In the case of Cemre and Monica specifically, their view of Germans as cold led them to take preemptive action in concealing their German learner position in order to ultimately protect their identity. Youssef’s and Karim’s accounts pointed to similar assertions, although their negative attitudes were towards French and Austrians. This leads us to the third implication.

- **Holding (very) favourable attitudes towards the L2 community can be beneficial for L2 learning behavior.** Youssef’s account, in particular, appears to confirm the prevailing “wisdom that positive attitudes facilitate acquisition” (Giles and Edwards 2010, p. 38). In Gardner’s (2011) words, Youssef displayed a strong integrative orientation. Youssef’s strong interest in the German language and culture was manifested in his examination of German literature. This in turn helped him assert himself as an erudite individual and Muslim, allowing him to create bonds with German speakers based on mutual interests.
• **Negative attitudes towards a learner’s community can impact learning behavior.** Some of the accounts laid out in Chapter 6 seem to confirm Norton’s (2013) assertion that “immigrants are far more vulnerable to the attitudes of the dominant group than the dominant group is vulnerable to them” (p. 119). Youssef’s and Karim’s experiences in France and Austria respectively suggest that whenever L2 learners perceive their L2 interlocutor as having negative attitudes towards their ethnic group, these learners are likely to avoid contact. If similar experiences accumulate, then learners might seek to confirm their identity in their own ethnic affiliation (for example, Ahmed).

What seems to emerge from analyzing my informants’ narratives is that the relationship between attitudes, identity and learning behavior is not one-directional, but rather complex and multifaceted. Attitudes appear to be strongly related to identity formations and can act as interpretative lenses to predict and explain other’s actions and therefore, can affect one’s learning behavior. In that sense, attitudes towards the L2 society seem to have no *direct* influence on an individual’s motivation to learn and his or her language achievements, in the sense that the relationship is not one-directional. Further, attitudes appear to have less impact on learning behavior in adult migrant L2 classrooms, where learning opportunities are taken advantage of regardless of attitudes as they pertain to economic and social prospects. Therefore, attitudes can affect learning outcomes in that they may shape a learner’s willingness to engage with L2 speakers. Whenever a learner perceives communication with L2 speakers as identity-threatening, he or she may abstain from initiating contact.

In regard to these insights, I wish to stress, that they are not of universal value and can not be applied to any learning context without reservations. These are rather insights that can
prove useful for the development of teaching methods for adult migrants. They can also contribute to the fairly recent but quickly growing research area of “language learning in the wild” (see Moore 2015) as they help deepen our understanding of what factors influence learning behavior and what teaching strategies can have a positive impact on L2 acquisition.

7.1.2 The IK

What my informants’ accounts suggest for the IK is unclear. The program most certainly eased immigrants’ initial transition into German society by breaking the social isolation many of them experienced upon arrival. It also provided an affordable opportunity for formal language instruction. It appears however, that in several respects, the IK fell short of meeting its own objectives. This, I believe, was mostly due to the discrepancy between the pedagogical aims and the set up of the IK.

While it is safe to assume that the instructors and the pedagogies teachers brought to the classroom influenced participants’ learning and acquisition of German, there are preconditions embedded in the IK’s design and its function as a political institution that impose limits on the pedagogical actions of individual instructors and on their impact. As Hartkopf (2010) points out, “Integrationskurse sind nicht allein Orte der Wissensvermittlung, sondern auch politische Institutionen”73 (p.117). The IK is therefore the product of the same political system engaged in the production and maintenance of public discourses and ideologies promoting Othering of non-Western groups (Hofer 2016, Holliday 2012) that affected my informants’ perceptions of self and their positioning. This is apparent in several of the IK’s characteristics. The first and most prominent is the DTZ-

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73 In Engl.: “Integration courses are not merely sites for transfer of knowledge, but also political institutions.”
exam concluding the GLC and the penalties tied to not passing the test within a given time frame. This not only signals a framework caught between voluntariness and repression (Hentges 2013b) but also automatically positions instructors as gate keepers and impacts the power relations in the classroom, allowing instructors as, for example, Susanne, to abuse the authorities given to them by the IK institution. As Gütlaff (2000) observed through her inquiries with IK instructors in Bochum, this leads teachers to see themselves in “einem anwaltschaftlichen Verhältnis zu ihrer Klientel“ and as “Erfüllungsgehilfen von ordnungspolitischen Maßnahmen“ (p.140). Added the unfavorable work conditions and lower wages, it is safe to assume that this did not have a positive impact on teachers’ motivation. In addition, the test-centered design of the IK is conducive to teaching practices focused on passing the final exam, as it is the only yardstick used to measure both teachers’ and learners’ performance and success.

