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Foreign Language Didactics, Foreign Language Teaching and Transdisciplinary Affordances

Abstract

Die Fremdsprachendidaktik und der Fremdsprachenunterricht sind in den letzten Jahren auf vielerlei Weise neu betont und von vielerlei neuen Praxen beeinflusst worden. Die Fremdsprachendidaktik kann als ein Teil der Fachdidaktik und Pädagogik angesehen werden, aber gleichzeitig sollten die in den benachbarten Wissenschaften stattgefundenen Veränderungen berücksichtigt werden. Unter dem Terminus „Fremdsprachendidaktik“ wird ein fachdidaktisches Teilgebiet der Erziehungswissenschaft verstanden, das den Lehr–Studier–Lernprozess umfassend untersucht, und in dem das aktive Lernen der fremden Sprache eine gleichrangige Stellung neben dem Unterricht und dem Fremdspracherwerb erhält.

Wir behaupten, dass die Fremdsprachendidaktik nicht lediglich als ein multi-, inter- und querdisziplinärer sondern auch als ein transdisziplinärer, die Grenzen der verschiedenen Wissenschaften überschreitender, eigenständiger Wissenschaftszweig angesehen werden soll. Sie muss gleichzeitig mit dem Sprachbegriff, der Sprachkenntnis, dem Sprachunterricht und dem aktiven Sprachenlernen verbunden werden. Unseres Erachtens dient die Fremdsprachendidaktik als geeignete wissenschaftliche Grundlage für den Beruf des/der Fremdsprachenlehrer/in. In ähnlicher Weise wird in Finnland die Didaktik für die wissenschaftliche Grundlage des Lehrerberufs gehalten.

Wir sind der Meinung, dass es im Bereich der Didaktik nach wie vor von großer Bedeutung ist, wie die Lehrkraft den Lernenden zum aktiven Lernen veranlasst. Wesentliche Bestandteile im didaktischen Prozess einer Fremdsprache sind die Zielstrebigkeit, der Kulturkontext, die Interaktion, der Inhalt und die sprachlichen Verfahren. Diese können auch aus dem Blickwinkel verschiedener sprachlicher Angebote, Affordanzen, betrachtet werden. In den letzten Jahrzehnten hat sich der Fremdsprachenunterricht aus den geschlossenen Systemen in Richtung offenere Lösungen entwickelt, z.B. die Übergänge von der Drillmethodik zum kommunikativen Fremdsprachenunterricht und vom einzelnen Medium in Richtung Mediation. Die Betonung der kommunikativen Mediation spiegelt sich in der Methodik dadurch wider, dass die kritische und eklektische Vorgehensweise verstärkt wird. Die Fremdsprachendidaktik, der Fremdsprachenunterricht und das Verständnis der Sprachkompetenz sind stark von den Wissensauffassungen und Lernkonzepten beeinflusst worden, die sich nach dem Soziokonstruktivismus und dem Soziokulturismus richten.

Der heutigen Ansicht nach ist die Fremdsprache ein Können-, Wissen- und Kulturfach. Sie ist bestenfalls ein vielfältigender Mediator, der das Wachstum der Gesamtpersönlichkeit des Menschen unterstützt (Tella 1999). Die Fremdsprachendidaktik und der Fremdsprachenunterricht beeinflussen ihrerseits die Verwirklichung mannigfaltiger gesellschaftlicher, sozialer und moralischer Werte als ein Teil umfassender gesellschaftlicher Strukturen.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Fremdsprachendidaktik, Didaktik, Pädagogik, Fremdsprachenunterricht, Lehr–Studier–Lernprozess, Fremdsprache, Sprachkenntnis, Afordanz, Soziokonstruktivismus, Soziokulturismus, gesellschaftliche Entwicklung.

Aim

In this article, we will look closely into foreign language didactics, analyse its expanded concept and its contemporary emphases. Our aim is to approach foreign language didactics as part of subject didactics but also via the construct of didactics itself. We intend to analyse the etymology of didactics, the ways in which it has been divided into various components, and to compare this etymology with the concept of pedagogy. We will also study foreign language didactics as a transdisciplinary science though closely linked to the conception of language, language proficiency, foreign language teaching and studying and equally as part of extensive societal progress and societal structures, such as national educational systems, human cultural capital growth, national identity and equity promotion.

Theoretical Background of Foreign Language Didactics

Dilemma of Didactics

Didactics, consisting of language didactics as a subject-didactic component, represents a central part of educational sciences. We will first analyse why in educational parlance, one so often speaks of the dilemma of didactics (e.g., Kansanen 1990; 2003; 2004) and yet one can argue that it is quite all right not only to use the concept of foreign language didactics, but even to recommend its use, as is being done in this article. The dilemma of didactics is associated with its various interpretations and with the different terminology used in various language areas. This is of course not only a phenomenon related to a didactic concept or educational sciences only; rather, it is a relatively common phenomenon regarding many concepts such as communicative language proficiency and communicative language teaching. What these different definitions of didactics have in common is the fact that they consider teaching to be the object of didactics (Kansanen 1990: 108–109), which can be explained if we think of the word's etymology. Didactics is drawn from the Greek verb *didáskein* (*διδασκειν*), which means 'teaching, presenting, clarifying'. The term *didaktiké téchne* (*διδασκαλική τέχνη*; *art of teaching*) refers to the praxis of teaching, and a didactician, *διδ(σ)καλος*; *διδασκαλος*, used to teach young adults (Hamilton 1999) while very often being himself an actor or a poet, training other actors.

The dilemma of didactics relates to the various educational traditions and different terminology used in different language areas. In the German and Scandinavian educational sciences, didactics is a generally-used concept. Finnish didactics, which was called 'opetusoppi'

(study of teaching) until the 1970s, has traditionally been influenced by the German tradition and its terminology¹. In the Anglo-American language world, on the other hand, 'didactics' retains little of its Scandinavian meaning, and it often includes negative or pejorative connotations. The content of Finnish didactics can be better—albeit partly only—related to the Anglo-American world in the educational tendencies that focus on *curriculum* and *teaching methods*. Another corresponding concept is pedagogy. (Hamilton 1999; Watkins and Mortimore 1999; Kansanen 2004: 81.) As a summary, we can argue that in the German tradition, didactics is associated with theory (Kansanen 2004: 81), while in the Anglo-American tradition, didactics is rooted in educational psychology, which is characterised by empiricist emphases. At present, the Finnish educational sciences—or the Finnish applied sciences of education, as they are often called—have approached more and more English-language educational research, which has confused the way didactics used to be defined based on the German educational tradition.

Didactics vs. Pedagogy

When defining the concept of didactics, we must also pay attention to its relationship with pedagogy. Etymologically, pedagogy comes from Latin and Greek, in which a pedagogue refers to a servant or a man who guards and supervises a child (Watkins and Mortimore 1999). The Latin word *paedagogus* explicitly refers to a slave who looked after and supervised a child or a boy at home, but also accompanied him to school and from school. In ancient Greece, pedagogues took care of the education of pre-puberty-aged boys (Hamilton 1999). The concept of pedagogy is also problematic for two reasons. First, its meaning has changed over time and, second, it implies different things in different language areas. For instance, the concept of pedagogy has been used more frequently in German-language and Scandinavian literature than in the Anglo-American world, where it has not had an established meaning (Watkins and Mortimore 1999).

