Learning to Integrate, Waiting to Belong

Language, Time and Uncertainty Among Newcomers in Germany

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Abstract

What happens when we require newcomers to learn a country's dominant language before they can work, study and become citizens?

At first blush, this may seem beneficial for newcomers and local communities alike. In fact, language proficiency requirements across Europe are often treated as innocuous components of broader immigration policies. However, recent scholarship in linguistic anthropology and related fields has demonstrated that such policies can, in practice, turn into significant sociocultural and economic barriers for newcomers. Understanding the impact of language requirements in the German context is particularly pressing: language learning is so central to German immigration and citizenship policy that it has become a core branch of a nationwide *'Integration Programme'*. Since 2015, Germany has granted asylum to over 1.1 million displaced people. Five years on, over 800,000 remain in Germany, most of whom are still seeking employment. How these nationwide programmes impact the everyday lived experiences and socioeconomic (im)mobility of newcomers in Germany is, however, largely underresearched.

My doctoral research has responded to these gaps through 15 months of in-depth ethnographic fieldwork within Berlin's state-funded language and integration programmes for adult newcomers. Drawing on research in social and linguistic anthropology, I demonstrate that although these programmes are designed to *accelerate* newcomers' socioeconomic incorporation, in practice they significantly *delay* their access to work, higher education and a sense of inclusion. What is more, in part because of the *slowing* effect these programmes have on their sense of progress, newcomers to Germany encounter *temporal disruptions*, which lead to acute experiences of stalling, boredom and temporal uncertainty. These findings contribute to enhancing our as yet limited understanding of the ways in which language is enmeshed in the temporal dimensions of migration and displacement, how policy-making impinges on experiences of temporal disruption, and what we can learn about newcomers' positions of (un)belonging from their experiences of time.

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I. Introduction

I went to visit Halim and his wife Anisah in the summer of 2019. I was in Berlin for a month visiting family, and took this opportunity to catch up with them over coffee in their apartment. Though my fieldwork concluded in the winter of 2018, the three of us had stayed in touch over WhatsApp and Anisah and I spoke on the phone often. I hadn't been back to Berlin in several months and was eager to see them again. Halim and Anisah and their two young children have now been in Berlin for four years. Their son, Yusef, was born here and Halim often jokingly referred to him as his "German man". I met Halim in the first German language course I observed in 2017 and soon thereafter began visiting the family in their home for lunch or at the local playground where their children liked to use the swings. Halim had studied computer science in Syria and Dubai and had had a successful 12-year career working in IT and cybersecurity prior to his arrival in Germany. He has since been working towards continuing his career in the field. Anisah has been taking German courses intermittently for the last three years, but her studies were interrupted while she was expecting Yusef, and while the family searched for a primary school for their daughter, Sofia.

Halim has always been frustrated by the pace of the language courses; wishing he could learn German faster, more efficiently and finally begin working again. During our past visits, he would tell me about some bureaucratic issue he was dealing with; something that had gone wrong, a qualification he was missing or a certificate he was still waiting for. "I am always waiting for something", he would often say. However, on this day, as we sat in their living room, sipping coffee, Halim seemed relieved that some progress was being made: after several years and many hours of German courses, he had received his B2 language certificate and was able to get his Syrian university degrees translated and recognised through the *Ausländerbehörde* (Immigration Office). Now he was eligible to enrol in a Master's programme and C1 German language course at one of Berlin's central universities.

"So, how do you feel about your German now?" I asked him in German.

"Pretty good", he replied in English. A feature of our interactions was our frequent use of both English and German resources; a style I was quite accustomed to growing up in a German-American community in Berlin and which Halim preferred when speaking to me since he was used to working in international environments where English was used often.[1]

He picked up Yusef, who had been trying to pull himself up using the coffee table for support. As he rocked Yusef back and forth on his knee, Halim added, sarcastically, "at least it's better than the German of *unsere türkischen Mitbürger* (our Turkish co-citizens)". Halim began to laugh, and, noticing my confusion, explained, "this is what my teacher told us. He said many German people called Turks *Mitbürger* (co-citizens)[2] instead of *Bürger* (citizens) because the *Mitbürger* maybe do not have enough loyalty for Germany. Even though they are Germans too!".

Halim paused for a moment to sip from the cardamom coffee he'd made for us. "And then you know what he said to us? He said we *Flüchtlinge* (refugees) are 40% less likely to pass the language course compared to other international students. Why does he call us *Flüchtlinge*? Why does it matter that we are refugees? He used the word negatively even though we are working so hard".

I was struck by what Halim said to me because it revealed so much about his experience in the integration programme and as a newcomer in Germany more broadly. Like Halim and Anisah, many newcomers to Germany are required to learn intermediate to advanced levels of German in partial fulfilment of employment, higher education, citizenship and permanent residency eligibility. So-called *Sprach-und-Integrationskurse*–language and integration courses (henceforth LICs or language and integration courses)–are state-funded language and civics knowledge courses, which are part of Germany's National Integration Plan (NIP), aiming to *sustainably integrate* newcomers. German policy

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[1] This is often referred to as *code-switching* (see e.g. Milroy 1995; Auer 1998; Gardner-Chloros 2009), however, more recent scholarship has adopted more fluid terms like *translanguaging* put forward by Garcia and Vogel (2017), whereby "speakers deploy particular features from a unitary linguistic repertoire to make meaning and to negotiate particular communicative contexts" (2017:1).

[2] It is difficult to neatly translate the sentiment behind the term *Mitbürger.* English translations such as *fellow citizens* or *co-citizens* sound more inclusive than the way in which the term is connoted in German. Popular and political discourse lays more emphasis on distinction rather than inclusion. For lack of a better translation at this stage, I use the term *co-citizen*.

discourse frames the acquisition of Standard German as a 'key' step in newcomers' socioeconomic inclusion and mobility, often portraying linguistic integration as the quickest and most effective means of ensuring employment and sociocultural belonging.

At first blush, such requirements and programmes may seem beneficial for newcomers and local communities alike. In fact, language proficiency requirements across Europe are often treated as innocuous components of broader immigration policies. Furthermore, many countries around the world maintain language proficiency requirements for citizenship and permanent residency. Indeed, many of my own interlocutors–transnational migrants and displaced persons from over 20 different countries–initially viewed the programmes they were enrolled in as major stepping stones in their pursuit of employment, financial independence and social belonging. However, as recent scholarship in linguistic anthropology and related fields has demonstrated, and as my research shows, such policies can, in practice, turn into significant sociocultural and economic barriers for newcomers: hindering their access to the labour market, delaying their sense of agency and contributing to experiences of exclusion and marginalisation (Shohamy 2006; Smith-Khan 2016; Del Percio 2018; Khan 2019). Moreover, setting language requirements for non-citizens and migrant groups runs the risk of suggesting that communities are bound together by a unified and culturally inherited national language–a view that scholars have called *ideologies of monolingualism* (Blackledge 2000; Gramling 2009, 2016). The trouble with this view, for one, is that it is not an accurate reflection of Europe in its multicultural and linguistically *superdiverse* contemporary form (Vertovec 2007; Blommaert 2013). More perniciously, building immigration policy around an implicit commitment to dominant national language(s) may privilege some ways of speaking–and thereby also some speakers–above others. Although language requirements appear common sense and practical, they place the onus on newcomers to adapt linguistically. Their failure to do so, meanwhile, is often interpreted as an inability or unwillingness to participate, resulting in a range of linguistic, social, legal and economic penalties which disproportionately affect minority language speakers and members of marginalised communities (Roberts 2013; Piller 2016).

Understanding the impact of language and integration policies is all the more pressing in the German context: language learning is so central to German immigration and asylum, citizenship and, indeed labour market policies that it has become a core branch of the nationwide *integration* programme that has existed since 2007. Since 2014, Germany has granted asylum to over 1.1 million refugees. Five years on, over 800,000 remain in Germany, most of whom are still seeking employment.[3] How these nationwide programmes impact the socioeconomic (im)mobility of newcomers in Germany is, however, largely under-researched. There is a particularly large gap in qualitative–let alone, ethnographic–approaches to these issues, which means we know little about the ways in which underlying societal assumptions about the importance of language proficiency shape newcomers' sense of belonging, progress and participation. While there exists vast and important research on Germany's language and integration policies and their implications for notions of national identity, immigration control and policy effects on diversity and inclusion (see e.g. Piller 2001; Stevenson and Schanze 2009; Holly and Meinhof 2013; Gramling 2009), there is still little research which focuses specifically on the perspectives and experiences of the many migrants and displaced people who are subjected to these policies.

My research has responded to these gaps through 15 months of in-depth ethnographic fieldwork inside three of Berlin's state-funded language and integration programmes for adult refugees and migrants. Such an immersive approach enabled me to capture the everyday lived experiences, hopes, anxieties and frustrations of those who have been required to learn German in order to work, study and become citizens in Germany. At the same time, I considered how these programmes affected their daily lives and future trajectories. In this way, I unpack the complexities of newcomer realities and everyday experiences, exploring aspects of migration experiences that are all-to-often overlooked in quantitative approaches to these same issues (see e.g. De Fina 2003). In so doing, I found that though these programmes are designed to *accelerate* newcomer incorporation in the national economy and society, in practice they, strikingly and significantly, *delay* newcomers' access to work, higher education and a sense of inclusion. What is more, in part because of the *slowing* effect these programmes have on their sense

[3] According to a recent report by the German employment agency (*Agentur für Arbeit*), around 56% of refugees who have been in Germany since 2013/2014 are un- or underemployed.

of progress, newcomers to Germany encounter *temporal disruptions, tears and distortions* which contribute to ongoing experiences of uncertainty, stalling and boredom.[4]

According to the *Konzept für einen Bundesweiten Integrationskurs* (Concept for a Nationwide Integration Course) designed by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), the means through which migrants and refugees ought to achieve social and cultural participation, equal access to the labour and education markets and otherwise live 'self-sufficient' lives without the assistance of the state, is through the acquisition of Standard German (BAMF 2008). On paper the link between learning German and accessing equal participation is presented as straightforward, particularly in the labour sector. As governmental websites describe: "language learning is essential to find your bearings in Germany as fast as possible. Immigrants have far better chances on the labour market if they can speak German" (BMAS 2016: 1). Statements like this one from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) create a direct link between language learning and fast, successful access to the labour market, while suggesting that the realisation of these ends is in the hands of migrants and refugees themselves: learning the language quickly means faster access to work.

The individuals I met during my fieldwork came from a broad range of educational, ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. They also represented a wide range of migration experiences and legal statuses: many were displaced from Syria, Iran and Eritrea, many others were voluntary migrants from Brazil, Ecuador, Ghana and Vietnam, some were in Germany on spousal visas, some were Ethnic German Resettlers from Russia and Ukraine and had a right to German citizenship under the condition that they learn intermediate German.[5] Others were EU migrants who–though not required to learn German–were making use of the subsidies applied to the integration course to learn German for work. Despite the diversity of my interlocutors' backgrounds and experiences, what seemed to unite them was a hope in progress; the idea that the LIC would unlock the 'not-yet' future possibilities that

[4] See e.g. Griffiths (2014; 2017) on *Temporal Ruptures*.

[5] Ethnic German Resettlers are considered individuals with German descent from parts of the former Soviet Union and other Eastern European states. Ethnic German Resettlers have the right to German citizenship pursuant to the Federal Expellees Act (BVFG) (BAMF 2017b; Recognition in Germany 2019).

Germany seemed to offer (Bloch 1986; Adam 2004, 2009). During fieldwork, my interlocutors spoke to me often about their hopes that the language courses would allow them to quickly find work, to become financially independent from the German state and to achieve a sense of security. Their relationship to learning German was often practical and strategic; the idea being that if they learned German quickly and secured work that they would not only be able to pursue new livelihoods in Germany, but that they would also distinguish themselves from other newcomers whom they felt were perhaps less successful, lazier or in other ways unwilling to integrate.

