



GLOCADEMIA IG PRESENTATION

Monday, 17th June 2024

**Towards a representation of German as a
“Glocal Language” – *Redesigning the curriculum
of two beginner’s language courses at Durham
University***

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Overview

Introduction

What is meant by “German as a Glocal Language”?

- ❖ Aims and rationale for the study

Literature review and Theoretical Framework

- ❖ The context of Foreign Language Education in HE
- ❖ The challenges of pursuing a “decolonial intercultural approach to a critical pedagogy on language and culture” (Guilherme & Souza, 2019).
- ❖ The concept of Glocal Languages within the Glodademia Matrix

Methodology

- ❖ Redesign the curriculum of two beginner’s German courses at Durham University: **German Stage 1** (an elective credit-bearing course for non-specialists) and the **MBA German Language course** (which forms part of the module *International Business in Context*).
- ❖ Questionnaire and interviews at two time points: start of course (October 2024), end of term 1 (December 2024)

Expected findings, contribution to research and practice and limitations

Aims and rationale for the study

- ❖ The study seeks to **redesign the curriculum of two German beginner's language courses at Durham University** with the aim of addressing **two dimensions of the concept of Glocal Languages: linguistic and social semiotic**.
- ❖ The study seeks to explore **students' perspectives** on the concept of **Glocal Languages** through an in-depth analysis of **questionnaire and interview data**.

The intervention would include:

- examples of language use (how language is used both 'at home' and 'abroad' (**the social semiotic dimension**))
- how the German language has been **transformed** and '**reimagined**' throughout history (**the linguistic dimension**)
- opportunities for a **critical discussion** on **language** and its **speakers**.
- Integrate **intervention** with **CLT objectives**



Rationale for choosing beginner's level courses



- ❖ **Highest enrollment** yet they are ones with the **heaviest focus on transactional language use and oral practice**.
- ❖ Because of learners' reduced competence in the foreign language, it is **difficult to foster opportunities for critical reflection**.
- ❖ Byrnes et al. (2010), with reference to US university-level courses, point out that the learning approach “favored a focus on **transactional, interactional, oral language learning**, at least at the **lower levels**, which have the **highest enrollment numbers**” (p.15)
- ❖ Byrnes et al. (2010) further acknowledge that “communicative competence so manifested has **been questioned with regard to its appropriateness** for collegiate FL learning on multiple grounds” (p.15). Schulz (2006) further argued that “**communicative competence** is neither a realistic **nor a sufficient goal** for the general education FL requirement” (p. 254).

Rationale for choosing beginner's level courses

- ❖ The **development of criticality and/or critical cultural awareness** in **beginners' language study** is under-researched.
- ❖ The learning that takes place in beginners' language courses is often compared to that which takes place in higher-level courses. —————→

This leads to an understanding of criticality within language study viewed only from the perspective of a humanities discipline.

Yamada(2009), reporting on her empirical study in a Japanese beginners' course at Durham University, concluded that “the development of **criticality** through foreign language education **is possible even at the beginners' stage** and **inquiry** is the **most essential first step of engaging in being critical** (Yamada, 2009). She argued that in beginners' language study, “**reflection is not limited to the cultural dimension only**. Whether on the cultural dimension or other aspects of language learning, the **development of criticality** can be a **product of foreign language learning**, besides linguistic skills. (Yamada, 2010, p. 261)

Situating beginners' courses within the Foreign Language Curriculum in HE – (UK)

LANGUAGE DEGREES (UK)

Ab-initio route
(beginners')

Post-A-level route
(advanced)

Content modules (cultural studies,
literature, film, interpreting and
translation)

LANGUAGE
ELECTIVES
Credit-bearing
IWLP (UK)

Beginners +
higher levels

LfA – non-
credit-bearing
(IWLP) (UK)

Beginners +
higher levels

Parallel structure – non-specialists do not experience content modules. They can only take elective language modules.

Situating beginners' courses within the Foreign Language Curriculum in HE – (USA)

LANGUAGE DEGREES (USA)

No prior knowledge
(beginners')
German 100 (Y1)
200 level (Y2)

Previous knowledge –
enter at
appropriate level
e.g. 300 (Y3)

Content modules (cultural studies,
literature, film, interpreting and
translation) – upper-level only (300, 400)

General Education Requirement

+ Non-specialists can enroll either in **lower** or **upper-division** to fulfil the foreign language GE requirement, provided they have previous knowledge of the language (e.g. from high school).