Another indicator is the absence of a definition of the term ‘culture’ used in all curricular documents concerning the GLC and the OK. This has immediate implications for the understanding of the intercultural competences promoted in the curricular documents, as they fail to address the relationship between language, culture and meaning as defined by progressive SLA:

In the dyad ‘language and culture’, language is not a bunch of arbitrary linguistic forms applied to a cultural reality that can be found outside of language, in the real world. Without language and other symbolic systems, the habits, beliefs, institutions, and monuments that we call culture would be just observable realities, not cultural

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74 In Engl.: “in an advocacy relationship to their clientele”, “agents of regulatory measures”.
phenomena. To become culture, they have to have meaning. It’s the meaning that we give to foods, gardens and ways of life that constitute culture. (Kramsch 2013, p.64)

The fact that the understanding of culture promoted in the IK differs from the one outlined above is revealed most clearly in the curriculum and set up of the OK. The segregation of the cultural component from the linguistic one contradicts the understanding of culture as ingrained in language. It allows for the incorporation of a rather narrow understanding of culture and “only to the extent that it reinforces and enriches, but not that it questions traditional boundaries of self and other” (Kramsch 1996a, p.6). The concept of culture promoted in the IK further conceives of it as inherent to nations and ethnicities, leading to the consolidation of the *Us-vs.-Them* dichotomy omnipresent throughout all my informants’ accounts. The OK curriculum further implies an understanding of Germany and Germanness as rooted in one German nation. This is reinforced by the mere absence of problematic concepts such as Germany’s recognition as an *Einwanderungsland* from the list of topics to be covered within the OK. As Kammhuber et al. point out:


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75 In Engl.:”Whether, for example, Germany even can be seen as a country of immigration, the equation of foreigners with guest workers through the recruitment agreements, the perception of ethnic German re-settlers as Russians and the various arguments against foreigners and any kind of immigration (isolationism), should not be
This comes to show that, despite the advances made by research in the spheres of the intercultural and the multicultural, language teaching can still operate on a relatively narrow conception of both language and culture; Language continues to be taught as a fixed system of formal structures and universal speech functions, and as a neutral vehicle for the transmission of cultural knowledge, not only in the IK (see Kramsch 2013). This is facilitated by the fact that culture is not a tangible skill - unlike speaking, listening, reading and writing – and therefore, requires more advanced and elaborate teaching practices. It is further difficult to assess and test students’ grasp of culture which in turn decisively complicates its teaching. Kramsch points out that in the period when culture was considered synonymous with literature and the arts, language teachers had less objections to assessing a student’s ability to interpret a poem or a cultural artifact in the L2 classroom. In the case of the IK, the design of the program a priori diminishes the possibility of incorporating culture in the teaching process as a strategy for developing an intercultural competence “steeped in a deep understanding of [the students’] historicity and subjectivity as language learners” (Kramsch 2013, p. 60). The fact that both the GLC and the OK conclude with a mandatory test, whereby failure has the potential to jeopardize one’s settlement in the new country, creates breeding ground for ‘thin’, superficial, test-oriented learning. This is particularly evident from my informants’ accounts of the OK. While Cemre and Karim “ab ovo” deemed it irrelevant, the other three participants in my study could barely remember any of its contents. The OK failed not only to provide them with a deeper understanding of the historical contextuality of events and cultural phenomena, it failed at the basic level to provide them with a broad, if not in-depth, understanding of Germany’s political system concealed in an Orientierungskurs, if the aim is to convey a realistic picture of the German society and its attitudes towards foreigners.”
and history. Several informants further reported that their learning was impeded by the complexity of the language used in the OK which did not reflect their fluency levels. It is, therefore, safe to assume that if the teaching material in the OK was linguistically challenging, and hence, inaccessible to the most advanced learners in the group (see Section 7.2), it was even more so for the underachieving ones. According to my informants’ accounts, the main goal of instruction in the OK was to ensure learners could check enough correct answers on the multiple-choice test in order to pass it. In this respect, my study’s results align with the findings of Hartkopf (2010), Hentges (2013a), and Zimmer (2013) outlined in Chapter 2.