It must be noted, though, that the concept of pedagogy has increasingly been adopted in the Anglo-American educational parlance since the 1970s. For instance, in the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), according to Hamilton (1999), the use of pedagogy increased fivefold from 1970 until 1997. In fact, Hamilton (1999) finds it to be a pedagogical paradox that once Anglo-American educational literature re-introduced the concept of pedagogy, it has jeopardised the trans-Atlantic dialogue. Hamilton goes on to argue that contemporary Anglo-American pedagogical discourse is very close to continental European didactic discourse, the two being distinguished only through terminology. Likewise, Kroksmark (1995) considers the concept of *pedagogy* to be contentwise very similar to the concept of *teaching*, and therefore not far from the continental European concept of *didaktik* or *science of teaching*. The continental European terminology defines

pedagogy in a more extensive fashion, as it refers to both education and teaching (Kroksmark 1995), though education is more underscored. In the Finnish tradition, pedagogy refers to research on education. At the moment, the term pedagogy is understood very widely and used, among other things, as a synonym for the whole science, in other words, for educational sciences (applied sciences of education) or for study of education and/or teaching (Hirsjärvi 1982).

As a synonym for study of teaching (*opetusoppi*), pedagogy and didactics are parallel concepts. Kansanen (1999; 2003) expands the concept of pedagogy by arguing that it also includes content, context, actors, goals and it is usually guided by the curriculum. According to Kansanen, pedagogy means constant decision making regarding teaching, which calls for pedagogical thinking from the teacher.

The definition of didactics also contains education (*kasvatus*), though teaching (*opetus*) is emphasised more. As Uljens (1997: 51) notes, education consists of all conscious activities that are likely to influence other individuals' competence, knowledge, personality and value world, and thus teaching can be considered as part of education. (Cf. Table 1.)

The terminological differences between the different language areas are related to the cultural differences caused by historical societal development. 'Why No Pedagogy in England?' is a question posed by Simon (1981; cf. Hamilton 1999). He defined pedagogy à la Herbart as a 'science of teaching' and answered his own question by referring to 19th–20th-century English ideological conceptions of a human having a predestined mental capacity and social containment, which he believed precluded the creation and dissemination of a developmental science of teaching. Hinchcliffe (2001) wonders why normative pedagogy or didactics in the United States has traditionally been regarded as inferior to education and to the descriptive educational sciences. He observes that, in his opinion, pedagogy includes more instrumental value, while education has more value on its own ('pedagogy views learning instrumentally, whereas education views learning for its own sake'). Hamilton (1999) then asks why England has no didactics. He refers to the negative connotations of didactics for Anglo-American educationalists, because didactics is embedded in dogma and dullness, the passifying influence of teaching, which can be traced back to Ratke's (1571–1635) *Didaktik*, in which the student was to stand still and listen.

Table 1. A Summary of the Main Interpretations of Didactics and Pedagogy (Tella and Harjanne 2004a: 29).

	German	Anglo-American	Finnish
Didactics	Related to theory	Not used; instead, <i>curriculum</i> , <i>teaching methods</i> , <i>pedagogy</i> ; related to educational psychology; focusing on empiricism	<i>opetusoppi</i> (study of teaching) (normative), <i>opetustiede</i> (science of teaching) (descriptive); emphasis on teaching, in addition to education
Pedagogy	Education and teaching	No established meaning; since the 1970s, more generally accepted; close to the European concept of didactics	<i>kasvatustiede</i> (educational sciences), system(at)ic study of education and/or teaching; emphasis on education, in addition to teaching

Foreign Language Didactics as the Professional Scientific Background for Language Teachers

Didactics is regarded in Finland as the professional and scientific basis for the teaching profession (Kansanen 1990: 17). In the same way, we argue that foreign language education can serve well as the professional scientific background for language teachers. Didactics is divided into two dimensions: descriptive and normative. Uljens (1997) contends that as a normative study of teaching (*normatiivinen opetusoppi*), didactics relates both to giving teaching instructions and to the value-boundness drawn from the aims and goals of the curriculum. As a descriptive science of teaching (*deskriptiivinen opetustiede*), didactics refers to research on teaching. It must be noted, however, that descriptive didactics is not free from normativity, which concerns the axiological issues beyond the scientific theory, such as the knowledge interest represented by theory. (Uljens 1997: 52.)

The educational sciences have emerged from the need to study the institutional school, as Kansanen (2004: 83) notes. The key content of the notion of didactics covers the central area of educational sciences, which is not even undermined by the varying use of the concept itself. Didactics is often referred to as general didactics or subject didactics, even though it is also true to say that it is often divided into 'sub-didactics' based on educational or training levels, such as adult didactics. Subject didactics is also represented by language didactics. On the one hand, this relates to the subject content of linguistics and, in particular, to the thematics of applied linguistics, and on the other, to didactics, thus showing, for its part, the multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary field of educational sciences and their different profiles.

Multidisciplinary Links of Language Didactics

Most Finnish teacher education was upgraded from teachers colleges and seminars into universities in 1974. Together with the new faculties of education and the departments of teacher education, the concept of

subject didactics was strengthened, as most universities established subject-didactic teaching posts, such as associate professorships of and lecturers in foreign language didactics. In the first language didactic manual, Leino (1979) defined language didactics as ‘part of educational sciences, whose task it is to give procedural instructions regarding the design and implementation of language curricula’ (1979: 16). Leino’s definition can be said to follow normative didactics, though it was also linked to various fields of science, which can still be seen as central to language didactics.



Figure 1. Language Didactics and Its Contact Sciences (Leino 1979: 16).²

Another example of the ways language didactics has earlier been structured is represented in the model proposed by Laihiala-Kankainen (1993).

tics as a science and a theory of teaching and learning under any circumstances and in any form. All these definitions emphasise the importance of teaching and learning. A slightly different emphasis can be seen in Lund's (2003) definition, in which teaching subjects (*oppia-ineet*) are important, because through them, knowledge construction is made visible. The definition formulated by Lund (2003) places two issues in a key position: the subject didactic perspective in general and social practices in particular: didactics refers there to a social practice in which learners, teachers and artefacts are configured around a knowledge domain, and in which knowledge building is made visible by grouping knowledge into educational subjects (Lund 2003).

Nevertheless, in our present article, we will refer to Uljens (1997: 52), who further specifies and enlarges the definition of didactics. According to Uljens (1997), didactics is the science of the teaching–studying–learning process, and thus it can also be seen as a theoretical framework for studying this process. What is noteworthy in this definition is the role of studying, which is an integral component of the teaching context. In harmony with Uljens's (1997) definition of didactics, Tella (2002b) grasps the extensive meaning of didactics, deeply comprehending the teaching–studying–learning process in a continental European sense. According to Tella (2002b), didactics is (1) a domain of science, which studies teaching; (2) a science and a study whose target is teaching, studying and learning, and (3) a doctrine which looks for teaching, studying and learning practices in order to achieve the set learning aims and goals by means of teaching and studying. For these purposes, didactics investigates and develops, among other things, the aims, content matter and working practices of the teaching–studying–learning process. In addition, didactics analyses the different stages of this process, in light of different language learning and acquisition theories, and studying and learning strategies. The key idea of didactics is therefore that teaching, studying and learning form an integral entity, in which each of the three components supports each other. (Tella 2002b.) In line with Uljens's definition (1997), we understand language didactics as a subject-didactic area of educational sciences, in which research is conducted on the teaching–studying–learning process of foreign languages and in which studying a foreign language is equal—not superior or inferior—to teaching and learning this language (cf. Harjanne 2003a; 2003b).