- Beginners often do not experience content modules **until their third year** of university (some universities no longer follow a two-tiered structure).

A mismatch between CLT objectives and GL in Foreign Languages

- There is a mismatch between the objectives of a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, and those of a critical pedagogy, from which the concept of Glocal Languages stems.
- Kramsch et al. (2007) argued that rather than preparing students to communicate with 'members of idealized homogeneous monolingual speech communities, we should **frame FL education** as an education in **reflexivity** on the **indexical, subjective and historical dimensions of discourse** at **all levels** of the curriculum' (p. 151).

lower-level + upper-level



The issue of the separation between language and content in UK and US foreign language degree programme is extensively discussed in my previous work (see Parks, 2018, **2019**, **2020**, 2023).

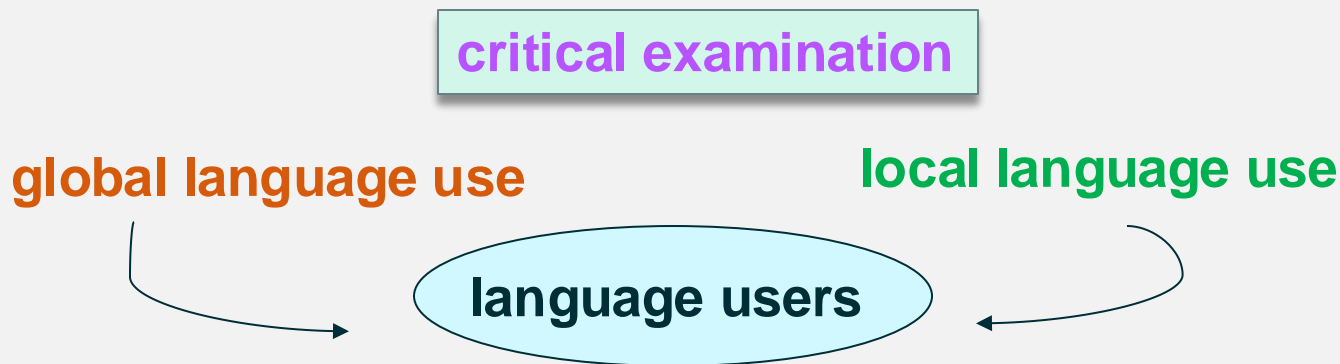
Defining “Glocal Languages”

- “The idea of ‘glocal languages’ does not aim to present linguistic theory but to address a **critical pedagogy** and **decolonial curriculum development** under the umbrella themes of **language education** and **teacher education**.”
- “‘Glocal languages’ require a **critical**, both synchronic and diachronic, approach to language education enlightened by a **political** and **cultural** understanding of language”.



Defining “Glocal Languages”

- “This approach entails the **critical examination** of the ‘**globalness**’ and the ‘**localness**’ of language use without overlooking the power relations and the subtleness of pressures that they convey on language users and that cannot be ignored while teaching and learning languages (Guilherme, 2018)”.
- “Languages are in fact displayed as discrete entities in the curricula, but they should be regarded and treated like porous and malleable material in the classroom, **reflecting social language practice**”.



Guilherme, 2019, p.52

German as a Glocal Language – the linguistic dimension

- The notion of Glocal Languages (GL) emphasises that languages have been ‘**contextualized**, **recontextualized** and **entextualised**, in **social, cultural and political sites**, both **at home** and **abroad**, in **different spaces** and **times**’ (Guilherme, 2019, p. 47).



German as a Glocal Language – the social semiotic dimension

[...] languages have been ‘**territorialised**’, ‘**reterritorialised**’ and ‘**deterritorialised**’, both at **home** and **abroad**, in play with different **social, political** and **cultural** events’ (Guilherme, 2019, p. 47).