Another problematic aspect of the IK that surfaced in the narrative analysis was in regard to the teaching material and the focus of instruction. All participants criticized the program for concentrating too much on grammar and lacking in relevance to their lived realities outside of the classroom. Furthermore, they all placed great value on communicative skills, but felt the IK failed to recognize their needs in this respect. This became apparent also during my class observations and I believe it can be largely attributed to the teacher-centered practices applied. Although both the GLC teaching objectives framework and the OK curriculum (outlined in Chapter 2) acknowledged that an immigrant L2 classroom has to recognize the lived realities of the migrant learners; however, instruction strategies in the classroom struggled to materialize these objectives. Research has long suggested that this can be done by inviting learners to participate, by bringing the outside inside, by giving migrant learners a voice in the classroom, a safe place to explore, discuss and exchange (see Norton 2013, Roberts & Cooke 2009, Simpson 2010). If learners are supposed to engage in intercultural encounters outside of the classroom, then what they need to practice
most is their communicative skills. This was not the case in any of the IK classrooms that I observed and was further confirmed by my informants’ accounts. The main condition that allowed for it to happen was the final goal of the GLC – the passing of the test, which ultimately decided whether both the IK and the participants would be deemed successful.

With regard to the instructors, it must be said that while Susanne’s attitudes and behavior might have been a deviation from IK ‘standards’, the fact that they were tolerated by the school and that she was allowed to teach in several other IK carriers signalled her affiliation and belonging to the IK institution. This was also the reason why I decided against the abandonment of this focus group and did not seek to investigate a group with a different instructor. For one, any negative impact she might have had on the learners was partially mitigated by the fact that Susanne only taught half of the course, that she did not teach the OK and that she adjusted her behavior after the school management approached her. Also, in my opinion and in the opinion of my informants, Susanne did not demonstrate excellence in her teaching practices, but neither did any of the other IK instructors that I had the chance to observe. Teacher- and book-centered practices were common in all IK classrooms I visited and have been the subject of criticism in all available research on the IK (Hartkopf 2010, Hentges 2013a&b, Schillo 2010, Zimmer 2013). The reason for this, I believe, is the design of the IK itself, which not only allows for such practices to take place, but offers the necessary preconditions. This is particularly evident in the case of the OK – the very part of the IK that is supposed to generate positive attitudes towards Germany, the Germans and the German language through culture-centered instruction. The absence of a definition of the term ‘culture’ a priori complicates the implementation of the teaching objectives. Added the time constraint, high volume of the mostly fact-based content and the linguistically
challenging terminology, instructors are stripped of their pedagogical relevance and become mere executors of the curriculum.

A third and last problematic aspect of the IK turned out to be its duration, which appeared too short to yield lasting linguistic results. Achieving the B1 level was not sufficient for four of the five participants and they all sought to continue learning German in order to achieve higher proficiency levels in order to really allow them to fulfill their goals. Both Cemre and Monica needed C1 to find a job or to apply to German universities respectively and they enrolled in more advanced German classes. Karim too felt that his current level did not allow him to freely communicate with his clients in the way he deemed necessary and, therefore, intended to continue learning German at an adult education center. Youssef continued learning German in a class offered through his apprenticeship program. The only informant who did not require higher proficiency to apply and hold a paid position was Ahmed. However, it ultimately turned out that he did not make much use of German while providing cleaning services at Fraport. If the B1 level was not sufficient for individuals, who desired to complete an apprenticeship, to do skilled work, to study, or to operate a small business, but was redundant for individuals performing manual work, then this begs question of which target group the IK is aimed at. Furthermore, in the case of the two participants who were not exposed to German through their families, Ahmed and Monica, the suspension of formal language instruction led to a felt stagnation, confirming Perdue’s (1993a) conclusion that “teaching can affect the acquisition process in unpredictable ways, but these effects tend to wear off as soon as everyday discourse activity becomes the main source of exposure to the TL” (p.50).
In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that all assertions about the impact of the IK on my participants must be read with care and only in light of the specific context. This is due to the small sample size and the mannerism of one of the teachers. However, I would also like to point out that it is not the purpose of the present work to measure the participants’ linguistic progress in relation to particular pedagogies. I am rather looking at how the IK experience affected their attitudes and identity work. If I was to accept that Susanne alone had a negative impact on participants’ attitudes in the sense that they either saw their negative beliefs confirmed in her actions or in that she reinforced *Us-vs.-Them* dichotomies, then it is justified to turn our attention to the impact that the rest of my participants’ instructors had on them. Based on the examination of the curricular documents, my observations and participants’ narratives, I believe that even if Susanne had not been my focus group’s instructor, they still would have found themselves captured in the *good-vs.-bad-Ausländer* discourse, as it was imposed on them by larger social structures and not by Susanne *alone*. She was rather one of many instances confirming it and this can largely be attributed to the IK’s design and its core as a political institution as outlined above. It appears that the other instructor and those who taught the OK did not in any way initiate or attempt to contradict, question or even discuss the public discourse regarding immigrants, nor notions of migration, nation, state and identity. When my informants made general comments about the IK, they often did so in regard to IK practices in general and not specifically to Susanne. The course was focused on grammar, syntax and test-preparation throughout and not only when she was the instructor. Cemre’s dissatisfaction with the IK, for example, grew despite the fact that she had Susanne as an instructor only for a short period of time. While it is very likely that she had a negative impact on learners’ language
acquisition, there are no indications that she instilled aversion to learning German in any of them.