The Teaching–Studying–Learning Process of a Foreign Language

The widened concept of language didactics covers the whole pedagogical process concerning foreign language teaching, studying and learning. The theory of didactics offers, according to Uljens (1997), an instrument to describe, analyse and reflect on the various dimensions of pedagogical reality, which helps us to better understand teaching practices. Uljens remarks that the teaching theory should recognise more problems than just the one linked to learning, in order to be valid

in the pedagogical reality of the school system. In other words, learning theory is too narrow an approach to describe and to try to understand the didactic teaching process. (Uljens 1997: 49–55.) Koskenniemi (1978: 71) is of the opinion that in didactics, one should be more interested in how the teacher gets the learner to learn than in how the learner learns. We argue that in didactics, we should be more keen on how the teachers get the student to study how to learn than on how learning takes place in a chemical or neurological process. To our way of thinking, the most crucial areas of language didactic research become foreign language teaching and foreign language studying. This view of ours is also underpinned by Jussila's claim (1999: 32) that didactic research becomes biased if one leaves teaching unnoticed while concentrating on learning only.

In fact, many contemporary conceptions of didactics emphasise the three components Uljens raised: teaching, studying and learning. Consequently, foreign language didactics should not be seen as opposing teaching and learning; rather, it aims at taking into consideration, understanding and appreciating all three components.

This perspective drawn from the widened concept of language didactics contributes beneficially to foreign language teaching. This question reflects a considerable change in perspective when compared to earlier foreign language teaching. Until the 1980s, there was an explicit and almost exclusive emphasis on teaching, which was expected to cover learning, at least implicitly. Since the early 1990s, reinforced learning psychology helped shift the focus predominantly to learning.

One feature that characterises the didactic teaching–studying–learning process is purposiveness, which is usually expressed as intentionality, especially in psychology. We prefer purposiveness as a didactic construct, as it is more directly connected to purposes, which again are in the heart of didactics as we envision it. For instance, teaching, according to the definition put forth by Lahdes (1997), is interaction based on educational aims and goals between the teacher and her students, with a purpose to create and facilitate the student's prerequisites to achieve the set learning targets. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind, as does Prabhu (1999: 53), for instance, that teaching can promote learning, but we cannot expect that teaching a thing automatically leads to learning it. What follows then is that through teaching a foreign language, we cannot guarantee without a reasonable doubt that the students will study or learn the language. Even so, teaching is and will remain the central instrument to direct the student's study processes.

Purposiveness is an essential feature of studying foreign languages. As Yrjönsuuri and Yrjönsuuri (1994) put it, a student's studying is guided by a conscious purpose to learn something. Studying a foreign language does not necessarily imply that a certain piece of knowledge or a certain skill being aimed at will be achieved or mas-

tered. When we examine learning from the didactic point of view, we must underline the fact that learning, as a process of learning, as well as the outcome of learning, is an unconscious event within the head of the learner, and therefore it is not consciously supervisable or controllable from outside (e.g., Kansanen 1993: 56; Uljens 1997: 37–39; Uusikylä and Atjonen 2000: 132).

Alongside the strengthening of constructivism, especially in the 1990s, the terms ‘learning’, ‘learner’ and ‘learning environment’ have gained ground in foreign language contexts and in general educational terminology. This has also evoked some criticism (e.g., Kansanen 1996; Uljens 1997; Tella 1998; Uusikylä and Atjonen 2000), because these terms are often used to denote something that does not correspond to their conceptual meaning. They are often used—and this is our criticism as well—when, *ipso facto*, one means ‘studying’, ‘student’ and ‘study environment’. Studying and learning are thus two completely different activities. Kansanen (1996: 123) states, very aptly, that we should not use the term ‘learning’, when in fact we talk about studying. Contrary to the constructivist presupposition, the student’s activity focusses rather on studying than on learning, which is a byproduct of studying (Puolimatka 2002: 98). The difference between learning and studying is well depicted by Y. Yrjönsuuri (2000: 155–156), who states that human beings can promote their own learning through their own activities, but they cannot exactly decide how much or how well they will learn and they will certainly not always know what they have learnt.

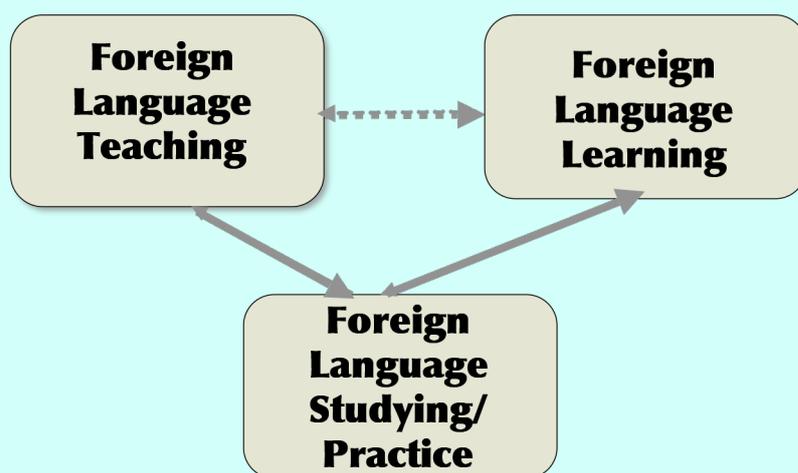


Figure 3. The Foreign Language Didactic Teaching–Studying–Learning Process (in the spirit of Uljens 1997; cf. Harjanne 2003a.)

We fully agree with Yrjönsuuri (2000: 156) concerning the fact that ‘it is difficult to understand how such different concepts as learning and studying are repeatedly mixed up with each other’. As a conclusion, one cannot oneself—nor can anybody else—decide when foreign language learning will take place. Neither can this process be controlled.

In short, the foreign language teaching and studying process aims at learning a foreign language, but it cannot guarantee that the target language will be learnt (Figure 3).

Admittedly, one *can* learn a foreign language directly as a consequence of the teaching process without further study and also as a result of studying without any teaching. A foreign language can also be learnt without purposive, target-oriented teaching or studying, which often takes place in the context of different hobbies that use foreign languages. Still, as a conclusion, the didactic teaching–studying–learning process emphasises foreign language teaching and studying, as these activities can be affected and they are controllable. This emphasis opens up a different perspective to foreign language teaching, and is, in our opinion, particularly worthwhile noticing and reflecting upon (cf., Harjanne 2004a; 2006).

The Complex Teaching Reality of a Foreign Language

The widened concept of school didactics is well explicated in the school didactic model by Uljens (1997), whose focus is on the teaching–studying–learning process and whose aim is to help to understand this pedagogical process and the complex teaching reality connected to it. The pedagogical reality is represented in the model by the different forms and aspects of pedagogical activity (Figure 4) and by the levels of curriculum, school, teacher and student. The forms of pedagogical activity consist of planning, teaching and evaluation or evaluative reflection, while teaching covers the whole teaching–studying–learning process. All pedagogical activity in Uljens’s school didactic model (1997) is characterised by intentionality, which contains the cycle of pre-understanding, intention (aim, target), activity and reflection. Furthermore, planning, implementing and evaluating the teaching of a foreign language must be reflected on, so that we could understand their pedagogical appropriateness, which again is conducive to the subsequent intentions (cf. Harjanne 2004a).