German as a Glocal Language (the social semiotic dimension)

territorialised

German as “the language of Germany or Austria”
Identification with nation state – the language is inseparable from the target language (TL) community
ALSO
The language of “Goethe” or “Schiller” – association of the German language with literature – high culture

reterritorialised

GLOBAL – LOCAL – GLOCAL
German-speaking immigrants in the USA
German in Namibia
emigration – immigration
Turkish-Germans in Germany and Turkey

deterritorialised

German as a language for work – science and engineering

German as a common language among refugees in Germany who don’t share a language (e.g. from Syria, Afghanistan and the Ukraine)

The two dimensions of German as a GL*

The linguistic dimension

words

syntax

grammar

This dimension looks at how the German language (e.g. words, grammar and syntax) is continuously **contextualized**, **recontextualized** and **entextualised**, in **social, cultural and political sites**, both **at home** and **abroad**, in **different spaces** and **times** (Guilherme, 2019).

Wortherkunft
Wortherkunft
Wortherkunft
Wortherkunft

The two dimensions of German as a GL*

The social semiotic dimension

a minority language

a 'native language'

a common language

This dimension looks at the meaning-making function of language and its different uses for the purpose of communication. It looks at the German language as a whole and critically explores how it has **been 'territorialised', 'reterritorialised' and 'deterritorialised', both at home and abroad, in play with different social, political and cultural events (Guilherme, 2019).**

**The subdivision of German as a Glocal language into two dimensions (linguistic and social semiotic) is one that I have made myself and is introduced for the first time in this paper.*



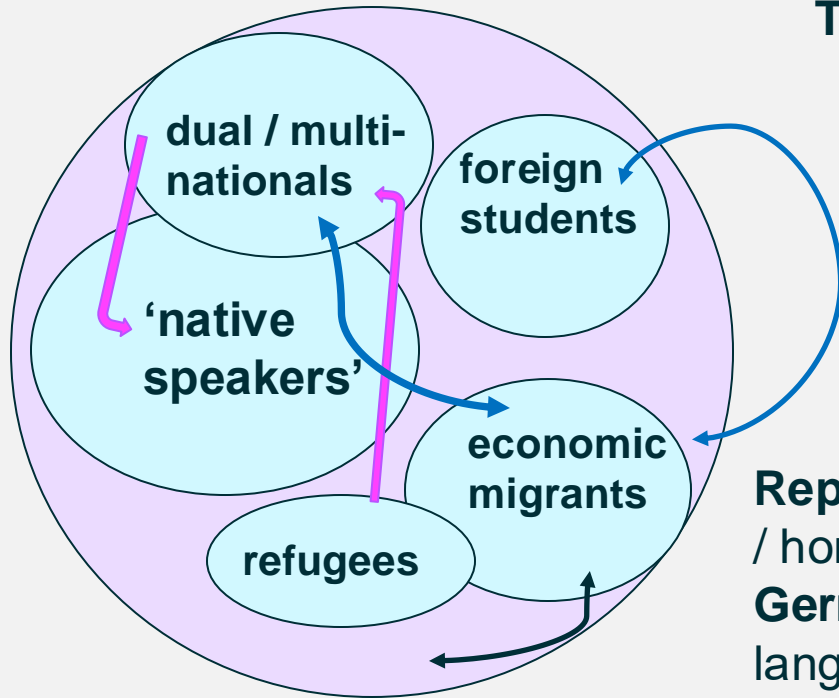
What is meant by a social semiotic?

Baynham (2015) describes language as a “**social semiotic** that both expresses and constructs emergent thoughts, a process in which identities are constructed through **repeated subject positionings** according to the demands of the situation.



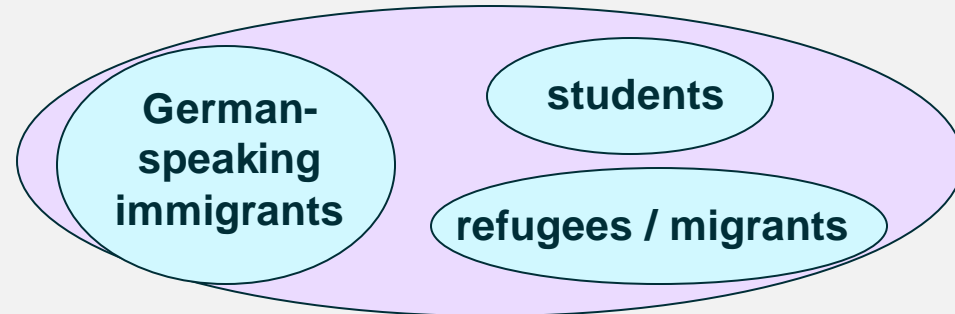
What is meant by a social semiotic?