To the participants of the LIC, time was a valuable commodity and one of which there was never enough. For many of the individuals I met during my time in Berlin, processes of migration and displacement, as well as the events leading up to them, had robbed them of several years of their lives; a period that left them with a sense of urgency to make up for lost time. However, their first few years in Germany were highly structured by bureaucratic procedures, institutional and legal requirements, and constant commuting as they tried to secure financial stability, accommodation, employment, vocational training and other educational opportunities. The time-intensity of the integration course, as well as the strict attendance requirements, meant that for most students, the better part of their day was spent either sitting inside the classroom or commuting to and from it. This meant that pressing matters at the *Jobcenter*–the German employment office, which is responsible for allocating funds to refugees and migrants for language courses and welfare provisions–needed to be handled outside of classroom hours. As did appointments at city hall and the immigration office. As did doctor appointments. As did childcare and accommodation searches. As did all other personal matters. Students who worked informally to supplement their meagre welfare benefits (between €135-354 a month)[6] needed to schedule their shifts around class. For many, this meant working late at night or very early in the morning.

As I have found, enrolling in the LIC in many ways represented a halting: many had to pause their studies and careers, or even re-train or work outside of their past professions. It was a roadblock on

[6] See e.g. DW (2018); Flüchtlingsrat-Berlin (2019).

their path to vocational and financial security, social and spatial mobility and a sense of inclusion. It was thus, a transitional space where everything else in life waited until the course had been completed.

My interlocutors described experiencing a great deal of temporal uncertainty as they worked through the language and integration requirements. This uncertainty was produced by various factors. The first being their access to knowledge and crucial information, which was in many ways mediated by state institutions and the prescribed curriculum of the integration course. This meant that they often had little means of planning their vocational futures or accessing important information on their own. Moreover, they were frequently met with changing requirements and conflicting information, which often made their routes forward and their expectations for the future feel shifting and unknowable.

Significant uncertainty also existed around the outcome of language exams. Though there is little statistical information of the success rates of participants in the language course, my own records and the statements of teachers and administrators I have worked with indicate that at least 45% of students fail the final B1 exam on their first attempt. In some classes, the failure rate was as high as 86% percent. In practice this means that many migrants and refugees spend years moving in and out of language classrooms, and as employers are increasingly requiring higher and higher levels of German language proficiency, most of their time in the first few years in Germany is dedicated to German language acquisition.[7]

Even for those–like Halim–who completed the language courses on their first attempt and graduated to higher levels, progress was underlined by ongoing uncertainty: students who completed their language training still struggled to access the kind of employment they aspired to and frequently felt socially and culturally isolated from their local communities.

Institutional practices, bureaucratic procedures and indeed, integrationist discourses, commonly operate with a linear view of newcomer progress over time. In fact, many of my interlocutors held

[7] Many employers on the skilled labour market are requiring that potential employees demonstrate a minimum of B2-level proficiency. As of 2018, the Federal Office for Migrants and Refugees has begun subsidising the 4-month B2 course (*DeuFöv*).

similar expectations of their future trajectories in Germany; anticipating that precisely because of Germany's extensive integration programme and institutional support systems, they would be able to quickly learn German, find work and obtain long-term (or permeant) residency permits. However, repeated encounters with bureaucratic institutions, legal and administrative requirements and often shifting or conflicting information, brought to light a stark tension between state-level and individual understandings and expectations of progress, speed and success. My interlocutors quickly learned that the link between language learning and socioeconomic participation was less straightforward than they originally believed, leading many to undergo various periods of slowing, stalling and re-direction as well as sudden moments of accelerated and frenzied time, forcing them to make quick and often unexpected decisions about their future.

Migration scholars have demonstrated that newcomers often contend with various, conflicting tempos after they have physically arrived in a new environment (Cwerner 2001, 2004; Fuglerud 2004; Rosa and Scheuerman 2009; Griffiths 2014, 2017). Their temporal experiences are often marked by intersecting forms of acceleration and deceleration. This is particularly the case when their own expectations and needs meet with the workings of state institutions, bureaucratic processes and institutionalised requirements. Life can feel frenzied and accelerated by their own sense of urgency to achieve financial security, legal protection, permanent residency and citizenship. It can feel frantic and rushed when newcomers face deadlines for applications for visa renewals or the renewal of their protected statuses (e.g. subsidiary protection), and they can feel a sense of time pressure to meet societal expectations and institutional requirements (such as learning German). The very same institutional, bureaucratic and social processes can lead to feelings of deceleration, slowing and interruption as newcomers wait for course placement, for exam results, for decisions from the immigration office and and for their professional qualifications to be recognised. The simultaneous occurrence of these forces of acceleration and deceleration lead to ongoing experiences of temporal disruption and uncertainty, which newcomers have to navigate daily (see also Schulte 2020).

Contending with external expectations of progress, their own visions of the future, constant bureaucratic roadblocks, and continued interactions with state-employees (at the Jobcenter and in the classroom), newcomers in Berlin navigate a range of different socio-culturally grounded notions of integration and belonging. As I have found, belonging and integration are not only temporally organised, but they also invoke specific notions of place: of having arrived and of participating in a certain community.

I approach the concept of arrival broadly through what I term *being here.* Being here (and not being here), captures the complex ways in which newcomers navigate the *spatiotemporal* dimensions of belonging, from physical arrival, to the attainment of legal statuses, the accrual of linguistic knowledge, forms of settlement and community formation. However, *Being here* also captures the ways in which newcomers encounter various forms of exclusion and assumptions of cultural difference. When Halim's teacher introduced the terms *Mitbürger* and *Flüchtlinge*, he was also invoking certain groups of people whom he deemed to be *not fully here*. On the one had, the designation of the term *Mitbürger* to describe members of the German-Turkish community, references political and popular discourses of so-called *Parallelgesellschaften* (parallel communities), which argue that the Turkish migrant communities of the 1950's and 60's failed to integrate and were therefore not fully part of the larger German national community (see e.g. Gramling 2009). On the other hand, the term *Flüchtling* (refugee), not only reifies his students' precarious legal positions, but it serves to distinguish between those who are likely to pass and those who are likely to fail the integration course–and who are therefore not fully *here.*

In many ways, Halim's continued encounter with exclusionary terms like *Flüchtling* and *Mitbürger* were symptoms of this tension and uncertainty: on its own, the term *Mitbürger* describes co-habitation, residency, participation, citizenship in the same state, city or locality. This may seem benign at first, however, as Kazancı (2011) demonstrates, and as my own cursory online search has verified, in popular and political discourse as well as in German dictionaries, the term disproportionately co-occurs with reference to certain ethnicities, religions, and subjective descriptors of foreignness in the accompanying relative clause: *türkischstämmige Mitbürger, ausländische Mitbürger, jüdische Mitbürger, muslimische Mitbürger* (co-

citizens of Turkish origin, foreign co-citizens, Jewish co-citizens, Muslim co-citizens) are some of the most frequent examples (see e.g. Kazancı 2011: 103; DWDS 2019; Duden 2019; Wortbedeutung 2019).

As Kazancı goes on to argue, the fact that the term seems to exclusively index certain groups and communities, implies two things: firstly, that the so-called 'ethnic' German makes up the majority of societal organisation and therefore reserves full ownership over the category of *Bürger* (citizen). The foreigner on the other hand is lacking in one or more attributes of citizenship (be it legal status, social and cultural practice, their participation in the community, contribution to the economy, etc.) and therefore cannot be included. At the same time, the term *Mitbürger* is a linguistic strategy of theoretical openness and inclusivity, a form of concession that seems to suggest that though one is foreign one is still at least considered a co-citizen. As Brubaker (1992), Forsythe (1989) Mandel (2008) and others have pointed out, the continued use of terms such as *Ausländer* (foreigner), *türkischstämmiger Deutscher* (German of Turkish origin) or *Deutscher mit Migrationshintergrund* (German with a migrant background), continue to perpetuate the notion of difference between so-called 'native' Germans (or Germans without a migrant background) and non-native Germans. Kazancı argues that the term *Mitbürger* emerged directly from Germany's relationship to the German-Turkish diaspora leading back to the 1950's and 60's when thousands of Turkish labourers emigrated to Germany on temporary work contracts. As he writes, due to the fact they are considered the largest migrant community in Germany, they become the shorthand for addressing social and political issues with migrants. The use of such linguistic devices allows for the production and maintenance of discursive difference between the German *Bürger* and the non-German co-citizen (Kazancı 2011: 105-108).

Halim's story makes clear that teachers have categorisation power, and they are introducing this into classroom interaction. In fact, Halim's story echoed many of the classroom encounters I observed during my time in the LICs, where notions of arrival and belonging were part of ongoing discursive negotiation. Course instructors frequently made assumptions about their students (based largely on their own socioculturally rooted perspectives) which lead them to make predictions about their

students' behaviour, their learning abilities, and even their perceived ability or willingness to belong and integrate. As I have found, these forms of instructional narratives not only created divisions between groups of students, but they also contributed to an environment where future outcomes felt less certain depending on a student's dominant language, national background or legal status. Halim's frustration over his teacher's comment about refugees therefore reveals the ongoing, complex and situated ways in which newcomers to Germany find themselves negotiating notions of belonging and integration.

However, crucially, Halim's story also showed that he understood the concept of *Mitbürger* enough to use it sarcastically. In fact our conversation involved a lot of sarcasm, laughter and other forms of conversational humour. Humour was a central part of my interactions with my interlocutors, as well as the interactions I observed between my interlocutors. It became a vehicle through which to laugh through temporal uncertainty, to make light of their shared experiences of migration and displacement and to joke about the often confusing, frustrating and alienating experiences of learning German and navigating bureaucratic hurdles. During my time in the LICs, humour was employed by my interlocutors to challenge authority and disrupt cultural assumptions and linguistic norms and to play with the rules of linguistic belonging. It was a tool for signalling intimacy and solidarity and building enduring relationships between course mates.

There is a tendency in migration research to focus on the ways in which state operations become oppressive–often framing migrants as agent-less victims of broader state interventions outside their control. While my approach to Germany's integration system is certainly critical, my in-depth linguistic and ethnographic analysis of the everyday lived experiences of my interlocutors, also allows me to show the multiple creative ways in which they develop strategies to navigate German bureaucracy, pursue their futures and build social networks. I show the ways in which my interlocutors disrupt and challenge norms, external expectations and teacher-led narratives of *being here* and *not being here*, and in so doing, capture how notions of integration and belonging are collectively disrupted, re-imagined and discursively negotiated.

In this thesis, I argue that while Germany attempts to construct a practical and inclusive relationship between the acquisition of Standard German and the incorporation of newcomers into a diverse and multicultural national community, the integration programme instead represents a mechanism through which the social and spatial mobility of refugees and migrants is regulated and policed and through which their transitory and liminal positions are reproduced and maintained. While language and integration policies and programmes promise a route into full participation in the German *Zivilgesellschaft* (civil society) the strict requirements along with opaque and complicated bureaucratic procedures have the effect of confining newcomers within prolonged periods of temporal uncertainty, in which the hope in progress is set against experiences of continued stalling, doubt and re-direction.

Underlying themes of progress, integration and employment is a continued reckoning with the time it takes to navigate the German integration system: the time it takes to achieve a sense of independence from the German state, and the long duration of experiences of arrival and exclusion. When I started fieldwork in Berlin, I expected time to play some role, as the courses were gruelling; running for four hours a day, five days a week over an initial period of seven months to a year. It was also not surprising to imagine that processes of professional recognition and bureaucratic procedures tied to gaining vocational training and securing employment take time. But as I demonstrate, time matters *more* and *differently* than one might expect, revealing an under-researched aspect of the ways in which language policies shape newcomer experiences. I found that altered experiences of time are a crucial aspect of newcomers' integration encounters. Integration means a complete restructuring of their relationship with time. It requires newcomers to adapt to German social and cultural traditions and customs around marking, keeping and reckoning with the passage of time. In this way, Germany's language and integration programmes, and, indeed the notion of integration, need to be understood in relationship to time.

I.I. The Temporal Dimensions of Linguistic Integration

Scholars in the fields of anthropology, sociology and social theory have contributed greatly to our understanding of time, both as a phenomenon which can be observed, measured, calculated and synchronised, as well as something that is experienced and responded to through various, often culturally-embedded practices (see e.g. Gellner 1958; Munn 1992; Gel 1992; Bear 2014; Schielke 2015; Bryant and Knight 2019). As anthropological research has demonstrated, while time is a universal, it is a culturally, historically and situationally fluid concept, "one that encompasses a multitude of meanings and orderings" (Griffiths 2017: 49). It is cyclical, rhythmical, linear, flowing or thought of as a set of discrete 'moments' (ibid).