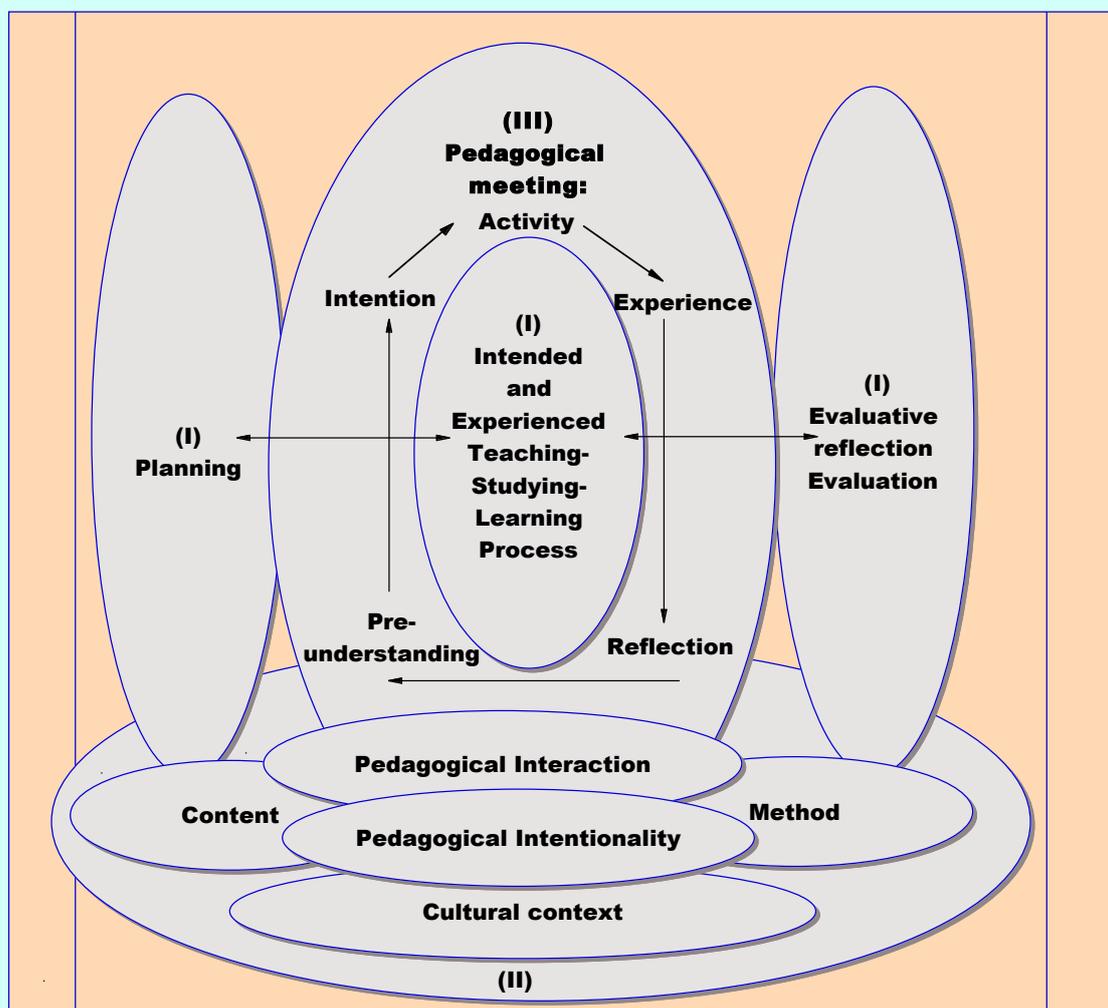
The school didactic model proposed by Uljens (1997) differentiates between the intended teaching–studying–learning –process (the teacher’s preparatory planning and situated planning) and the experienced or implemented TSL process; thus, the two facets of teaching reality are taken into account. This whole pedagogical process is mirrored against the backdrop of the pedagogical meeting, which means that the intentions, activities, experiences and reflections by both teachers and students are encountered on a cyclic and interactive basis. (Uljens 1997: 65, 75–79.) In general, a didactic teaching environment is typified by actionality which embraces the teacher’s roles and her work image (Tella 2001: 27, 53) as well as the student’s roles and work image (cf. Harjanne 2004b). The context embedded in this teaching process is according to Kansanen (2003: 221–222), social,

mental, physical and, above all, pedagogical. This context, admittedly, is also very often and to a high extent affective.

As Uljens (1997) points out, understanding the didactic teaching–studying–learning process calls for consideration of all relevant issues embedded in the pedagogical process (Figure 4). He divides the essential dimensions of the teaching process into five aspects, which are intentionality, context, interaction, content and methods (Uljens 1997: 23–27). Intentionality—or purposiveness, as we call it elsewhere in this article, relates closely and essentially to all pedagogical activity. In fact, activity cannot be considered pedagogical if it is not intentional or purposive. The complexity of pedagogical reality is always increased by the fact that both the teacher and the student enter the teaching–studying–learning context with certain aims and goals, which might also include non-intentionality or non-purposiveness, and they (re)act in that context as guided by those aims. Uljens (1997) is right in supposing that teaching reality might also suffer from the conflict between intentions, because what the teacher and the student strive at might not be in harmony with each other. The teacher’s pedagogical purposiveness is usually guided by her conceptions of human beings, knowledge and learning, as well as her world of values (her axiological worldview), though she might not be explicitly aware of that. (Uljens 1997: 40, 60.) The student’s purposiveness, too, is related to his relatively unclearly-recognised conceptions. In addition, the student’s and the teacher’s purposiveness in a teaching context are directed by their personality factors and the conceptions of the foreign language and the foreign language teaching–studying–learning process based on prior knowledge and prior experiences, as well as their pre-understanding rooted in their life histories.

Another central aspect related to this foreign language teaching–studying–learning process is the context. A pedagogical process is always tied to time, place and some cultural context (Uljens 1997). Certain contexts of the foreign language teaching–studying–learning process are, among other things, society, school, classroom and the curriculum. The students represent the local cultural context and their home background, and they bring these contexts with them into the classroom. Values belonging to purposive, intentional teaching as well as to the roles of the teachers and the students are culturally-bound as well. The cultural context is thus a noticeable mediator in the pedagogical process, as it is when interacting with all the other aspects of pedagogical activity. (Uljens 1997: 25–26, 83–87.) Our view is that the model created by Uljens can be situated very much in a socio-cultural context, which is worth noticing from the viewpoint of language didactics, for it also enriches foreign language teaching in general. We would also like to point out that the classroom culture represented by the foreign language teacher can seem strange to the students, which can affect them negatively and bring about defiance, repression and

withdrawal. As for the teacher, traditional classroom-based frontal teaching, especially foreign language teaching, has developed so as to cover an increasing number of diverging virtual and mobile environments as a teaching space. The teacher might find it hard to accept these environments, among which she does not necessarily feel at ease, though these and similar technologically-rich environments might



be very familiar to the students (e.g., Tella 2002a).

Figure 4. The forms (I) and aspects (II) of pedagogical activity and the pedagogical meeting (III) in the framework of the didactic teaching-studying-learning process. (Based on Uljens' [1997, p. 65] reflective model of school didactics; Harjanne 2003a, p. 433; modified and visualised by P. Harjanne.)

Uljens's school didactic model (1997) also includes a number of other aspects of pedagogical activity, namely pedagogical interaction, content and method. In pedagogical reality, the interaction between the

teacher and the students is always asymmetrical; the student's status and role always differ from those of the teacher. The curriculum is the starting point when content matter is being selected. This selection is also influenced by the teacher's own conceptions of epistemology, ontology and learning theories. An important question should also deal with the ways the reality that exists outside the school itself is manifested in the classroom. The teaching method consists of actions needed to support an individual's study processes and learning. (Uljens 1997: 70–74, 78–79.) From the point of view of communicative language teaching, certain other issues are not to be neglected. These concern, among other things, the asymmetry of teacher–student interaction.