German in German-speaking countries



DIFFERENT
SPACES
and
TIMES

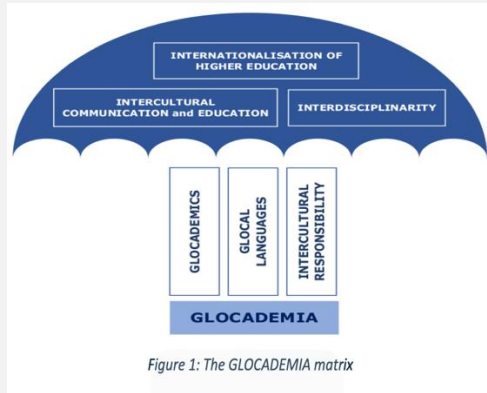
German in non-German-speaking countries



Repeated subject positioning – formal-informal / home-foreign / private-public..

German as a... native/ second native language... home, official, second, foreign, minority language?

Positioning GL within the Glocademia Matrix



The **GLOCADEMIA theoretical framework** includes three interdisciplinary, theoretical and practical bodies of knowledge:

1. Internationalization of higher education

(academic mobility, internationalization of academic institutions)

2. Intercultural communication and education

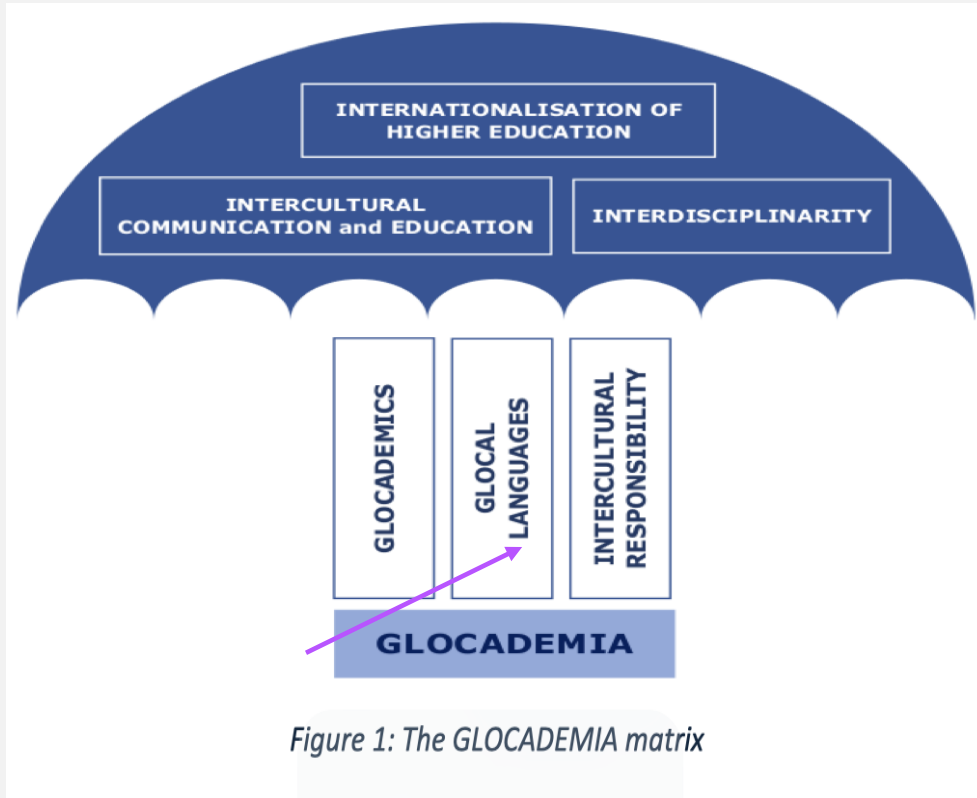
(individual reflexivity and mindfulness and/or collective awareness of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and intercultural citizenship)

3. Interdisciplinarity

(has become of interest to experts in different disciplines as well as policy makers both for cross-disciplinary fieldwork and those operating within the same discipline)

(Guilherme, 2022, p.11)

Positioning GL within the Glocademia Matrix



- “The three umbrella themes illuminate a three-pillar- based conceptual framework, namely: (1) Glocademics; (2) Glocal Languages; and (3) Intercultural Responsibility, all of them geared to **addressing the possibilities and tensions of global- local dynamics** in research activities” (Guilherme 2022, p. 12).