Scholars have identified various *time types* within which a distinction is made between time as measurable (astronomical, chronological, 'clock time') and time as experienced (Gell 1992), or rather, there is a distinction to be made between *time* and *temporality*. Temporality, in this sense, "designates how beings experience such processual qualities in different sociocultural contexts, for example, through memory or anticipation" (Gingrich, Ochs and Swedlund 2002: S3).[8] While time and temporality are universal, they are also locally situated and thus there exists a "coexistence of divergent modes for recording and conceptualising temporalities", as well as multiple *repertoires* of temporal markers. Such repertoires including calendars, genealogies, chronologies, myths, and stories are historically and institutionally rooted, with different symbolic and moral meanings, which may, furthermore, be interpreted in various different and possibly conflicting ways (ibid: S4).

As Gingrich, Ochs and Swedlund (2002) point out, a recurrent theme in anthropological research is the power asymmetry among "modes of reckoning dimensions of temporality", meaning that people use multiple and sometimes conflicting time-reckoning systems to understand and regulate social life. Time-keeping systems and indeed relationships to time are, thus, sites in which multiple official and unofficial, public and private 'clocks' may be actively supported and these are often rooted in existing power relationships. Recent anthropological research on time and temporality has focussed on the

[8] See also Gould 1987; Bender and Wellbery 1991; Gingrich 1994; Aveni 1995; Hughes and Trautmann 1995.

ways in which a range of temporal relationships coexist locally and thereby focus on the "intertwining of categorisations of time and certainty" (Gingrich et al. 2002: S4) as well as the ways in which these figure into moral matters, "implicating such notions as truth, virtue, authority, origins, memory, desire, progress, and anticipation" (ibid). Such research brings attention to the notion that ways of recording, and experiencing time are situated and vary within and across societies and communities in time and space, and are, furthermore, informed and inform their socio-historical contexts (Gingrich et al. 2002: S4).

As scholars in anthropology, sociolinguistics, and linguistic anthropology have argued, several tenets underlying notions of linguistic integration are based on understandings of belonging, community and nation which are rooted in the past, such as the notion of a shared, common language. As Mandel (2008) describes, the idea of an "organic community" bound together by a shared language, history and culture (2008: 207), relies on imaginations of *how it was* (real and imagined). Similarly, as Inoue (2004), Irvine (2004) and others reminds us, the temporality of language is often used to *historicise* within language ideological constructions of origin, identity and mutability (Inoue 2004:1). Language can thus be invoked to create and maintain commonality and to uphold visions of community by identifying shared practices, behaviours and attributes which serve to identify and demarcate groups and is therefore a crucial facet of our linguistic belonging (Anderson 1983). The interconnectedness of linguistic practices, community and temporal orientations towards notions of past and present, further illustrate the ways in which ideas of linguistic belonging are spatiotemporally organised.

Elaborating upon Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the *chronotope,*–or the complex ways in which space and time are variously configured–Blommaert (2016) describes how chronotopes as, "invokable 'tropic' chunks of history" play a particularly powerful role in language ideological constructions of national identity. As Blommaert writes, contemporary European nations often frame ideas of national belonging "in an unbroken line of unspoiled ethnolinguistic transmission reaching back into an 'unspecified past' […] and see the contemporary usage of 'pure' language (the institutionalised variety of it) as the contemporary normative enactment of that *durée*" (2016: 56). Chronotopes elicit particular images of persons, actions, meanings and values and their invocation in the contemporary here-and-

now (particularly in political discourse) is thus a means of defining (or attempting to define) collective identities as they *as they should still be now* (see also Eisenlohr 2004; Perrino and Koehler 2020). In this way, chronotopic formulations can have the discursive effect of delineating between what it means to be "from here" and therefore what it means to simply "reside here". This distinction, following Blommaert (2016) is articulated precisely by "invoking different historicities of origin, movement, stability and change" (2016: 56).

In this sense, while time can be a powerful tool of creating and maintaining forms of community and belonging, it also, crucially, can be invoked as a means of marking difference: of identifying the persons, actions, meanings and values which are distinct and apart from ideological notions of belonging and *being here* (see also Bastian 2001; Gal 2016: Gal and Irvine 2019).

In a similar vein, many scholars, including Gramling (2009, 2016) and Holly and Meinhof (2013) have argued that Germany's contemporary integration programmes are a reaction to a perceived failure to integrate migrant communities of the past, whereby, lacking the prospect of potential long-term residence under German law and therefore trapped in transitory state, the Southern and Eastern European and Turkish guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) of the 1950s and 60s tended to keep close ties with their countries of origin. Until the 1970s it was widely assumed that the presence of more than 2 million foreign workers was merely temporary–as the term 'guest' would imply. It wasn't until the 1990s, following the large-scale settlement of guest workers, that immigration and naturalisation policies were revisited and liberalised in unified Germany, to allow former guest workers and their children access to permanent residency and citizenship (Brubaker 1992: 172-73). One remnant of Germany's guest worker agreements is the difficult notion that due to an absence of integration efforts on the one hand, and the perceived unwillingness or inability of guest workers to actively participate in German society, on the other, so-called *Parallelgesellschaften* (parallel societies) could form; creating a cultural rift between immigrant communities and so-called 'native' Germans (Wegmann 2012; Forsythe 1989; Brubaker 1992).[9]

[9] Germans without a migrant background, meaning they themselves are not immigrants nor are their parents or grandparents.

In this way, Germany's contemporary language and integration efforts must also be understood as a reaction to perceived failures around immigration and citizenship policies from the past in order to construct a vision of the future into which newcomers can (or ought to) incorporate. As the term *integration* suggests, newcomers are not necessarily *fully here* upon physical arrival. Instead, the integration ideal assumes a linear and future oriented notion of belonging whereby they may become *fully here* by following certain steps (e.g. learning German). In the same way that invoking certain "chunks of history" engender a sense of a shared present identity (Blommaert 2016), imaginations of the future can invoke a sense of "shared purpose" (Griffiths, Rogers and Anderson 2013: 26). Visions of collective futures are particularly powerful tools for national governments in "countering diversity or uncertainty and encourage the assimilation of migrants (ibid). As I discuss in more detail throughout this thesis (see e.g. Chapters 1 and 2), such future-oriented visions are palpable in the National Integration Plan (NIP), introduced under Chancellor Merkel in 2007, outlining steps to make the integration of newcomers *sustainable* and *forward-looking* (NIP 2007:2).

While there is a vast scholarship on the spatial dimensions of migration, often viewing processes of migrating as a physical journey from point A to point B, migration research has only relatively recently begun drawing on work on time in order to explore the various, complex and cross-cutting roles time and temporal experiences play within migration and mobility.

However, as scholars working on the relationship between time and migration demonstrate (Allen 2000, 2005, Edensor 2006; Eder 2004, Rosa and Scheuerman 2009), and as my own research shows, states govern through multiple temporal devices which combine different senses of time and temporal modalities, which not only go beyond imaginations of past and future, but complicate such notions altogether. These include everyday periods of waiting, and varying lengths of qualification procedures for vocational, citizenship and residency eligibility. Bureaucratic and administrative procedures, thus, play a particularly significant role within migrants' temporal experiences. This begins with the time it takes for asylum requests to be processed, while the temporary right to remain issued to refugees is set to either one year or three years. Then there is the scheduled time of the integration course: seven

months (five days a week, four hours a day), then the B2 course, in some cases, the C1 or C2 course, then vocational training or university (re-)education, and the time it takes to become financially independent from the state. In this sense, bureaucratic requirements and institutionalised schedules and routines, alongside notions of progress and speed, "all have the potential to dramatically override and thereby alter the temporal patterns and expectations of individuals" (Griffiths et al. 2013: 24), and have significant impact on a newcomer's experience of temporal uncertainty. The integration programme assumes a linear, future-oriented process, but the reality of newcomers in Germany is a lot 'messier' (Griffiths 2017; Çağlar 2016). Instead, as Mavroudi (2017) points out, "migrant identity and sense of belonging can be seen as journeys over time and space, morphing and cross-cutting at different speeds and rhythms, juxtaposed between here and there in potentially fragmented, jarring and confusing but also multiple, hyphenated, fluid ways" (Mavroudi 2017: 1).

As research on time in contexts of migration and displacement continues to grow, much of the literature is focused on temporalities of asylum seekers who are waiting for their asylum to be processed, and irregular migrants who face detention and deportation (Mountz 2011; Rotter 2015: Bendixsen and Eriksen 2018). Little research, however unpacks the temporal dimensions experienced by migrants and refugees who have already received the right to remain (both temporary and permanent), and the ways in which time-based governance continues to affect newcomers even after their initial asylum/visa applications have been processed and approved. As Tuckett (2018) demonstrates, the experiences of migration, border crossing and legal limbo, in many ways represent one element of the continued relationship with bureaucracy and state institutions. In what she has termed the *documentation regime,* Tuckett shows that even for migrants who attain permanent statuses, encounters with bureaucracy continue as individuals pursue employment and support for their families and friends (2018: 4). The same is true for many of my interlocutors: most had been in Germany for six months to two years before I met them, and during this time, many had ventured across Germany to settle in Berlin (after initially arriving in refugee hostels and waiting for their asylum applications to be approved). Many had moved into their own apartments and had helped family members apply for family reunification, and some had found informal employment and part time work. But the hurdle

they faced, still, was attaining the language certificate which they needed for job applications, for university qualifications, for permanent residency and citizenship. In that way, the language and integration programme was embedded in a larger bureaucratic landscape they had to navigate.

Though integration is mentioned implicitly in recent scholarship on time, there is little research on national integration programmes–as experienced by those subjected to its requirements and expectations–nor on the ways in which integration ought to be addressed as a temporally uncertain process. This thesis addresses these empirical and conceptual gaps, by showing the ways in which Germany's bureaucratised language and integration processes *delays* rather than accelerates inclusion and participation. This, in turn, impacts ongoing discourses and practices of belonging.

I.II. Field Site and Methodology

I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Berlin over a period of 15 months, observing and participating in three state-funded LICs at various proficiency levels. I selected Germany's capital for several reasons. Firstly, it is a small city-state in former East Germany, which is increasingly becoming one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse urban centres in Germany. It also receives a disproportionately high number of refugees through the *Königsteiner Schlüssel* system: an algorithm which allocates refugees amongst the 16 federal states.[10] Due to the high proportion of migrants and refugees seeking enrolment in language courses, Berlin offers a comparatively high number of integration courses. This initially gave me more flexibility when I was preparing for fieldwork and seeking access to integration classrooms. Secondly, I chose my field site in order to expand upon my previous research on Berlin conducted during my MSc in Social Anthropology (2016), in which I interviewed integration course instructors. I did so in order to understand the role that language plays in Germany's conception of integration and the ways in which instructors position themselves within these discourses. Along with expanding on my existing research, I chose Berlin as field site for practical

[10] After asylum seekers are registered in Germany, they are allocated to the federal states through a computer-generated algorithm called the *Königsteiner Schlüssel* which calculates a state's tax revenue (2/3) and its population size (1/3). These factors are generated annually and determine the percentage of asylum seekers each state is required to accommodate. While the *Königsteiner Schlüssel* factors in tax revenue and population size for each federal state, it does not factor in area size, meaning that smaller city-states such as Berlin and Hamburg carry a greater burden; having more difficulty ensuring accommodation, access to healthcare, financial benefits, and access to education for asylum seekers (GWK Bonn 2016).

reasons. Having grown up in Berlin, I know the city well and was able to stay with family during fieldwork.[11] Below, I include a map of Germany, with Berlin circled (in red) in the north-east:

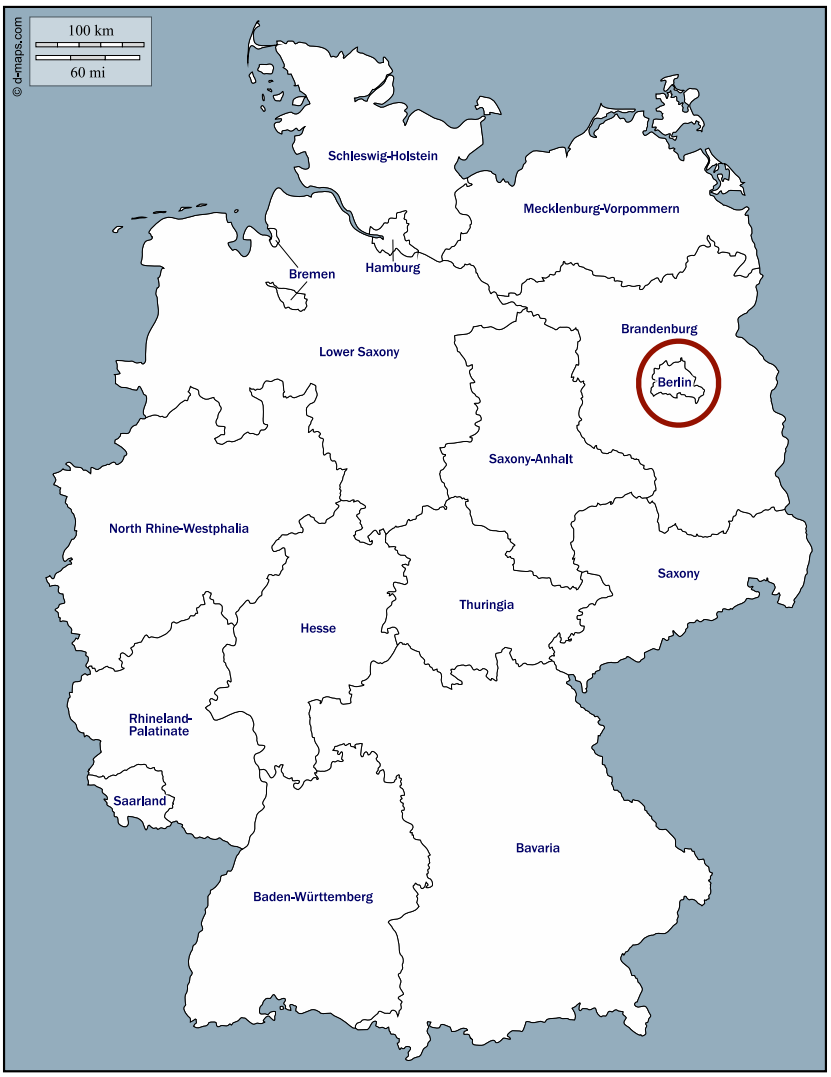

Image 1: Map of Germany (source: blank map from d-maps.com; red marking by the author

My access to integration classrooms was based on the willingness of individual teachers to let me participate in their courses. Because teachers at these schools are generally freelance instructors employed by the state and not by the schools directly, school directors were often wary about assigning me to one of their courses. I thus had to rely on the instructors I met in 2016, which meant that I had little control over the types of courses I could access. This depended on the courses the teachers happened to be facilitating at the time of my fieldwork. Before arriving in Berlin, in the summer of

[11] In the future, I plan to expand my work on language and integration in Germany, by conducting similar research in other parts of the country, particularly in smaller towns.

2017, I established access to a B1 LIC in Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf (in southwest Berlin)[12] through the help of Marianne, a teacher I had interviewed as part of my previous research (see map of Berlin, below). She handled the formal communication with the school's administration, who agreed to allow me to attend the course as a *Hospitantin*–a kind of visiting university student (usually in training for a similar vocation). During the seven months I spent with the B1 class, I met other language instructors. One, a man named Jürgen, also taught at a language school in Tempelhof-Schöneberg (a district south east of Charlottenburg),[13] and agreed to let me observe one of his courses at the Schöneberg school once I finished with my first group. At the time my first group completed their B1 exams, Jürgen had been assigned to teach a so-called B1 repeater course, which was shorter in length, but gave me access to a new school, with a larger student population, meaning I met students from a variety of different levels. The final course I observed came to me quite spontaneously through one of my interlocutors from the first group. She and two other participants from the B1 course enrolled in the same B2 class, which, coincidentally, was being facilitated just down the street from the B1 repeater course. I began participating in the B2 course while the B1 repeater course was wrapping up.

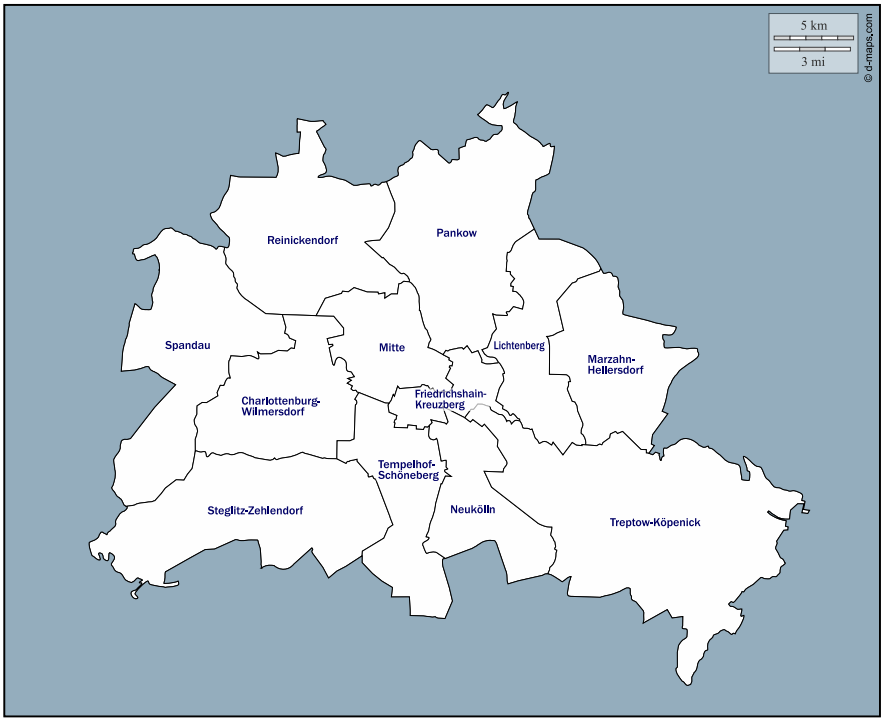

Image 2: Map of Berlin (source: d-maps.com)

[12] Henceforth referred to as "Charlottenburg".

[13] Henceforth referred to separately as "Tempelhof" and "Schöneberg".

All three courses were rigorous and time-intensive, each running for four hours a day, five days a week for four to seven months. The first, a B1 integration course, ran for seven months from July 2017 through February 2018. It included language instruction from the level A1 to B1 as well as a one-month civics knowledge course known as the *Orientierungskurs* (orientation course), involving lessons on German history, politics, law and the constitution. The second course, known informally as a *Wiederholerkurs* (repeater course), primarily catered to participants who had previously failed the B1 language exam. The course started at level A2.2. on the CEFRL scale (see Chapter 1), running for 300 hours–or roughly four months–as opposed to the 700 hours of the standard B1 integration course. Like the B1 integration course, the repeater course is also subsidised by the German state, in order to give migrants and refugees the opportunity to repeat three modules before resitting the B1 exam. This course is also open to participants who are taking the course for the first time, but have previous knowledge of German (and therefore don't require training in levels A0-A2.1.). The final course I attended was a B2, vocational German class, also known as *Deutsch für den Beruf* (German for the job)–or *Deuföv* for short. Completion of these courses is increasingly becoming required for migrants and refugees seeking employment in the skilled labour market, and is also a necessary step in qualifying for entry to universities. The course ran for four months, of which I participated in two.

During my time in all three courses, I conducted individual and group interviews with course participants, engaged in focus group discussions and spent time with students in informal settings, at their homes and with friends and family members. I attended the courses between three to five times a week for the duration of the course hours. After receiving written and oral consent from my participants, I also began audio-recording individual classes. This in-depth and immersive engagement with the everyday structure, content and practices in the courses allowed me insight into elements of the integration programme that are opaque to the German public: from teachers' instructional narratives and their approach to teaching a diverse group of students, to the gruelling hours of grammar lessons, to the treatment of different languages and varieties in interaction, and to discussions of everyday life in Germany. My time with course participants outside of the classroom afforded me an

in-depth view of their everyday encounters with locals, shopkeepers, neighbours, government and employment office administrators, as well as the dynamics of everyday social and family life.

Before starting fieldwork, I spent several months learning colloquial Arabic, meeting regularly with a colleague at Oxford to practice reading and writing the alphabet as well as some basic speech. Though I only had a very limited understanding of colloquial Arabic when I began my research, my ability to greet my interlocutors and engage in some basic conversation greatly eased our initial encounters and, as I continued to learn and practice through the help of my Arabic-speaking interlocutors, it also helped us forge and strengthen our relationships.

Taking my positionality as a white, German, middle-class, educated female researcher into account, it was important for me to allow enough time for my interlocutors to become acquainted with me and the aims of my research. Depending on the length of the course, I made sure that the first weeks were informal, in that I only took minor notes during class, refrained from making recordings, and spent most of my time getting to know students individually (as much as possible), leaving time for them to ask me questions, and for us to socialise outside of class. Given that I was working in a multilingual environment, I also used this time to hand out information sheets on my study in students' dominant languages. Through the help of translators, I was able to provide written information on the scope and aims of the project and what participation would entail. Some of my interlocutors were non-literate in their dominant languages, in which case I would provide information through the help of an interpreter. I began my formal research once I gained both oral and written consent from all participants (usually a few weeks into my stay in the classroom).

I.II.a. The Language Classroom

My research largely took place inside a language classroom. Research on education and classroom discourse has been a focal point in linguistic anthropology[14] for the last four decades (Wortham 2008). Unlike education research and some work in applied linguistics, linguistic anthropological approaches to classroom interaction shift their focus away from primarily observing literacy skills and competencies, pedagogical practices and language acquisition, and towards a consideration of language as a socially embedded practice, rooted in performances of identity and negotiations of cultural values and power relationships (Rampton, Maybin and Roberts 2014: 18). As Tsui (2011) explains, such approaches take a "holistic approach to classroom discourse analysis" which situates the classroom "in the larger context of society and seeing classroom processes as shaped by pedagogical concerns as well as by broader social, economic, political and cultural forces (2011: 280). This means that there is substantial attention paid to the various social, cultural and institutional forces that play in to the classroom context; such as the aims of the government, bureaucratic procedures which regulate (and often complicate) the linguistic integration process, as well as educational boards that may prescribe the curriculums. Such spaces are also shaped by the aims and expectations of the teachers, and the goals, backgrounds and experiences of the students. In this way, my approach to the integration classroom considers how these various factors play out in everyday interaction.

The work of scholars in this field has at once demonstrated how the classroom becomes a site in which various forms of social and cultural identity play out, how institutional, national, local and individual ideologies of language use are negotiated and how meanings of belonging, legitimacy and authenticity are approached and transformed. At the same time, they illuminate aspects of educational processes and institutions (Wortham 2008: 10).

As Wortham (2008) points out, "schools are important sites for learning (and legitimating) associations between types of speakers […] and types of […] language use" (2008: 7). This is evidenced on the one

[14] The linguistic anthropology of education is particularly influenced by research in applied linguistics and sociolinguistics, though all three fields generally have a substantial degree of overlap.

hand by Blackledge et al.'s discussion of Punjabi-English teachers' language use and the negotiation of authenticity (particularly from the perspective of the student population), but it also affects the ways in which teachers make assumptions about their students based on their linguistic practices. Wortham demonstrates that it is not only different communication styles, but also teachers' assumptions about the speakers that lead teachers to make judgements about their students' behaviours and learning abilities. These assumptions can also be based on extra-linguistic practices such as a speaker's body language, or a teacher's expectation of classroom participation, involving notions of politeness and respect. Poveda (2003) describes how a teacher's assumptions about the "subservient role of women in Middle Eastern culture" (qtd in Godley 2014: 465) shaped her perspective on a female Arab student's participation during class. The girl's avoidance of eye-contact, for example, when seeking to decline a turn to talk during a discussion, signalled impolite behaviour to the teacher. As Poveda argues, the teachers interpret students' behaviour based on their own assumptions about students' cultural backgrounds (as I examine more in Chapter 4).