As a summary, the widened concept of language didactics comprises the complex and multifaceted teaching reality of the foreign language in terms of the didactic foreign language teaching–studying–learning process, with a special view to planning, implementation and reflective evaluation of all the issues in question. As stated earlier, this foreign language didactic process consists essentially of purposiveness, context, interaction, content and method. It is therefore important to realise that these aspects of pedagogical activity interact constantly with each other.

Foreign Language Didactics as a Transdisciplinary Science

Research Components and Other Considerations in Foreign Language Didactics

To our way of thinking, the nature of foreign language didactics should be understood very broadly and in a transdisciplinary way. Foreign language didactics conducts transdisciplinary research on foreign and second language teaching, while taking into account cross-cultural, dialogic communication. We have moved onwards from the interpretation of foreign language didactics by Leino (1979) as a science giving advice on curriculum development. As an example, this is how Tella described foreign language didactics in the mid-1990s:

The central research and observation components of foreign language didactics include foreign language teaching and studying and, on the other hand, aspects related to methods, teaching practices, curricula and instructional contents (Tella 1994: 136–137).

Now, 12 years later, it is necessary to go even further when interpreting foreign language didactics. At the moment, foreign language didactics includes comparative, applied and developmental research based on various language learning and acquisition theories. We must, however, also bear in mind that our conceptions have strongly expanded regarding foreign language proper, language proficiency and language teaching in general. We also argue that it is time to move from multi-,

inter- and cross-disciplinary research towards transdisciplinary research, which crosses various boundaries between different sciences and domains of knowledge. The broadened conception of language also implies a novel, dynamic relation to extensive societal structures. In this article we cannot deal in detail with all perspectives of this argument, but we try to give a few examples. When speaking of theories we use the relatively well-established notion of 'learning theory and acquisition theory', though we realise that the question very often is about considerations and concerns with the studying component, in the same way as we have done earlier in this article.

The Widened Conception of Foreign Language, Language Proficiency, and Language Teaching

In foreign language didactics, we must take into consideration all those changes that have taken place in our conception of foreign language⁴. In the same way, changes have taken place in conceptions of language proficiency and language studying (cf. Harjanne 2004b). These changes are important to foreign language didactics as it serves as a scientific basis for language teaching, which, at its best, lead to many-sided and empowering language proficiency (language proficiency as empowering mediator; Tella 1999).

As late as the 1980s, foreign languages were mostly seen as instrumental subjects. At that time, it was thought that they only had an instrumental value, while the real values were to be found elsewhere. This narrow and, in the light of contemporary knowledge, biased conception started to widen in the 1990s. One factor that partially contributed to this change was that language teaching was increasingly influenced by sociological and societal points of view and the socio-cultural perspective about the growth of human beings' mental capital. At first, the instrumental value of languages as expanded to cover aspects of a skills subject, as Tella (1994) suggested, for instance:

Foreign languages must be considered both skills and instrumental subjects. When we speak of language proficiency, the language must be analysed from the viewpoint of a skills subject. Then a many-sided language and communication proficiency is emphasised, both written and oral. When we speak of the instrumental value or utility of languages, then we underline the importance of languages as medium. As a medium (instrumental) subject, languages are used to present language users' own standpoints, opinions as well as feelings and expression of will, and then to transmit different educational contents. We can even argue that speaking of the instrumental value only is to restrict the reality, because language proficiency builds the basis for an individual's creative self-expression and even for the mastery of his or her life. Language is also communication and foreign language teaching helps transfer language and culture via different communication channels and modes (Tella 1994: 137)

The present conception is even broader. In our opinion, this has been covered well in the National Framework Curriculum (LOPS 2003), which refers to foreign languages at senior secondary school level as skills subjects, knowledge subjects and cultural subjects. In basic education (POPS 2004), foreign languages are seen from a slightly more narrow perspective, namely as skills subjects and cultural subjects. As a comparison, we would like to state that mother tongue and literature are regarded in basic education as a life-mastery subject as well as a central knowledge, skills, cultural and art subject (POPS 2004).

Tella (1999) has contended that speaking of foreign languages only as medium or instrumental subjects is a far too narrow and biased position and this limits the internal logic and potentiality of foreign languages. He has argued that in addition to the instrumental use function, languages should also be regarded as intellectual partners, as creators and maintainers of new studying, learning, working and communication contexts, and at their best, as empowering mediators that have a multiple impact on human beings' whole personalities (cf. Tella 1999).

It is also important to notice that, in the same way as in conceptions of interpreting foreign language didactics and conceptions of language, foreign language teaching itself has, during the past few decades, experienced a strong shift from an inflexible approach that could be described as having no methodical alternatives, towards an eclectic but flexible approach that makes it possible to apply several different methods. As one key example, we could present the shift from drill methodology to communicative language teaching (CLT). In fact, in Finnish language teaching, we observe quite a few methodical options and emphases.

Another example could be the shift from the notion of medium to the notion of mediation (e.g., Tella 2004). The notion of medium, very strong up to the emergence of communicative language teaching in the early 1980s, emphasised linguistically-coded messages, language as a code, and the model focused on the traditional language structure. Teaching therefore emphasised the structural, syntactic and semantic features of language as dominant. The teacher's job was seen to transmit information, and the language learner was seen as a passive recipient of that information. Underscoring mediation, on the other hand, has led to reflections on how and why the language is used in communication, and for what purposes. At the same time, other features of language have come to the fore: the pragmatic, functional and communicative-strategic uses of language, especially in problem-solving situations, as well as in the deeper understanding of other people and other cultures. This is also closely related to the notion of respecting otherness—or more and more often, multiplicity. From the point of view of methods, the ever-increasing emphasis on mediation can be characterised as the emergence of a critical, eclectic approach.

All this has helped to change the notion and demands of language proficiency. It is beyond the scope of this article to analyse the shifts that foreign language didactics and language teaching have undergone for instance as far as communicative competence is concerned. Rather, we present a few generalised viewpoints, which we believe will help to understand current emphases (cf., however, e.g., CEF 2001; Kramersch 2002; Tella 2004). Our comments focus on communication as well as on the demands that both teachers and students are likely to experience.

Table 2. Recent Emphases in Foreign Language Didactics, Language Proficiency, Language Teaching, Learning and Acquisition Theories, and Language vs. Society (Tella and Harjanne 2004a: 46; widened; Tella and Harjanne 2004b).

Subject-Didactic Emphasis	TEACHING–Learning	Teaching–LEARNING	TEACHING–STUDYING–LEARNING (TSL)
<i>Language</i>	Target of teaching; language as a code	An instrumental subject; a skills subject	A skills, knowledge and cultural subject; an empowering mediator
<i>Language Proficiency</i>	Language knowledge; grammatical language competence	Pragmatic, functional, task-based and interactional language proficiency	Communicative, transcultural language proficiency
<i>Language Teaching</i>	Grammar–Translation	‘Closed methods’, e.g., audio-lingualism; drill methodology	A communicative, critical, methodically eclectic approach; language education
<i>Language learning & acquisition theories</i>	Nativist	Environmentalism & interactionist	Ecological; socio-cultural
<i>Language vs. Society</i>	A closed system; a separate ‘island’ (e.g., within a school)	Part of an increasingly growing international culture	Broad societal structures; cultural capital; national identity

According to contemporary foreign language didactics, communication is characterised by authenticity, genuineness, interaction taking place in real time, dialogism and, to some extent, mediation through technology, which is due in part to the educational use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Besides, communication could be typified as pragmatic and, more and more frequently, as taking into account intercultural or transcultural language proficiency, that is, crossing different cultural boundaries when exchanging ideas and experiences with people from near and afar. Oral proficiency occupies a central field, but at the same time, we must bear in mind that the ultimate goal is multi-faceted language proficiency. This consists of both

oral and written expression, receptive listening and reading skills, in a way that these facets also interact and intertwine in the context of using language in real life situations.