Critical interculturality and glocal languages

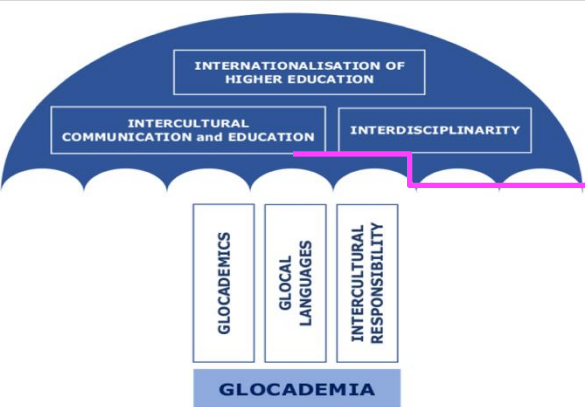
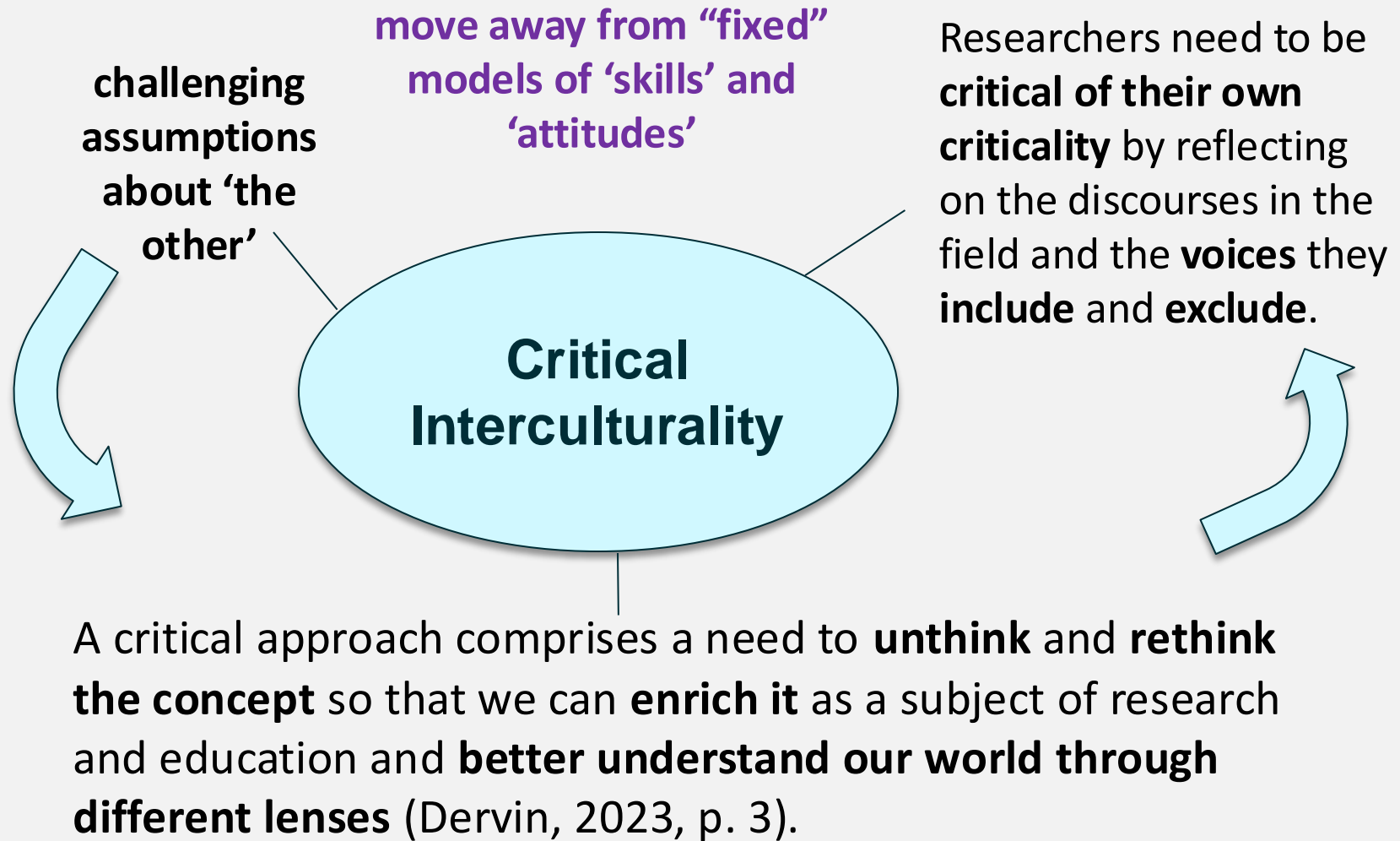