As I discuss in more detail in Chapters four and five, while the ways in which students and teachers interact with and interpret each other based on their linguistic practices and cultural backgrounds plays a significant role in studying classroom interaction, the ways in which students–particularly in intercultural contexts–relate to each other during classroom discourse adds another important layer of analysis. This is particularly significant in Chapter 5, where I show the ways in which various forms of humour and laughter contribute to group formation and allow students to signal intimacy and perform solidarity (Coates 2007; Wise 2016).

The integration course is thus taken as a site of intercultural exchange, where integration policy meets educational practice, and where social actors negotiate what it means to be a legitimate speaker, to belong and to participate in German society through their discursive interaction. This is in line with a large body of linguistic ethnographic and applied linguistic research in the US in particular, which focuses on the discursive interaction in the 'citizenship' classroom (like the German integration courses which prepare naturalisation applicants for language and civics knowledge exams). As Loring (2013)

points out, the citizenship classroom represents a very complex educational space as "this arena encompasses a host of additional teaching hurdles, such as a student population with a wide range of abilities, open registration dates and reduced funding" (Loring 2013: 190).

The complexity of perspective and experience often leads to the production of new forms of meaning through which differences can be negotiated. As Widin and Yasukawa point out, such conceptual approaches to classroom interaction seek to destabilise the "binaries between different discursive spaces" and instead "examine the possibilities of creating new and hybrid spaces that productively engage participants in new ways" (Widin and Yasukawa 2013: 173), meaning that attention is also drawn to the ways in which institutional aims intersect with and diverge from the expectations of migrants (and teachers) involved in the courses, and how new sites of meaning are (or are not) created through the negotiation of these aims.

In order to explore, on the one hand, how institutional and national language ideologies become embedded in the classroom exchange, and on the other, how new meanings are produced and negotiated in these spaces, I draw on a range of analysis methods, including ethnographic description, critical discourse and conversation analysis (CDA and CA), which in more recent scholarship have often been used together or in different combinations. Following Hymes (1972), the ethnography of communication seeks to describe how people acquire, use, and understand patterns of discourse in specific situations or communities. To accomplish this, ethnographic research on intercultural communication in education usually includes intense, longitudinal observations of language use within classrooms or communities, audio- or video-recordings to capture the details of social interactions, as well as interviews with participants (Godley 2014). The focus of ethnography is on communication from an emic point of view; that is, from the subjective point of view of speakers with the goal of understanding how they account for the meaning in a given experience, practice or interaction.

Critical Discourse Analysis focuses less on participants' understanding of discourse patterns (which one might do in, e.g. Conversation Analysis) and more on the systems of power and beliefs that are

realised through discourse, and that participants may not be conscious of, such as the beliefs and expectations that speakers convey through language. This can involve a teacher's expectation of their students' participation in class and how that affects the ways in which they interpret their behaviour, but it can also involve the expression of different attitudes and ideological positionings.

Increasingly, linguistic anthropological methods for the study of classroom interaction are being combined in order to better describe the complex relationships between communication, culture, and learning in classrooms. Such research, for example, provides a more complete and complex picture of the kinds of communication patterns that students need to learn in order to be successful in school and the ways in which teachers, often unconsciously, perpetuate inequity in education by communicating unfounded preconceptions and intolerance for linguistic and ethnic minority students (Godley 2014: 463). In some cases (see Chapter 5), I thus take a combined approach to consider the larger context, relationships of power and personal experiences of those interacting, while often also taking a detailed approach to turn-by-turn interaction. Thus, I adopt the position taken by van Dijk (1999) and demonstrated by scholars in language and gender research (e.g. Bucholtz 2001, Wetherell, Sunderland and Baxter 2010) that CA and CDA complement and enhance each other, rather than representing two incompatible perspectives.

As mentioned above, the linguistic anthropology of education allows for a dynamic and holistic study of classroom interaction and the various social, cultural and institutional forces that play into educational spaces. These forces include the expectations of educational and governmental institutions which are codified in the class curriculums, kinds of funding and course structures. They also involve the various cultural backgrounds, life experiences, expectations and abilities of the students, as well as the assumptions, expectations, modes of engagement and teaching of the course instructors. All of these forces in interaction need to be considered when conducting classroom ethnographies, providing a range of methodological and interpretive approaches.

I.II.b. Interlocutors and Notes on Pseudonymity

During 15 months of fieldwork from the summer of 2017 to the fall of 2018 and further follow up research in 2019, I met and worked with around 60 adult newcomers from a range of national, linguistic, ethnic educational and socio-economic backgrounds. Their age groups ranged from 18 to 60. They also represented a broad range of migration experiences and legal statuses: the majority of students in each of the three classrooms I observed were displaced people. Many had fled the civil war in Syria, some were young men who escaped civil unrest and mandatory military service in Eritrea, some were Afghan refugees in Iran who fled to Germany seeking further protection. I also worked with political refugees from Turkey whose opposition to the Erdogan regime forced them to flee to Germany, while one of my interlocutors, a young Iraqi Kurdish man was exiled in Germany after receiving threats from local extremist groups. Others joined spouses and family members through spousal visas and through Germany's family reunification policy for recognised refugees.[15]

Many of my interlocutors migrated to Germany for economic reasons: searching for better working conditions. Some were migrants from within the EU who moved to Germany for work and were making use of the subsidies applied to the integration courses to learn German.[16]

A large group of my interlocutors moved to Germany from Eastern European states such as Russia, Ukraine and Poland. Many of them were so-called Ethnic German Resettlers who, due to their German ancestry, were entitled to German citizenship under the condition that they learn German (at level B1).[17]

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[15] Individuals who have recognised refugee status are allowed to apply for family reunification within three months of receiving their official refugee status in Germany. Family reunification applies to spouses and children under 18 years of age. Those under subsidiary protection are not entitled to apply for family reunification (UNHCR 2017; Welcome Center Berlin 2017).

[16] Under § 11(1) of the Act on the General Freedom of Movement for EU Citizens (Freedom of Movement Act/EU) and in conjunction with § 44(4) of the German Residence Act, EU citizens are entitled to attend integration courses, but are in most cases not required to (though some employers may require German language proficiency at level B1 or higher). Integration courses are subsidised for EU citizens and are therefore less expensive than privately run language courses (BAMF 2019a).

[17] Ethnic German Resettlers are individuals with German ancestry and members of German minority communities in Eastern Europe. Under the Federal Expellees Act, Ethnic German Resettlers are entitled to return to Germany and become permanent residents and citizens (BMI 2020).

I met some of my interlocutors through their own networks of family and friends, such as Fathi and Anisah, both of whom were not in the classes I observed, but were introduced to me by course members. Fathi is the son of Mariam, one of the participants of the first language course I joined. Anisah is married to Halim, who, like Mariam, was in the first course.

Unfortunately, I couldn't write about all of my interlocutors in this thesis; though I plan to incorporate as many of their stories as I can in future work. In this thesis I write about 34 of them (including the teachers)–some in more detail than others. Some characters recur throughout the chapters, taking a central role in the stories I tell. Fathi, Halim and Anisah, Zahra, Ahmad and Nasim are mentioned particularly often. This is not because I found their stories more pressing or more interesting than others, nor because I chose to focus specifically on my Syrian interlocutors (though all six of them happen to be Syrian). I write of them most frequently because I spent the most time with them: during interviews and focus groups, at their homes and other informal meet-ups outside of class, and therefore have the most details on their experiences. In many ways, their stories allowed me to structure the themes in this thesis.

The names of my interlocutors have been pseudonymised to protect their identities. In some cases, I have altered parts of their biographical information to ensure their anonymity further. I have broken the three classrooms into several different classrooms and refer to them variously throughout the thesis. I have furthermore given each of the four instructors several different names so that they are not as easily identifiable.[18]

[18] Thank you to Ingrid Piller for her advice on pseudonymisation.

I.II.c. Terminology and Analytical Categories

One of the biggest challenges writing this thesis was to settle on the language I was going to use to describe my interlocutors. During fieldwork, I spent my time with a diverse range of individuals: with different ethnic, religious, linguistic and educational backgrounds, legal and socioeconomic statuses, ages, (dis)abilities and migration experiences. How does one talk about such a diverse group without making possibly dangerous generalisations? When I started writing this thesis I decided to use three categories: (1) *newcomer* (2) *migrant* (3) *refugee.*

I decided that, where possible, I would refer to my interlocutors as *newcomers*: a relatively neutral term that would act as an umbrella descriptor. I chose this term consciously as, in some places, it has been used to describe individuals who have been in a new environment for under five years (see e.g. Extra, Spotti and Avermaet 2009). Taking this broad definition on board, the term newcomer allowed me to summarise one commonality between most of the individuals I worked with: they had all been in Germany for under five years – most, between one to two years.[19] I also preferred using this term as it is not a legal category and it is broad enough to include most of my interlocutors. In addition, some of my interlocutors used it to describe themselves.

I use the terms *migrant* and *refugee* in cases where I need to distinguish between the legal statuses and reasons for migration amongst my interlocutors. I use the term migrant broadly to include various forms of what can be considered *voluntary migration*, such as economic migration, spousal or family reunification or the migration of so-called ethnic German Resettlers from parts of Eastern Europe who are entitled to German citizenship. I also include individuals in this category who have migrated to Germany from other EU countries. Most of the migrants I met during fieldwork intended on settling in Germany for an extended period of time, often permanently. In some cases, length of stay or intent to settle is used as a factor in distinguishing *immigrants* from *migrants*. In these distinctions, migrants are considered 'temporary residents'. I do not make this distinction in my thesis. Instead, I

[19] There were a few exceptions to this rule: a small handful of my interlocutors have been in Germany for over five years. I write about one of them; Francesco, who has been in Germany for over 20 years.

follow recent theoretical approaches in anthropology which prefer the term *migrant*, as this "suggests an understanding and theoretical framework of 'impermanence' of movement of people" (Horevitz 2009: 748), meaning I understand migrants to be individuals who may move back and forth between their home community and one or more 'host' communities physically, emotionally, as well as virtually through digital technologies. As I have found in my research, most of my interlocutors maintain strong ties to their home countries and friends and family members elsewhere. They also negotiate experiences of (un)belonging, arriving, transition, waiting and alienation on a daily basis. This means that many of my interlocutors are constantly moving between various spatiotemporal frames of *being here* and *being elsewhere.* To refer to my interlocutors who are in Germany 'voluntarily' with the intention of settling, as immigrants, would, in my mind, erase those experiences of 'impermanence' which go beyond physical movement and settlement.

Furthermore, I employ the term migrant in order to distinguish voluntary/ordinary migrants from those who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries, and who have received asylum in Germany. Thus, I use the term *refugee* to refer to individuals who have experienced forced migration. I do not use this term lightly: recent scholarship has attempted to move away from the refugee taxonomy in favour of other, more specific and nuanced terms, such as asylum seeker, irregular migrant, undocumented migrant or internally and cross-border displaced persons (Castles and Loughna 2005). However, Voutira and Doná (2007), on the other hand, argue that the term refugee "synthesises the varieties of issues relevant to forced migration research", explaining that it "denotes those who undergo forcible uprooting, who lack protection [and] are stateless" (2007: 163). While many of my interlocutors have experienced displacement, there is no neat or unifying term to capture their experiences. They differed in their protected statuses and asylum permits: some were on one-year renewable subsidiary protection, others on three-year protected status. All had different experiences of displacement and of entering Germany.

I am mindful of the fact that many of my interlocutors reported that they do not identify with the term refugee. The German term, *Flüchtling*, was one they particularly distanced themselves from, primarily

due to the societal perceptions they felt were linked to the term. Many echoed the sentiments voiced to me by Zahra, a woman now in her late 50's, who had fled Damascus two years earlier: "I don't want to be called a Syrian refugee. Refugees cause problems in Germany". Like Zahra, many felt they needed to rectify the image of refugees in Germany. Many grappled with the concept themselves and why their lives in Germany were so structured by such legal categories. I feel a strong responsibility to my interlocutors not to repeat and reinforce categories that they do not identify with and feel alienated by. However, I also have a responsibility to tell their stories, and to analyse Germany's integration system as it affects the lives of newcomers, both voluntary and involuntary, in a way that does to some degree consider the legal ramifications and categories valid in the context of Germany's integration systems.