If we wish to characterise a modern language learner, we might refer to certain features that can be considered as being criteria for modern foreign language didactics: autonomous learning, self-directedness, initiative taking, responsibility assuming, purposiveness or target orientation, collaboration and communalism, as well as shared, distributed or combined expertise.

The primary aim of this chapter has been to exemplify certain changes and recent emphases that we believe to be important in modern foreign language didactics (Table 2). Unfortunately, the scope of this article has not allowed us to enlarge or deepen the multiple complexity of foreign language didactics to the extent we would have wished. Still, we hope that our thoughts and reflections will serve as fruitful starting points for language teachers and language teacher educators who work in similar problem areas.

Language teachers are bound to face many a paradox. For instance, how can teachers, if we may quote a well-known phrase, move from a 'sage on the stage' to a 'guide on the side', that is, how can they take into adequate consideration the developing conceptions of human beings, knowledge and learning, and the pressures that are targeted towards the role of a language teacher. In practical work, we are sure, language teachers are made aware of other paradoxes, such as 'language is best "taught", when it is used in communicatively-meaningful situations, not by teaching code-based rules, that is, structures which are best adopted and acquired as "byproducts"'. A well-known paradox, dating from Kant's philosophy, is the fact that the pedagogical relation between teacher and student cannot be constant, as it is the teacher's task to help the learner grow more autonomous gradually.

We argue that a key challenge in foreign language didactics is how all the above-mentioned changes and emphases can be taken into consideration in a way which prevents foreign language didactics from becoming fragmentary or unstructured, but rather helps it to structure and analyse the widened areas of knowledge and science as an integral part of didactics, educational and behavioural sciences.

Language Learning and Language Acquisition Theories

Language learning and language acquisition theories belong logically to the theoretical knowledge needed in foreign language didactics. These theories are a natural sounding board in language teaching and in different teaching and studying practices. Knowing the theories of language learning and language acquisition also ameliorates comprehension of the didactic teaching–studying–learning process.

The language learning and acquisition theories can be divided into four main categories: (1) nativist theories; (2) environmentalist theo-

ries; (3) interactionist theories, and (4) ecological theories. Our division is based on Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991: 220–298), whose classification we have broadened by including ecological theories, especially Lantolf's (2000) and Vygotsky's (1978) thinking. In this connection, we will not differentiate between language learning and language acquisition, though in certain theories, their respective role varies. Since there are dozens of theories around, classifying them properly is made difficult by, among other things, the subtle borders between theory, model and paradigm.

(1) The nativist theories presuppose that human beings have an innate (genetic) biological endowment that makes learning possible. In some cases, such as in Chomsky's Universal Grammar, this endowment is regarded as language-specific (LAD = language acquisition device). This category also includes Krashen's monitor theory, developed in 1978–1985, with its five main hypotheses.

(2) The environmentalist theories hold that an organism's nurture, or experience, is more important for development than its nature, or innate contributions. Good examples of this there are behaviourism and audiolingualism. One of the earlier theories is Schumann's (1978) pidginisation hypothesis and acculturation model from the 1970s. Schumann's thinking, together with the theory's psychological and social distance criteria, would clearly be valuable for today's foreign language didactics as well, especially when we speak of transcultural communication and cultural encounters in general. Moreover, the first stages of second language acquisition (SLA) are often very close to the use of mixed pidginised languages, though at the individual level.

(3) The interactionist theories invoke both innate and environmental factors to explain language, leading to a greater power of explanation, but calling for extra factors, variables, causes, processes and so on by the researcher. Beyond the above general characteristic, the interactionist theories of SLA differ greatly from one another.

(4) The ecological theories can be seen as part of the environmentalist theories or, as we do here, they can be regarded as a new theory category, which is most interesting from the point of view of foreign language didactics. The fundamental idea of this theory—the ecological approach to cognition, learning and language—is very much grounded in the thoughts of Vygotsky, Bakhtin, Peirce and Dewey (e.g., van Lier 2000). The ecological theories have a lot in common with socio-culturalism and the socio-cultural perspective. For instance, van Lier (2000) regards them in fact as manifestations of the same idea. In these theories, not all cognition or learning can be explained in terms of processes that go on inside the head (vs. learning takes place in the brain, by means of computational mechanisms that process information received by the senses). Here the perceptual and social activity of the learner, and particularly the verbal and nonverbal interaction in which the learner engages, are central to an understanding of

learning; they do not just facilitate learning; they *are* learning in a fundamental way in these theories.

One of the key constructs for ecological theories is emergence, meaning that at every level of development, properties emerge that cannot be reduced to those of prior levels. According to these theories, a foreign language user is like an animal in the jungle; s/he must be able to come to grips with it so that its potential or affordances can be exploited and utilised in a meaningful and multifaceted way. The second, central concept of affordance will be discussed later in this article.

When considering language learning and language acquisition theories, a few basic ideas must be borne in mind. First, the concept of theory in itself is a target of constant research. In order to be a theory, any theoretical ideational framework or model must be universally and always valid; it must be something that can be tested and it must be open to the analysis and critique of the science community. Second, a theory must always lead to more than one method. And these methods must lead to various teaching and studying practices, which are often based on experience and practical data. Just as C. Wright Mills once put it, 'Theory without data is empty, but data without theory are blind' (cited by Eriksen 2004: 43). For foreign language didactics as well, we can well argue that a good theory is close to good practice and that good practice very often is the best possible theory.

Multi-, Inter-, Cross- and Transdisciplinary Research Approaches

We are accustomed to using the prefixes multi- in some terms, and cross- or inter- in others, such as when we speak of multiculturalism, intercultural sensitivity, intercultural or crosscultural communication. We also referred above to two multidisciplinary approaches to foreign language didactics (figures 1 and 2). How are these prefixes different from one another and how are they connected to our topic? Let us try to explain and at the same time, justify why we believe it is important to recognise certain differences between multi-, inter-, cross- and trans-, sometimes informally referred to as MICT research (figure 5)⁵. (Partly based on Tella 2005; cf. also Ruokamo and Tella 2005a; 2005b.)



Figure 5. Multi-, inter-, cross- and transdisciplinary research approaches (Tella 2005).

To our way of thinking, there is a certain parallelism between what we called a shift from a closed-system approach towards more open and flexible systems and the shift from multi-, via inter- and cross- to transdisciplinarity. By analysing the differences, we are likely to understand better certain features embedded in interaction and communication between the members of different teams. Let's analyse these prefixes further in order to differentiate between the four of them.

Multidisciplinary research interlocks with the parallel, purposive work of many different disciplines and arts. Multidisciplinary teams do not necessarily work in close collaboration, but they take advantage of one another's points of view. The experts in multidisciplinary teams represent several disciplines, but they usually work rather independently of each other. This may lead to a situation, in which the focus of research is covered from various angles of observation, but an integrated or interactive whole might not necessarily be achieved in an ideal way.