Figure 1: The GLOCADEMIA matrix

Drawing on the work of Catherine Walsh's work (e.g. 2012), Guilherme (2022) discussed the importance of the concept of '**critical interculturality**'. Walsh (2012) highlights "the importance of '**other**' critical modes of knowledge ... that enable **critical theorizations from difference**, opening up new analytic, critical, post/trans-continental, and **decolonial possibilities** of knowledge and existence" (2012, p. 15).

Critical interculturality, from a **decolonial perspective**, departs "from the particularity of **local histories**, and political, ethical, and epistemic places of enunciation, all of which are marked by the colonial difference and by decolonial struggle ... [and it] **extends its project of an otherwise**, a **transformation** conceived and impelled from the margins, from the ground up, and for society at large" (Walsh 2018, p. 61).

Defining Critical Interculturality

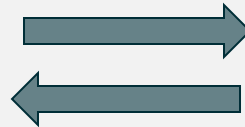


Critical Interculturality and Foreign Language Education

The 2023 QAA *Subject Benchmark Statement for Languages, Cultures and Societies* (in the UK), for example, maintains that placements abroad “enable **profound engagement with other cultures and societies**, thereby **fostering intercultural awareness and pluricultural capability**” (QAA, 2023, p. 16).

One of the problems with the rhetoric around study abroad is that “discourses are often premised on a **binary culturalist difference** between **students’ home** and **host societies**” (Doerr, 2022, p.1), which **overlooks the students’ own intercultural identities and experiences**.

native language,
native culture

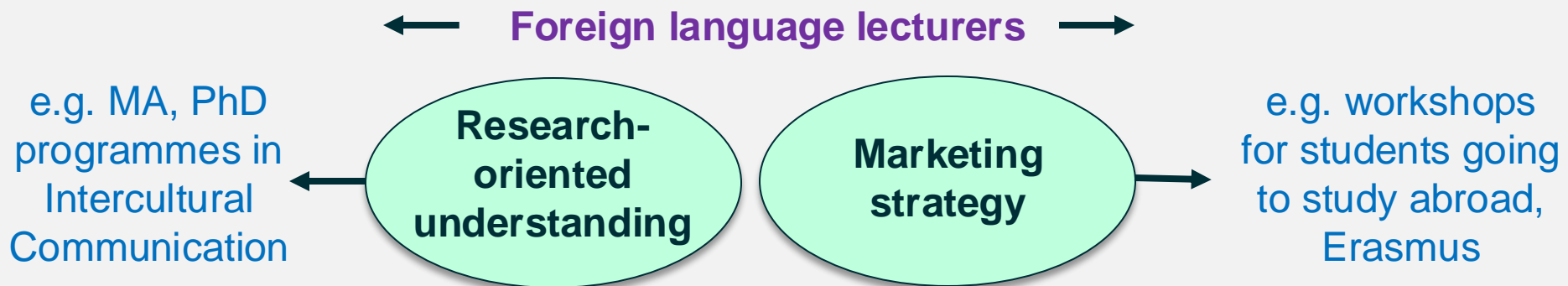


target language,
target culture

The different uses of the term “intercultural”

On the one hand we have a **research-oriented understanding of interculturality**, which is **increasingly critical**, while on the other, interculturality is perceived as a desirable **outcome of international mobility** and is thus employed as a **marketing strategy**:

Critical interculturalists working in neo-liberal and globalised Higher Education find themselves in the double bind of **critiquing cultural essentialism** and the commodification of difference (Giroux, 1993) while operating in institutions that use **diversity as a marketing strategy to promote internationalisation**. (Rolfe, 2013 cited in Ferri, 2022, p. 381).