To ease this tension somewhat, I use the term refugee only when I have to make summarising or legal statements about my interlocutors, e.g. "the course consisted of 25 migrants and refugees from various countries". I do this because the term refugee, in this sense, is broad enough to include the range of displaced persons I worked with; their legal statuses and experiences. I avoid the terms migrant and refugee when I give biographical accounts of individuals. In these cases, I describe the circumstances of their settlement in Germany, using more descriptive language about their movement such as "she came to Germany", "she migrated to Germany", "she is a displaced Syrian", "she experienced cross-border displacement". I acknowledge that, as Anderson and Blinder (2019) point out, the term "migrant" is often used loosely, vaguely or is otherwise misused, "often conflating issues of immigration status, race, ethnicity and asylum" (2019:2). I also acknowledge that the terms immigrants, migrants and refugees are often used indiscriminately and sometimes lack clear definition (often being too generalising or too limited). The migrants and refugees I refer to represent a broad range of ethnicities, legal statuses and experiences of migration or reasons for settling in Germany. I am not using these terms to make any generalised claims about their experiences, goals or situations.

I.II.d. Transcription and Translation

I audio-recorded classroom interaction, focus groups, interviews and informal gatherings with the written and oral consent of my interlocutors. Speech was recorded using my Zoom H2N digital recorder. All files were catalogued and stored on an encrypted external hard drive as well as in my own, private, Microsoft OneDrive account. Files were later (partially) segmented and transcribed using ELAN software.

Transcription Conventions

Transcription conventions are largely based on the *Jefferson Transcription Conventions*, with some alterations.

(.) short pause
(…) long pause
((abc)) comments related to speech production
[abc] comments on extra-linguistic action and context
(hhhh) laughter
hh (without brackets) indicates aspiration or rapid breathing at the end of the word
= end of turn/beginning of next turn with no pause in between
[ ] overlapping speech
°abc° speech that is quieter than surrounding noise
#abc# speech that is shaky, irritated, or creaky
CAPS speech that is louder than surrounding noise
underline emphasis
? rising intonation, including questions
! animated or emphatic tone
*** unidentified speaker(s) or multiple speakers
"abc" reported speech

The first letter of the utterance/line is capitalised when it follows (!) and (?) and to mark speaker change. Capitalisation rules differ in German and English (e.g. for proper nouns and the formal second person nominative "Sie").

Transcribing in contexts of foreign language learning

As I have detailed at the beginning of this section, my field site consists mainly of state-sponsored language and civics knowledge education programmes for refugees and migrants who have come to Germany from a range of socio-political and economic circumstances. Most were at the early stages of German language learning at the time of my fieldwork (between A0-B1). Given my field site, as well as my own positionality as a white, German, middle-class, educated woman, it is important to critically examine the ways in which the choices I make about my transcription and translation methods serve to either faithfully represent or otherwise misrepresent the speech of my interlocutors.

As Roberts (1997) notes, transcribing means "working with language in the social world" (1997: 167). That is because language is a socially embedded practice, rooted in the experiences of particular groups who are all, in different ways, "defined by social power" (ibid). Transcription is a cultural practice and transcripts, per Duranti (2006) are "artefacts that possess 'temporal-historical dimensions'" (2006: 302). In that sense, transcribed talk equally concerns language ideologies, the politics of language and the political economy of language (ibid). Transcription can thus never be neutral, and equally, following Atkinson (1992), "there is no such thing as a 'natural' mechanism for the representation of speech" (1992: 23). Instead, it is an ongoing process of making choices between being representative, readable, and accurate. The ways in which talk is analysed also affects the ways in which it is transcribed and presented in text: from ethnographic transcription, included in vignettes and the main body narratives, to excerpts used for conversation and discourse analysis. They will vary in the detail of what is transcribed and what is left out. All of these choices require critical and reflexive commentary on part the researcher. I comment on my transcription and translation choices throughout this thesis, commenting on each excerpt and reported dialogue. In the following I will discuss this in greater detail.

(a) Choices

Transcribing means making choices about how to represent speech, and each choice reveals its own implications for what is being left out, what it being represented and how that is interpreted. This means that transcription is more than the choice of conventions and the application of notation symbols. Rather, choices are "integrally related to theoretical positions and how researchers locate themselves and others in the research process" (Davidson 2009: 38; see also Jaffe 2007). As Duranti (2007), Ochs (1979) and others have noted, qualitative researchers often present their transcripts as transparent representations of recorded speech, rather than "a series of choices in need of explanation" (Davidson 2009: 36). However, transcription is a process of selection; it is "theoretical […] interpretive and representational (ibid: 37), and, moreover, the choices that transcribers make about how to represent speech "encompass power relationships" (Bucholtz 2000).

When making choices about representing speech in transcription, researchers have to balance questions of reliability, readability and accuracy with questions of representation. That is, how is the speech of interlocutors being represented, and thereby, also, how are the speakers themselves being represented? As Bucholtz (2000) notes, the challenge for the transcriber is to produce transcripts that are "accurate and readable but that are also reflexive in how they make explicit to the reader the constructed nature of written talk and so the problematic nature of accuracy and readability" (168).

To manage the tension between accuracy, readability and the political issues of representation, Roberts (1997), proposes the following criteria for the transcription of speech: (1) transcripts should use *standard orthography* even in cases where speakers are using nonstandard varieties (this also means avoiding eye dialect). Doing so, following Roberts, minimises the risk of stigmatising speakers' talk. (2) Researchers should work closely with interlocutors, making sure they are being represented in the way they want to be represented. (3) Use experimental methods to contextualise and evoke speakers' voices, while still remaining consistent and accurate. (4) Take a layered approach to transcription; using different versions at different levels (i.e. fine-grained to ethnographic). Finally, (5) researchers should be reflexive

about the transcription process, discussing their transcription choices throughout (1997: 170). Additionally, transcripts need to be reliable, meaning the transcriber must have sufficient knowledge of the language(s) they are transcribing and should have consistent transcription conventions throughout.

(b) Readability: different functions of transcribed and translated talk

Throughout this thesis, I take an experimental approach to the presentation of transcribed talk. When I began writing this thesis, I decided to follow the approach outlined by Blackledge and Creese (2010), choosing not to follow usual transcription conventions distinguishing between different 'languages' through bold, underlined or italicised fonts. By trying to avoid creating boundaries between different languages, my aim was to follow arguments about translanguaging (Garcia and Vogel 2017) and heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1934) and reflect the diversity and linguistic fluidity present at all times in the LICs.

Within the main body text as well as vignettes, I initially tried to include transcribed talk as it was originally uttered (e.g. in German or Arabic) in "quotation marks", giving English translations, where needed, in (parentheses) immediately following the reported utterance. However, this quickly became very difficult to read, slowed the flow of the narrative and made the text dense and tricky to disentangle. I therefore had to make a few decisions that went against my original plan.

The first is that when I use reported speech and transcribed talk as part of my own narrative, discussions and ethnographic vignettes, I generally use the English translation only; presenting the talk in "quotation marks".

Example (a):

> These predictions disproportionately targeted Arabic speakers, with teachers often making comments such as "Arabic students find it more difficult to learn German" or, "in my last group, all the Arabic students failed the exam". These forms of instructional narratives not only created divisions between groups of students, but they also contributed to an environment where future outcomes seemed less certain depending on a students' dominant language.

Following Jaffe (2007), using particular excerpts of talk is used to illustrate broader patterns and practices that are being studied ethnographically. In this sense, "we can view the representation of those fragments as being designed with reference to a larger whole that is only partially demonstrated in any particular selection of data in a transcript" (2007: 832). This means transcription needs to remain open to a range of methods of representation.

In some cases, if it is important for the context, or if I want to add further illustration, I will include multilingual talk. In the example (b) below, my interaction with Nasim begins with him speaking to me in German; he is repeating the sentence structure for an exercise on coordinating conjunctions, and in doing so, is telling me about himself. The interaction below is preceded by a description of a grammar exercise where several students construct sentences using the two-part coordinating conjunction "sowohl…als auch"–as well as. In this case, I found it important to show how Nasim uses that sentence construction in German to begin building a biographical narrative. I use the English translation of his subsequent talk, presented in quotation marks, to simplify the reading flow and to build his story into my analysis.

Example (b):

> As Jürgen went around the room, discussing each student's sentences, Nasim nudged me on the arm, directing me to look down at his phone. "Ich habe sowohl einen Neffen, als auch eine Nichte" (I have a nephew as well as a niece) he whispered as he tilted the screen of his phone towards me, revealing the image of two young children. The picture appeared to have captured the children mid play, as one of them was holding up a small blue ball, and the other was turning on her heels, extending out one leg, as if in the act of running. The children played in front of a low, rectangular mud brick house, behind it a squat stone wall and tall trees."This is a typical Kurdish house", he explained, as he swiped through more shots of the children in front of his home. "We build them with mud so that they keep us warm in the winter, and cool in the summer. My family built this one," he pointed to the wooden slats jutting out of the façade, just under the flat roof.

In some other cases, I present dialogue in both the original language(s) in which it was uttered, alongside the English translation. The original transcripts are presented on the left side of the page and the translation is presented on the right. This allows me to capture some of the translingual interaction while minimising the intervention effects of the translation (as they might be e.g. in conventional

transcription formats where the translation is presented directly under the original talk, or when languages are demarcated by different font types (e.g. italics, underlines or bold text). I use this format for both shorter and longer excerpts:

Example (c):

Original German			English Translation		
1	O:	Hast du deiner Mutter	1	O:	Did you give your mother
2		etwas zum Geburtstag geschenkt?	2		something for her birthday?
3	A:	Wann hast du Geburtstag? (hhhh)	3	A:	When is your birthday? (hhhh)
4	O:	Nein nein nein! (hhhh)	4	O:	No, no, no! (hhhh)

(c) Representing the Speech of Language Learners

At the time of my fieldwork, most of my interlocutors were at very early stages of language acquisition (with the exception of the B2 group who were intermediate speakers). Often they might have used an 'incorrect' article, a different word order or non-standard conjugation when speaking. Working with learner varieties, means critically reflecting on how to represent learner talk (Preston 2000).

My intuitive approach is to transcribe their talk exactly as it is uttered, however, as Copland and Creese (2017) point out, there is a risk of inadvertently producing cartoon-like representations of migrant language-learners' speech. This can in turn maintain the stigmatisation and social evaluation by the reader (Atkinson 1992). At the same time, editing their talk in transcriptions can lead to the sanitisation of their talk in a way that would not only be prescriptivist, but could also fundamentally misrepresent them (Copland and Creese 2017). This would be particularly dangerous given that I am critically approaching the topic of linguistic integration and because I am a first language speaker of German.

The tension here lies between, on the one hand, finding a way to represent the speech of my interlocutors and what they are communicating through it, in a way that they want to be represented, and determining the purpose of transcribed material, on the other hand. Such cases call for a certain degree of selectivity (Ochs 1979): balancing readability with accuracy and research purpose. Having considered these conflicting approaches in this thesis, I transcribe the talk as it is uttered–excluding phonetic transcriptions and diacritics, while capturing word order, conjugation and article use.

Notes on Italics

I use italics for a number of different purposes throughout this thesis:

(A) In excerpts of spoken interaction, italics mark speakers' emphasis of certain words or phrases.

(B) In text when I am recounting someone's narrative, or including dialogue in "quotation marks" I use it to mark speaker emphasis as well as important words or concepts they bring in (sometimes from other languages):

Example (d):

> "I need an hour-and-a-half with the *U-Bahn*[20] to get to the German course. Every day! Back and forth. I leave the apartment at 6:30 am. In the train, I often take a nap, a *rafwa,* or I chat with my friends and family on WhatsApp".

The speaker uses two important terms here that I include in italics. I do not do this to delineate between different languages, but because these concepts add conceptual thickness, context and specificity: I could have translated "U-Bahn" to "subway", but I kept the German term, because it is a specifically relevant term to the Berlin context. The second term "rafwa" is a Syrian Arabic term for nap. I include it here, because–as the speaker explained to me–rafwa describes a particular kind of short nap (or dozing). I thus included it to reflect the specificity of the term.