7.2 Limitations and Future Research

The limitations of my study are trifold. The most challenging aspect of my research – finding immigrant learners, who at the beginning of the IK would speak English or German well enough to answer my interview questions, inevitably limited the pool of potential participants. The interviews were conducted in English or in German and not in the participants’ first language. This deprived me of the opportunity to interview IK participants who presented cases of particular vulnerability, such as those of the analphabetic immigrants and refugees caught up in bureaucratic limbos that I met there. As evident from their narratives, the informants of my study were among the most advantaged and privileged learners enrolled in the IK due to their native spouses, contact with L2 communities, higher education and knowledge of other foreign languages. While they came from different backgrounds, they had a lot in common in terms of their socio-economic status and education, hence forming a rather homogeneous sample in this respect. Yet, this is not to say that my study allows for the extrapolation of general patterns from the data. As it is the case with most small-scale qualitative research, the primary aim of my study was to deliver insights into adult migrants’ idiosyncratic learning experiences while enrolled in the German IK.

The fact that the interviews were not conducted in their respective L1s does present a limitation in itself as well, due to the fact that some informants’ restricted vocabulary range and syntax might have prevented them from fully expressing their thoughts the way they
would have been able to do it in their mother tongue. I believe this was offset to a degree by the recurrence of most of the questions. In addition, it has to be noted that two of my informants, Karim and Monica, were recruited at a later point and completed only two interviews. This partially limited the pool of data and information I could draw on for the reconstruction of their stories. I tried to mitigate this by conducting longer interviews with them, inquiring more intensely about their past learning experiences. While they indeed joined the study at a later point, it was because they were admitted to the IK at a higher proficiency level, hence my project ultimately captured their entire IK experience. The fact that so many of my initial informants had to withdraw from the course further confirms the specific dynamics of that learning context – in the world of adult migrants, life often comes in the way of learning German in formal settings.

Another limitation lies in the short time span during which my informants were monitored. I only followed participants for the duration of the IK, although a prolonged observation would have yielded more in-depth results. A continuous presence on my part in the IK and more interviews would have also allowed a more thorough examination of their circumstances, resulting in ‘thicker’, more complex learner profiles. This, however, was not possible due to financial constraints.

The third limitation of my study is inherent to my research method. The purpose of employing NI was to gain insights into participants’ idiosyncratic constructions of their learning experiences in the IK classroom and how these relate to attitudes and identity work. While the advantages of this research methodology were clearly laid out in Chapter 5, it is necessary to note that participants’ perspectives might have been influenced in various ways. One of them could be the re-occurrence of themes and questions throughout the
interviews. This, in addition to the insights they gained regarding my research interests could have possibly caused them to enter the study with some premeditated assumptions. In addition, the very wording of the questions which were often aimed at stimulating interviewees to reflect on their experiences could have influenced their answers or caused them to persist in their views. Finally, readers need to be aware of the effect my presence could have had on participants’ accounts and of the power relations between the researcher and the researched. My standing as a German teacher and researcher might have influenced my informants’ perspectives and answers, prompting them to possibly wish to present themselves in a more favorable light. I sought to mitigate this by creating a friendly atmosphere and allowing participants to lead the conversation whenever possible. Lastly, it is necessary to consider how my subjectivity, experiences and views have influenced the research process as reflected in the questions I asked, in the methods I used for the narratives analysis and interpretation and in the theoretical framework presented in my study. This subjectivity, however, is generally not considered problematic in qualitative research (Barkhuizen et al. 2014, Benson 2013, Duff 2008) where the demand to extract the ‘truth’ is replaced with the ‘truths’ constructed by individuals in their efforts to make sense of their experiences (see Riessman 2003, Duff 2008).