Research questions

RQ1: How do students in the MBA course and German Stage 1 describe their own expectations of what it means to learn a foreign language in HE and their understanding of the concept of German as a Glocal Language (at Time Point 1) ? (TP1 questionnaire and interviews)

RQ2: According to students, in what ways does the intervention provide opportunities to critically reflect on the ways in which language continues to be contextualized, recontextualized and entextualised, in social, cultural and political sites, both at home and abroad, in different spaces and times (at Time Point 2)? (TP2 questionnaire, interviews)

RQ3: How do students understand the concept of Glocal Languages and German as a Glocal Language (at Time Point 2) and are there differences between the responses of participants in the MBA course and German stage 1? (TP2 questionnaire, interviews)

Methodology – Mixed-methods



- ❖ **Rationale:** The study will adopt an exploratory research design comprising an anonymous questionnaire and interviews at two time points (before and after the intervention).
- ❖ **Research orientation:** exploratory – inductive, generation of theory (Bryman, 2008)
- ❖ **Justification for a mixed-methods design** – The questionnaire would allow participants to remain anonymous - potentially leading to greater truthfulness of responses and thus increase the validity of the data (Dörnyei, 2007).
- ❖ The main purpose of the interviews is not only to collect feedback on the intervention itself, but, most importantly, to give students a voice in the way the concepts of “**Glocal Languages**” and “**German as a glocal language**” are **understood** - leading ultimately towards **a collaborative approach towards theorizing these concepts.**

Research design – Questionnaire and interviews

❖ **Data collection** – questionnaire and interviews at two time points: start of term 1 (October 2024), end of term 1 (December 2024)

❖ **Time point 1** – Questionnaire topics:
Interview topics:



RQ1

❖ **Time point 2** – Questionnaire topics:
Interview topics:



RQ2 + RQ3

Research design – The intervention

- The intervention would include **examples of language use** that reflect the **diverse ways** in which language is employed both **‘at home’** and **‘abroad’** as well as examples of how the German language has been **transformed** and **‘reimagined’** throughout history, in an effort to increase opportunities for a **critical discussion on language and its speakers**.
- ❖ **The linguistic dimension** – focus on words, their origin, use in the past and present
- ❖ **The social semiotic dimension** – focus on meaning-making through short texts, film, social media, poetry, literature

Participants, data collection and analysis

I will be teaching both German Stage 1 and the German MBA course in the 2024-25 academic year.

- **German Stage 1** – There are around 30-40 students who enroll on this module yearly. All students will be invited to participate in the questionnaire and 10 students will be selected for the interviews (from those who expressed interest to participate).
- **German MBA class** – There are around 20-30 students who enroll on this course yearly. The same approach will be adopted.
- **Data analysis**: Statistical analysis of the questionnaires + thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of the interviews.

How results will impact future research and practice

- To my knowledge, this will be the **first empirical study implementing an intervention in German beginners' courses** with an **explicit focus** in promoting both a theoretical and applied **understanding of the concept of German as a Glocal Language**.
- Future research will be able to draw on the findings of this study to explore further opportunities on how to reshape the curricula of beginners' (and higher level) language courses in HE and beyond.
- The findings will be of interest both to Germanists and to teachers of other languages.
- It is hoped that the findings will help promote a more critical approach towards the teaching of languages that reflects the theoretical positions articulated in the Glocademia Matrix.

Limitations of the study

- Small-scale study in a single teaching term
 - small number of participants within one university
 - Results are therefore not representative, and findings cannot be generalized beyond the participants themselves.
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- ❖ The study, however, because it is exploratory in nature, neither seeks to test a hypothesis nor to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention.
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- The aim of the study is rather to experiment with the concept of German as a Glocal Language and gain **greater insight** on the student perspective of the approach and the **concept itself (generation of / contribution to theory)**

Selected publications:

Parks, E. (forthcoming). Fostering Critical Interculturality in Foreign Language Education, in F. Dervin (forthcoming), *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Interculturality in Communication and Education*.

Parks, E. (2023). COVID-19 and Interculturality: revisiting assumptions about intercultural competence and criticality development in Modern Language degree programmes. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 23(1), 88–104.

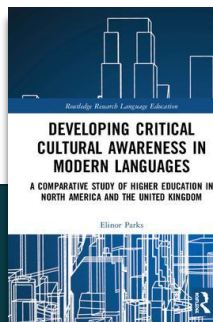
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Parks, E. (2018). Communicative criticality and savoir se reconnaître: emerging new competencies of criticality and intercultural communicative competence, *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 18:1, 107-124.

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