(C) I use italics in my own writing for emphasis and to highlight specific terms (sometimes these are German terms or concepts).

[20] The U-Bahn is the underground commuter train in Berlin.

I.II.e. Translation

The majority of my conversational data (particularly interviews and focus groups) is in German and in English, both of which are my dominant languages. My fluency in English and German allowed me a great deal of flexibility to transcribe and translate texts independently (without the help of a third party), though I made sure to have my transcripts reviewed both by German/English-speaking colleagues as well as by my interlocutors. There were also frequent occurrences of varieties of Arabic, Russian, Turkish, Tigrinya and Persian (to name a few) in classroom interactional data. However, I only include a few excerpts of Arabic talk in this thesis. With the help of colleagues at the School of Anthropology at Oxford and the Department of Anthropology at Princeton, I was able to transcribe and translate some segments of Arabic talk. Unfortunately, most of my plurilingual data has yet to be transcribed and translated. I plan to devote more time to this in the future.

The English translations of German talk are simplified, focussing on capturing the content of each utterance rather than direct translations (unless otherwise indicated) and specific word order. This means there is a degree of interpretation in my translations, which does effect the ways in which I capture the voices of my interlocutors. To ease this tension somewhat, I consulted with my interlocutors during the translation process to make sure that I was accurately representing what they wanted to say. [21]

I.II.f. Transliteration

Arabic talk is transliterated using the Latin script and a simplified version of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies'* conventions.

The Arabic letter ع (‘ayn), a voiced pharyngeal fricative, is described for Syrian Arabic as “a smooth but tense spirant [=fricative]” by Cowell (2005: 4). Throughout the thesis, ع is transliterated as ‘ as in sma‘ and tale‘.

[21] I am aware that a lot of work has been done in anthropology and linguistic anthropology to address the ethical dimensions, power dynamics and decision-processes involved in translation (see e.g. Rosman and Rubel 2003; Gal 2016; Copeland and Creese 2017). I plan to dedicate more time and attention to this issue in future work.

I.III. Thesis Outline

Across five chapters, this thesis critically explores the temporal dimensions of migration, displacement, integration and belonging in contemporary Germany (using Berlin as a core case study). In so doing, this thesis examines how time is *variously experienced and negotiated* by a diverse community of migrants and refugees subject to Germany's language and integration requirements. It considers how time *shapes policy decisions and bureaucratic procedures* (such as the issuing of temporary residency permits, time limits for language and integration course attendance, as well as the ways in which institutions make newcomers wait for appointments and crucial resources). It examines the ways in which historically-rooted and socio-culturally embedded assumptions about the importance of language competency for belonging and integration intersect with the requirements put forward for newcomers to Germany, ultimately *delaying* rather than more quickly enabling their socioeconomic inclusion. Following the first chapter, which sets out the background, context and workings of Germany's contemporary integration programmes, the ethnographic chapters are organised around four related yet distinct themes: (1) Future and Progress, (2) Waiting and Boredom, (3) Time Practices and Spatiotemporal Belonging (4) Humour, Laughter and Parody.

Chapter One lays out in detail the historical development of Germany's integration programmes and policies while unpacking its ideological underpinnings, temporal dimensions and implications. This chapter, thus, situates and contextualises contemporary Germany's language and integration system as part of a broader push to liberalise and modernise its immigration, asylum and citizenship policies, which did not historically have straightforward pathways to citizenship, permanent residency and labour market access for all newcomers. Aiming to acknowledge its role as a major European country of immigration, the notion of integration is presented–in policy discourses–as a *sustainable* and *forward-looking* effort to ensure the socioeconomic inclusion of refugees and migrants. However, as I demonstrate in this chapter, notions of language-based integration cannot be easily separated from Germany's historically complicated relationship to national identity and even in it's contemporary form, Germany's linguistic integration programmes are marked by underlying language ideological notions of belonging, which undergird its contemporary efforts to incorporate newcomers.

Chapter Two, the first ethnographic chapter, explores the temporal dimension of the notion of progress and competing notions of and expectations for the future. As I have found, for my interlocutors, ideas of belonging, success and security are tightly interwoven with imaginations and discourses of *the future*, particularly as it pertains to professional and vocational attainment. Many spoke of the language and integration classroom as a *key* through which to unlock the 'not-yet' future possibilities of Germany's economic landscape (Bloch 1986; Adam 2004). Progress was measured by the speed with which future goals were met: in class, it was about the speed with which they progressed through the language course, outside of class, it was the speed with which they secured professional recognition; a procedure which I explore in detail in this chapter. Obtaining professional recognition of foreign degrees is a messy, opaque process for many. Germany is strict about the kinds of foreign qualifications it recognises and how these map on to German equivalents. Often, newcomers are required to re-train and enrol in apprenticeship programmes to be permitted to formally work. For many, this process is experienced as a form of stalling and enforced re-direction, which undervalues their previous training and expertise. For others, it is met with a sense of hope and opportunity as they build on their vocational and educational experience, expand their social networks and find some temporal certainty. This chapter contributes to emerging scholarship on the future, by examining the ways in which it is imagined and navigated by newcomers in Germany: unpacking their frustrations, anxieties, hopes and expectations as they encounter ongoing interruptions, redirections, periods of stalling, slowing and sudden acceleration. In so doing, my research adds to a growing body of work seeking to add further complexity to our understanding of the future and future-making.

Chapter Three contributes to research on the notion of boredom, which expands our understanding of the temporal experiences of voluntary and involuntary migrants in Germany. Boredom has historically been linked to a sense of ennui; a state of listlessness and disengagement, particularly in moments of leisure or in contexts of the mundanity of everyday routine in the modern world (Lefebvre 1984; Goodstein 2005). In these contexts, boredom has come to describe an individual's disenchantment with modernity (Anderson 2004), particularly in Western, secularised and capitalist societies. Boredom in this context, however, goes beyond the mere tedium of everyday grammar

lessons that one might expect in the language classroom. It is also more complex than the listlessness one might feel when faced with an overabundance of "empty time". Instead, as my interlocutors describe, boredom is the product of combined experiences of confinement, hope and temporal uncertainty, owing, in large part, to restrictions on mobility, limited access to information and resources, experiences of alienation and marginalisation, as well as prolonged experiences of waiting without the certainty of desired outcomes. While the concept of waiting has been widely explored in anthropology, particularly in the context of migration and displacement, most recently in the work by Khosravi (2020) Bryant and Knight (2019), Bandak and Janeja (2018) and Schielke (2015) the related, but distinct concept of boredom is still undertheorised. This chapter will contribute to emerging research on migrant temporalities by demonstrating the ways in which boredom manifests as a product of delayed mobility brought on by Germany's strict language and integration measures.

Chapter Four examines the spatiotemporal dimensions of *being here* and *being there* as they are discursively negotiated by members of the LIC. Through the discourse analysis of classroom interaction, I examine the ways in which teachers and students construct and compare different formulations of (un)belonging; negotiated across various, socially-embedded understandings of time-keeping, routine and time-based practices. I examine the how newcomers to Germany encounter a range of different, socioculturally grounded models and practices of time and how such models and practices reveal a tension between often idealised notions of everyday German time and the messy and complex realities newcomers experience daily. Shared relationships to time and time-based practices can be invoked to maintain community cohesion and bolster group identification. However, perceived differences around time and temporal relationships can also be engendered to mark difference and uphold boundaries. In this way, I show how the everyday experiences of my interlocutors involve continued negotiation of the boundaries between arriving and not yet fully belonging. I show how repeated encounters with state-employees (including Jobcenter employees and LIC instructors) reveal conflicting notions and expectations of temporal adaptation: from adapting to external expectations of progress to the practices associated with everyday life in Berlin. While the previous chapters considered how language and integration requirements and bureaucratic procedures affect newcomers'

relationships to the future, ideas of progress and pathways to inclusion, this chapter considers how the relationship between time and belonging is navigated on a discursive level: focussing on the ways in which time-based practices are conceived in relationship to understandings of inclusion and participation and how these are variously negotiated within classroom discourse.

As I demonstrate in Chapter Five, in contexts of migration and displacement, jokes, joke-telling and laughter can ease anxiety or anger: making light of traumatic, oppressive and dangerous situations, in addition to expressing a sense of shared reality. My interlocutors employed humorous devices in several different ways: for teachers, joking, play and laughter added levity to the language learning process and helped create a sense of community. Often, however, these devices had the effect of enforcing linguistic and sociocultural norms; it was a means of disciplining students who broke from expected convention. By integrating comedic devices into their teaching, instructors did a lot of language ideological work, legitimising the hegemony of Standard German over other, non-standard ways of speaking. For students, parody, mimicry and joke-telling were means of disrupting and challenging classroom discourse. It became a method through which to comment on and navigate their shared experiences of displacement, uncertainty and marginalisation. Communal joking and laughter allowed my interlocutors to momentarily make light of difficult and overwhelming situations and to process their shared encounters in Germany. I argue that humour as a methodological lens in the context of Germany's newcomer integration efforts, enables us to gain a dynamic understanding of migrant encounters with linguistic belonging in Germany: it allows us to unpack the ways in which social attitudes and ideologies are transmitted through language teaching as well as the ways in which they are challenged and disrupted by a diverse transnational group of migrants and refugees. At the same time, humour allows us to study the various intricacies of community formation and the ways in which laughing about shared hardships allows newcomers to comment on and negotiate experiences of marginalisation, alienation and precarity. This, the last of four ethnographic chapters delves into the kinds of micro-level dynamics between my interlocutors, revealing the ways in which notions of linguistic belonging are continuously produced and disrupted by humour and language play.

I conclude by summarising my research findings and addressing parts of my research that remain under-explored. Looking towards my future research, the concluding chapter lays out some of the areas I plan to expand upon.

1. Language, Integration and Belonging in Germany

Political and policy shifts in the last three decades have contributed to a theoretical change in Germany's citizenship and immigration debates, whereby the discourse around belonging–and particularly the inclusion of newcomers–uses linguistic competency as a central mechanism. Germany's large-scale migrant integration efforts since the early 2000s construct an image of twenty-first century Germany which is characterised by diversity and cultural pluralism, while also unified by a common service to constitutional democracy and economic growth, and bound together by a "pan-ethnic lingua franca" (Gramling 2009: 131). The introduction of the National Integration Plan (NIP) in 2007 set out to create "a new road towards a mobilising and sustainable integration policy" (NIP 2007: 37), one in which newcomers "possess the necessary self-sufficiency to handle all aspects of everyday life without assistance from a third party" (Act to Control and Restrict Immigration 2007: 190-91). "Necessary self-sufficiency" is attained through the acquisition of German civics knowledge–i.e., German history, the legal and political system, the constitution, culture and society–and at minimum, basic knowledge of Standard German. With the implementation of the NIP came the re-modelling of so-called *Sprach-und-Integrationskurse*. These language and integration courses are state-subsidised language and civics knowledge courses designed to aid newcomers in their paths to residency, citizenship, employment and higher education, and to encourage participation in local society more broadly.

Today, most migrants and refugees are required to enrol in and complete courses at the level B1(threshold/intermediate) of the Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFRL) within the first few years of their arrival.[22]

On paper, one might argue that these programmes appear useful and practical. Speaking a country's dominant language can foster interaction with local communities, help build social networks and contribute to individual agency. Indeed, Germany attempts to construct a very pragmatic relationship

[22] Under the Integration Act of 2016, refugees as obligated to attend LICs once their asylum applications have been approved and once their residence permits have been issued (BMAS 2016).

between linguistic practice and social, cultural, economic and political inclusion. In the German context, language is at once treated as a practical tool for integration and social participation as well as a key unifying cultural practice, promising that "anyone who answers the call to active participation on a neighbourhood and national level embodies Germanness itself" (Gramling 2009: 130). As Gramling argues, as nations (particularly in Europe) become more diverse in terms of ethnicity, race, religion, and national origin, language use becomes increasingly scrutinised and regulated as a vehicle for symbolic allegiance and purported social cohesion.

In the following chapter, I lay out the historical developments which undergird Germany's contemporary language and integration policies, while also critically examining the concept of integration and its language ideological underpinnings.