Interdisciplinary research makes it a point to solve a problem using the methods of two or more disciplines and arts or concepts within one or more subject matters. Interdisciplinary teams are always composed of experts from several disciplines. These kinds of teams work in close contact with one another, and they compare thinking and deductions systematically and regularly. Communication between interdisciplinary teams and team members is usually characterised by the frequent use of tools, methods and instruments that tend to en-

courage information sharing and the discussing of individual results. In interdisciplinary teams, each member is expected to have his or her own area of responsibility, which at its best guarantees that the whole problem area is usually covered better than in multidisciplinary teams.

Cross-disciplinary research brings together different kinds of disciplines and learning, often including comprehensive research and reporting skills, presentation and performance skills. This type of research usually implies investigation that 'crosses' two or more disciplines in a way that gives the researcher or the team members a chance to see something of the 'other side'. How much each of the team members or any of the teams profit from cross-disciplinarity, depends very much on the commitment given to the task to be shared. At its worst, a cross-disciplinary encounter is a collision; at its best, a fruitful combination of expertise from various fields of science.

Transdisciplinary research aims consciously to exceed the limits of many different disciplines or arts in a purposive manner in terms of research methodologies, themes, and the research teams themselves. In their communication, interaction and other activities, transdisciplinary teams especially attempt to ensure that the different fields of science and art and their representatives interact synergetically all the time. This interactivity and integration of action are best fulfilled through communal and shared interaction. Transdisciplinary teams often include experts from neighbouring fields of science or domains of knowledge, as well as laypersons, such as parents. This factor is likely to affect the sharing of roles somewhat differently from interdisciplinary teams, for instance. Briefly, we argue that in inter- and transdisciplinary teams, their members are more closely interdependent than in multidisciplinary teams, in which individual members are more autonomous. Therefore, especially in transdisciplinary teams, the single members must really commit themselves to the aims and goals of the teams, and to help and support one another on a regular basis.

It seems that transdisciplinarity may easily provide language teachers and teacher educators with a versatile, multi-faceted approach to collaborative or communal cooperation between various actors, such as colleagues, students, parents, outside experts, and school personnel. To us, transdisciplinarity is something that should be seriously considered as one dimension that is likely to enrich foreign language didactics as well as foreign language teaching.

We would now like to combine this issue of transdisciplinarity with one special and salient feature of an ecological theory, that is, the notion of affordance. We are of the opinion that transdisciplinarity naturally leads to various manifestations, one of which is affordance.

Affordance

Foreign language didactics as a transdisciplinary science, together with recent conceptions of language, language proficiency, and language teaching, studying and learning, are bound to signify different things and different emphases to different people working within foreign language didactics. It is fruitful, in our opinion, to analyse this relationship from the perspective of the notion of affordance (Gibson 1979/1986). An affordance refers in the ecological psychology of Gibson (1979/1986) to the reciprocal relationship between an organism and a particular feature of its environment. It is noteworthy that according to Gibson, affordance does not refer to the actor's qualities nor to any quality of the target of action, but expressly to the relation between them. van Lier (2000) argues that affordance is a property of the environment, relevant to the perceiving organism and which affords further action, but does not cause or trigger it. Affordance thus refers to the opportunities of action which the environment provides for the perceiving and engaged individual. For instance, in a forest, one and the same leaf can offer very different affordances to various organisms depending on what they perceive and how they react. According to van Lier, in order for some property to turn into an affordance expressly depends on how an individual acts (van Lier 2000: 252). van Lier's conception of affordance emphasises, in the spirit of Gibson, the relation between an actor and an object, as well as the actor's observation and action *vis-à-vis* the object.

Norman's (1999) definition has a different focus: 'Please don't confuse affordance with perceived affordances ... Affordances reflect the possible relationships among actors and objects: they are properties of the world.' Norman also argues that affordances reflect the possible relations between actors and objects, but Norman's affordance is also the property of the object, and therefore we find it justified to contend that his view on affordance differs radically that form of van Lier.

The notion of affordance can be illustrated by various examples and metaphors. For instance, A. G. Bell's aphorism aptly refers to the affordances of the environment and to the fact of their being perceived and exploited:

When one door closes, another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the ones which open for us. (Alexander Graham Bell, inventor 1847–1922)

Bell's doors represent the feasible affordances of the environment that offer certain opportunities to act. Those who recognise these doors and act *vis-à-vis* them, that is, who open them, these doors serve as affordances.

We argue that the expanded notion of foreign language didactics as a transdisciplinary science and all the conceptions of language, language proficiency, language teaching, studying and learning associ-

ated with it can be seen as affordances which provide different language teachers and teacher educators with different opportunities to act, depending on what they regard as relevant and depending on how they then act and react to them.

Tella (2005) has further developed the concept of affordance by dividing it into dormant (latent) affordances and dominant affordances. In the area of foreign language didactics, dormant affordances refer, for instance, to the expanded conceptions of language, language proficiency, language teaching, studying and learning, which the language teacher is not yet aware of or which she is reluctant to take advantage of. Dominant affordances, on the other hand, refer to the conceptions which the language teacher is fully cognisant of and with which she has a functional relationship. Thus, dominant affordances represent the affordances in the spirit of Gibson (1979/1986) and van Lier (2000).

In the same way, we might consider the relationship between a language learner and the language as an affordance. An engaged language learner is likely to notice affordances in her linguistic environment, and she is also likely to make use of these in her use of language, as van Lier (2000: 252) points out. What exactly becomes a linguistic affordance depends on what the language learner perceives and to what she reacts. According to van Lier (2000: 253), language learning is not from an ecological perspective a process of representing linguistic objects in the brain on the basis of input received; rather, language is something we learn to use and to live with and in. van Lier exemplifies this insight with an ecological comparison, in which the knowledge of language for a human is like knowledge of the jungle for an animal. When thinking of studying and learning languages, we understand easily that the environment is full of feasible linguistic affordances, in other words, language that would provide an active and participating language learner with opportunities to study and to learn.

These linguistic affordances offered by the environment exist and are the same to all, but different individuals perceive them in differing and diverging ways in the light of their prior knowledge, advance understanding and aims. These different perceptions have a crucial impact on what each language learner sees as affordance and what affordances she will utilise when studying and using the foreign language. Therefore, it is only fair to say that there are feasible affordances which have not yet been utilised, and then they are linguistic affordances that are being actively used.

From an ecological perspective, studying and learning languages successfully very much depend on the language learner's capacity to perceive the linguistic affordances embedded in her study environment and on her ability to utilise them in her language use. A consequence of this kind of an ecological insight is, according to van Lier (2000: 253), that in language teaching, we must provide students with a rich

semiotic budget, that is, to structure the learner's activities and participation so that access is available and engagement encouraged.

Foreign Language Didactics and Language Teaching as Part of Extensive Societal Development

Our last argument is that foreign language didactics and language teaching must be thought of as part of the extensive societal development that we are facing in Western societies. One way to approach the societal challenge ahead of us is to analyse the values embedded in our school system, especially in basic education, and to reflect on the different ways foreign language didactics and language teaching can contribute to the realisation of shared social, ethical and moral values. In the national framework curriculum for basic education (POPS, 2004), the axiological foundation of basic education is defined as follows:

The underlying values of basic education are human rights, equality, democracy, natural diversity, preservation of environmental viability, and the endorsement of multiculturalism. Basic education promotes responsibility, a sense of community, and respect for the rights and freedoms of the individual.