In terms of future research, I believe there is clear need for longitudinal research, with developments traced over longer periods of time, involving immigrant learners and teachers alike. Thus far, there are no studies investigating the impact of the IK on more vulnerable participants, particularly those who have no contact with L2 speakers outside of the IK. The viewpoints and experiences of IK instructors and the difficulties they experience in working
with such diverse learner groups as those of the IK have not been adequately represented in research either.
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Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions:

Name: ______________________________________________________________________
(to be replaced by a pseudonym if recruited for the study)

Gender: male ☐ female ☐ Age: ______

Nationality: ____________ Occupation ______________

Mother tongue: ____________________________________________________________ (please include all native languages, if there is more than one)

Other languages spoken (if applicable): ______________________

Level of knowledge of German: ______________________

Are you obliged to participate in the Integration Course by the German Migration Act?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Where did you learn German prior to immigrating to Germany? _________________

Reason(s) to immigrate to Germany (i.e. reunify with spouse/family, skilled worker, etc.):

__________________________________________________________________________

Note that this study guarantees and protects the full anonymity of all participants.
FRAGEBOGEN

Beantworten Sie bitte folgende Fragen:

Name: ______________________________________________________________________
(wird durch ein Pseudonym ersetzt, falls Sie für die Studie rekrutiert werden)

Geschlecht:  weibl. □  männl. □  Alter: ________

Staatsangehörigkeit: ________________  Beruf ________________

Muttersprache(n): __________________________________________________________ (nennen Sie bitte alle Sprachen, die Sie als Ihre Muttersprache bezeichnen)

Weitere Sprachen (falls zutreffend): ______________________

Niveau der Deutschkenntnisse: ______________________

Sind Sie gem. des Zuwanderungsgesetzes verpflichtet an dem Integrationskurs teilzunehmen?

JA □  NEIN □

Wo haben Sie Deutsch gelernt ehe Sie nach Deutschland ausgewandert sind?

________________________________________________________________________

Grund für Ihre Zuwanderung (z.B. Familienzusammenführung, Facharbeiter, etc.)

________________________________________________________________________

Diese Studie schützt und gewährleistet die absolute Anonymität der Teilnehmer.
Appendix B

Set of Core Interview Questions

Background
Could you clarify your reasons and the conditions under which it was possible to immigrate to Germany?
How much and what did you know about Germany prior to immigrating?
What was your perception of Germany, Germans and German culture prior to coming to Germany?
Where did you learn German prior to coming to Germany?
What was your experience with the German language prior to coming to Germany?
Does having learned another foreign language help you learn German now?
What are your reasons to learn German? / What motivates you to learn German?

The Integrationskurs
Did you know about the Integrationskurs before you arrived? / Were you planning to enroll in such a course?
What benefits do you expect from the Integrationskurs?
What do you think about the Integrationskurs? Do you find it a good idea to have an Integrationskurs?
How do you feel about it being mandatory? / Would you have enrolled in the Integrationskurs if it wasn’t mandatory? Why?
What do you like and what do you not like about the Integrationskurs?
How is the Integrationskurs helping you learn and progress? Examples?
Could you comment on the teaching practices in the Integrationskurs?

Attitudes and Affiliations
How do you feel about Germany and Germans?
Do you identify as…?
Do you have contacts with other members of the ... community?
Learning behavior and habits regarding formal learning
How much time do you devote to doing your homework and studying at home?
Does anyone help you with your homework?
How else do you prepare for class? Are there any specific learning strategies you use when preparing for the *Integrationskurs* / learning at home?

Learning behavior in informal learning contexts
What language do you speak at home? Why?
Do you have contacts to German speakers outside of the classroom?
Do you make any attempts to establish contacts to Germans? Why?
Is it difficult to establish contacts to Germans?
How do you feel when someone corrects you?
Appendix C

Questions for Journal Entries

The questions for the e-journals had an open-ended character. Their purpose was to encourage the learners in elaborating and reflecting on the learning context and experience from their own point of view and to add further aspects that raised their interest or attention. Three trigger questions were asked in each email. The content of these questions was specifically adjusted to the previous narrations of each participant, but generally focused on the following aspects:

- Learner’s perceptions of the learning environment and process, consisting of their evaluation of the Integrationskurs content and materials, learning objectives and progress, i.e. How is the Integrationskurs going for you? Do you feel your German is improving?

- Learner’s social environment outside of the classroom, their access to and interaction with German speakers, i.e. Do you have contacts to German speakers outside of the Integrationskurs now? / Do you continue to have contacts to German speakers outside of the Integrationskurs? Are your encounters outside of the Integrationskurs helping you improve your language skills? How so?