The basis of instruction is Finnish culture, which has developed in interaction with indigenous, Nordic, and European cultures. In the instruction, special national and local attributes, the national languages, the two national churches, the Sami as an indigenous people and national minorities must be taken into consideration. The instruction must also take into account the diversification of Finnish culture through the arrival of people from other cultures. The instruction helps to support the formation of the student's own cultural identity, and his or her part in Finnish society and a globalising world. The instruction also helps to promote tolerance and intercultural understanding. (POPS 2004, chapter 2.1)

One of the fundamental tasks of basic education and upper secondary education is often not thought of sufficiently profoundly: in basic and upper secondary education, the growing youth will acquire those study habits and learning strategies that s/he will later need in lifelong and lifebroad learning. In our opinion, foreign language teaching, studying and learning play a very central role in this socialisation process.

But foreign language didactics and language teaching can and should be seen even in a broader context as part of young adults' societal development. This has been crystallised brilliantly by Byram (2003), who claims that language teaching should be understood to be in an increasing growing contact with extensive societal structures, such as national educational systems, the growth of human cultural capital—also for the benefit of national economy—national identity and the promotion of equality. All of these are components of societal interaction, which to our way of thinking, has had an important impact on foreign language education and language teaching. Likewise, we

would like to contend that foreign language education and language teaching also affect different aspects of societal interaction positively.

The relationship between foreign language education and language teaching and societal interaction can also be approached from different theoretical frameworks and then assessed through them, the relevant factors involved. As an example, we refer to Layder's research map, which he also calls a resource map for research (1993; Table 3). The five research elements included in the map are tied to history, while the analysis of any research can be focused on any research element, as long as we remember to take into account the above-level elements. Although Layder's map is primarily intended to be used 'as a way of understanding the constituent aspects of pieces of published research' (Layder 1993: 73) and to help 'in the planning and ongoing formulation of field research which has theory generation as a primary aim' (Layder 1993: 73), we are convinced that It might also serve as a good grid or a sounding board for theoretical ideas or suggestions when looking closely into those aspects with which foreign language education and language teaching can also be associated with societal progress.

Table 3. The research map (Layder 1993: 72).

	Research Element	Research Focus
HISTORY	Context	<p><i>Macro social organisation</i> Values, traditions; forms of social and economic organisation and power relations. For example, legally sanctioned forms of ownership, control and distribution; interlocking directorships, state intervention. As they are implicated in the sector below.</p>
	Setting	<p><i>Intermediate social organisation</i> Work: Industrial, military and state bureaucracies; labour markets; hospitals; social work agencies; domestic labour; penal and mental institutions. Non-work: Social organisation of leisure activities, sports and social clubs, religious and spiritual organisations.</p>
	Situated activity	<p><i>Social Activity</i> Face-to-face activity involving symbolic communication by skilled, intentional participants implicated in the above contexts and settings. Focus on emergent meanings, understandings and definitions of the situation as these affect and are affected by contexts and settings (above) and subjective dispositions of individuals (below).</p>
	Self	<p><i>Self-identity and individual's social experience</i> As these are influenced by the above sectors and as they interact with the unique psychobiography of the individual. Focus on the life-career.</p>

This map can be interpreted for instance as follows. Action geared towards oneself is primary from the point of view of language learners; its focus is the individual's self-identity and social experience. In language teaching, situations that involve language and purposive social activity play an important role. Purposive studying was described at the beginning of this article as the central component of the didactic teaching–studying–learning process. Using a foreign language is symbolic communication *par excellence*. Then the focus of the language-oriented activities are genuinely on the emergent meanings and on the social negotiation of meanings. At the level of 'setting', the didactic teaching–studying–learning process is complemented by an organisational aspect. For instance, at the level of teaching and studying practices, cooperation is enriched with collaborative and communal features. The action environment is underlined and it can be targeted towards teaching, studying, working as well as communicating. In language teaching, studying and learning situations, there is a substantive emphasis on Layder's notion of non-work, such as leisure activities, hobbies and sports. At the level of 'context', we see references to the socio-cultural view, in which the significance of culture as well as understanding several different cultures and respecting otherness and multiplicity become crucial. Layder's map also underlines the importance of values, traditions and various forms of social and economic organisation.

History, especially from the sociocultural perspective, implies not only knowing oneself and one's own background but also building further on these foundations. Many of these foundations are actually artefacts, such as language, which represent history *per se*. Anyone who does not know their background and history, is unable to think highly of the present and is certainly not capable of understanding the future. In our interpretation, in Layder's research map (1993), history is that part of the map that can be divided into various components depicting language learning developmental stages. These stages start from unscientific, 'traditional' language teaching through various developments and steps towards foreign language didactics as an autonomous and specific science and domain of knowledge. These stages then progress further towards multifaceted and versatile language teaching which can fruitfully underpin and contribute to an individual's personal growth.

From this perspective—and while taking into serious consideration all different contemporary emphases that we have analysed in this article—we firmly believe it is fair and justified to defend and recommend the use of foreign language didactics as the scientific basis of, and the necessary theoretical approach to, foreign language teaching, studying and learning, from the point of view of the individual, community and society. In this way, foreign language didactics will be an organic part of the professional teacher's scientific foundation, didactics, as well as

of the educational sciences and, more generally speaking, of the behavioural sciences.

Notes

¹ According to Kansanen (1990: 2; 2004: 78), the term 'didaktikka' is impossible to translate into English conceptually, as such an expression does not exist. However, Uljens (1997) uses a direct translation into English, didactics, in his doctoral thesis published in English in England. Tella (2002) argues that when translating Finnish-language 'didaktikka' into English, one can use the adjective 'pedagogic' (for instance, when speaking of pedagogic goal setting [*didaktiikan tavoitteenasettelu*]), which is likely to underline educational aspects. 'Didaktikka' can also be rendered into English as *research on teaching*, *teaching methods* or *the teaching–studying–learning process*. A very common translation of 'kielididaktikka' as *foreign language education* indicates that 'kielididaktikka' is considered to be close to education. (Tella, 2002b.) — In this article, we translate the Finnish language 'kielididaktikka' into the English-language *foreign language didactics*, in order to be able to differentiate between didactics, pedagogy and education more clearly.

² *Kielididaktikka* = language didactics; *kasvatustiede* = educational sciences; *didaktikka* = didactics; *opetussuunnitelmateoria* = curriculum theory; *käytännön koulutodellisuus* = practical school reality; *oppimisteoriat* = learning theories; *psykologia* = psychology; *psykolingvistiikka* = psycholinguistics; *kielitiede* = linguistics; *sociolingvistiikka* = socio-linguistics; *sosiologia* = sociology; *kasvatussosiologia* = educational sociology.

³ *Kasvatustiede* = educational sciences; *kasvatuspsykologia* = educational psychology; *psykologia* = psychology; *psykolingvistiikka* = psycho-linguistics; *kasvatuslingvistiikka* = educational linguistics; *kielenopetus ja -oppiminen* = language teaching and learning; *sosiaalipsykologia* = socio-psychology; *kielitiede* = linguistics; *kasvatussosiologia* = educational sociology; *sosiologia* = sociology; *sociolingvistiikka* = socio-linguistics.

⁴ In this article, we speak about foreign language, including the Swedish language and Finnish as a second language, with no further analysis of differences between foreign and second language.

⁵ There are other prefixes as well, of course, such as pluri- in plurilingualism, made so well known by the Common European Framework (CEF 2001). In this connection, we regard pluri- as a synonym for multi- and will not discuss it at length.

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