1.1. Newcomer Integration Policy in Contemporary Germany

Newcomer integration efforts began in 2000 when Germany started introducing new immigration and naturalisation policies under the Citizenship Law Reform to better regulate migration into Germany, create easier pathways to citizenship, as well as ensure the successful economic and social incorporation of newcomers. Prior to this reform, citizenship was only narrowly defined along the principle of *Jus sanguinis*–or right of blood–meaning that citizenship was primarily conferred through blood descent. This conception of citizenship was broadened in 2008 under the Nationality Act (*Staatsangehörigkeitsgesetz*) to include *Jus soli*–right of the soil–granting citizenship to those born in Germany, provided that at least one parent was of German descent (Mandel 2008).

Such reforms were born out of the transition from the long-standing conservative Christian Democratic-led coalition, under Helmut Kohl, to the centre-left coalition of the Greens and the SPD (Social Democrats) under Gerhard Schröder in 1998. This also marked Germany's shift away from its long-upheld stance: "Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland" (Germany is not a country of immigration) and a move towards acknowledging its status as a major European country of

immigration. Germany is among the OECD countries that receive some of highest numbers of permanent immigrants per year (OECD 2019).[23] In 2016, as I was preparing my fieldwork project, a micro-census of Germany's population of 82 million showed that 17.1 million people or roughly 21% of the population had a 'migrant background'; meaning that either they themselves were immigrants or their parents or grandparents had come to Germany from elsewhere.[24] The acknowledgement of Germany's position as a country of immigration (in 2001) came with a series of recommendations for developing migration policy, based both on an analysis of Germany's historical and contemporary social and economic conditions as well as the context of European-wide migration and asylum policies and processes (Stevenson and Schanze 2009: 90).

While aiming to create more liberalised pathways to citizenship, permanent residency and the right to remain for migrants and asylum seekers, these new policies also set requirements for newcomers seeking to reside in or to become citizens of Germany, as a means of ensuring civic and economic integration. This included, for example, proof of employment and absence of a criminal record, but also "a sworn loyalty oath and a language evaluation" (Wegmann 2014: 133). Thus, in Germany, while minimum residency requirements for naturalisation have been reduced from 15 to 8 years, additional demonstration of basic German proficiency is required to obtain citizenship. This requirement was taken one step further in 2004-05 with the Comprehensive Immigration Policy Reform, which explicitly stated that the "integration of immigrants was a national priority" (ibid: 134). Under the regulation of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), all new legal immigrants were now required to participate in the integration effort by enrolling in so-called integration courses, which teach German language, culture, and history, as well as practical, everyday skills. The aim of the integration courses was to decrease welfare costs and enable migrants to participate in the labour market (Wegmann 2014: 134).

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[23] Permanent Immigrant Inflow is defined by the OECD as covering "regulated movements of foreigners considered to be settling in the country from the perspective of the destination country" (OECD 2019).

[24] Today, by comparison, the number has risen to 21.2 million. 11.2 million are described as foreign residents. These may describe foreign nationals living temporarily in Germany or who are not yet German citizens–including those with refugee or protected statuses (Destatis 2020).

The NIP, introduced under Chancellor Merkel in 2007, outlined steps to make the integration of immigrants sustainable and "forward-looking" (NIP 2007:2). The NIP aimed to improve integration efforts across ten areas of society, including German language acquisition, better access to education, vocational training, better opportunities for women and girls, promoting intercultural competence and the civic participation of immigrants (ibid). The integration course is presented as a vital first step in the process, ensuring that all new immigrants can speak basic German and have basic knowledge of German society and law, thus enabling them to move on to the next step of successful integration: access to the job and education market. As Khan and McNamara (2017) point out in their investigation of citizenship, immigration law and language, reforms like those in Germany came at a time when several European countries began to "reinvigorate notions of language and citizenship as part of immigration and 'border control' policies" (2017: 451). This also involved the introduction of new or modified citizenship testing schemes, which were "more onerous for the migrant, in line with more stringent entry and settlement requirements" (ibid).

Citizenship, residency, and entry requirements for migrants are not uncommon or new in the European context (or in the context of other Western countries such as the US and Canada); however, the increased focus on host language acquisition has only begun emerging recently. The European Commission has recently stated that "it is broadly agreed that the acquisition of language skills is critical for integration" (European Commission 2011: 4). Increasingly, the acquisition of national languages has become a key priority for integration policy in the EU, and, as Ros i Sole argues in her review of European language and integration policies, knowledge of the host language "is seen as a barometer of migrants' integration in a particular society" (2014: 57), with many countries making language and 'knowledge of society' tests compulsory requirements for entry, residency and citizenship applicants. This in turn means that across many European countries, access to full rights and benefits, the job and education market, as well as social life, is contingent on language proficiency. This change has happened rapidly: while in 1998 only 6 member states had language requirements for citizenship, residency or pre-entry, by 2010, the number had tripled.[25] Today, most countries in Europe have

[25] This factors in the EU's eastern expansion in 2004.

language requirements for citizenship applicants. The table below, from Ruth Wodak's (2013) paper on citizenship and migration in Europe shows language (LANG) and knowledge of society requirements/ tests (KOS) across European countries (EU and non-EU):

	Pre-entry	*Residence*	*Citizenship*
Armenia			LANG
Austria	LANG + KOS	LANG + KOS	LANG + KOS
Czech Republic		LANG	LANG
Denmark	LANG + KOS	LANG	LANG
Estonia		LANG	LANG
Finland		Under discussion	Under discussion
France	LANG + KOS	LANG	LANG
Germany	LANG	LANG + KOS	LANG + KOS
Great Britain	LANG	LANG	LANG
Greece		LANG	LANG
Hungary			LANG
Italy		LANG	LANG?
Liechtenstein	LANG	LANG	LANG
Lithuania		LANG	LANG
Luxemburg	Under discussion	LANG	LANG
Netherlands	LANG + KOS	LANG	LANG
Norway		Under discussion	Under discussion
Poland			LANG
Slovakia			LANG
Slovenia		LANG	LANG
Switzerland			(cantons) LANG
Turkey			LANG
Ukraine			LANG

Note. LANG = language requirements; KOS = knowledge of society course/test.

Table 1: Language Requirements for Entry, Residency and Citizenship in European Countries (Wodak 2013: 174)

As the table indicates, Germany has a comparatively strict set of requirements, demanding language and civics knowledge in two of the three status categories–only Austria demands both in all three categories. What is more, the German language requirement sets one of the highest standards for language proficiency in Europe and even in most of the world. Comparatively, the Netherlands sets a proficiency requirement of A2, while countries such as Sweden require migrants to move up one level in the CEFRL scale (based on the level they started with). The US and Canada, on the other hand, propose basic proficiency levels, whereby proficiency is not graded along a set framework, but is assessed through a personal interview (see e.g. Piller 2001; Gales 2009; Heller 2010; Loring 2013).

According to the National Integration Plan, all new immigrants–excluding those migrants coming from other EU countries–are expected to enrol in integration courses. As of 2005, all new immigrants can be obligated to take the course if they are found not to be able to "sufficiently communicate" in

German (BAMF 2016). Additionally, immigrants that have acquired a right to remain after January 2005 can be required to take the course if it is deemed that they have failed to independently integrate themselves into German economic, cultural and social life. In some cases, this also applies to residents who are receiving financial welfare support (ibid). All decisions are made by the German State's Foreigners' Registration Offices (*Ausländerbehörde*).[26]

According to the Integration Act, and as outlined by the BAMF, as of January 2017, asylum applicants with "good prospects to remain" are given access to integration classes, and are often required to attend. According to the BAMF those with "good prospects to remain" involve asylum seekers from countries of origin with a protection rate of 50% and above (BAMFc 2017:1). In 2017 this included asylum seekers from Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Syria and Somalia. The criterion for having good prospects to remain only pertains to individuals who are granted permission to reside in Germany in accordance with section 55.1 of the Asylum Act (*Asylgesetz*), which grants a temporary right to remain to individuals while their asylum procedure is pending. Though EU citizens are not required to take the integration course, they are eligible to enrol and many do, as do other European citizens, including ethnic German Resettlers from Eastern Europe, who represent a large contingent of the European students. Ethnic German Resettlers are entitled to German citizenship under the condition that they learn intermediate (B1 level) German.

Citizenship	Permanent Residency	University	Vocational Training Programmes (VET)	Skilled labour
B1 + O-Kurs	B1 + O-Kurs	C1	B2	Min. B2

Table 2: Language Requirements for Citizenship, Permanent residency, Education and Employment (O-Kurs = Orientation course)

Language requirements extend beyond legal requirements for citizenship and permanent residency eligibility. Proof of language proficiency is also required for entry to German universities and vocational training programmes and apprenticeships (which I discuss in more detail in Chapter Two). Employers on the so-called "skilled labour" market may also require certain levels of language

[26] It is unclear how exactly this decision process works. This will be subject to further research.

proficiency from applicants (though the levels and types of qualifications required vary). In this sense, language proficiency expectations are intricately embedded in all domains of social life and become a continued barrier to socioeconomic mobilities.

So how does all of this work in practice? In general, integration courses involve six-to-nine-month programmes consisting of a German language class and a so-called *Orientierungskurs* (orientation course), involving German history, law, politics and social life. The standard, full-time B1 integration course I attended took seven months, with four hours of instruction a day, five days a week. Next to the general language and orientation courses, most providers also offer specialised courses for women, parents, and adolescents, as well as literacy programmes for those who do not have prior experience reading and writing in the Latin script. The course is followed by a written and oral examination in which applicants are required to demonstrate German civics knowledge and German language proficiency at level B1 resulting in the *Zertificat Deutsch* (the certificate of German language B1 level proficiency) in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFRL), which ranges from A1 (entry level) to C2 (advanced proficiency), whereby B1 is considered the 'threshold' level between basic and advanced language proficiency. I give a basic overview of the CEFRL scale below. Language and integration classes breakdown the six levels (shown below) into smaller modules ranging from A1.1 to A1.2, A2.1 to A2.2 and so on. A B1 language and integration course will thus consist of six modules each running for around one month and followed by a one-month Orientation course (*Orientierungskurs*).

Level	Basic Description	Detailed Description
A1	Basic User/Breakthrough/Novice	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.
A2	Basic User/Novice/Intermediate Low	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
B1	Threshold/Intermediate Mid	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes and ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
B2	Intermediate High/Advanced Low	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
C1	Advanced Mid-High	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
C2	Advanced High/Distinguished	Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation. Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.

Table 3: Common European Framework Reference for Languages (CEFRL) (Council of Europe 2020; Goethe Institute 2021)

Programmes run under national curriculums designed by the BAMF (in collaboration with TELC, the language test provider) and are taught at schools that are officially qualified as *Integrationskursträger* (carriers of the integration course). At the time I began fieldwork in 2017, there were around 1,699 officially registered LIC providers in Germany, with about 400,000 attendees nationwide (BAMF

2017). A single cohort of up to 25 adult participants will progress from entry-level German courses A1 to basic or 'threshold' level A2-B1 along a standardised course curriculum with set course-books and work-books provided by TELC. The course booklets aim at teaching German grammar and conversational skills, based on topics "relevant to work and everyday life" (Telc 2016: Introduction) with a view toward preparing students for everyday and work-related challenges, as well as the final language exam *Deutsch-Test für Zuwanderer* (German (language) test for immigrants). Topics range from going to the supermarket, looking for apartments and dealing with your neighbours, family-related issues, going on vacation, as well as such topics as taking care of the environment and recycling, conflict resolution, and even how to talk about migration experiences. Following the language course, students continue on to a one-month civics knowledge course (orientation course), where they are taught about issues in German history (such as World War II and the GDR), and aspects of German society, law and politics (such as Germany's democratic values, the constitution, marriage laws, gender equality and LGBTQ rights). Civics knowledge is also assessed through a written exam called *Leben in Deutschland* (Life in Germany).[27]

Following the successful completion of the course, migrants and refugees then, theoretically, continue to apply for jobs, vocational training, or higher education, and for many it is also a first step in achieving their citizenship and permanent residency requirements. Increasingly, however, potential employers are requiring higher levels of proficiency. As of 2018, BAMF also subsidises B2 courses (which are often geared toward vocational German skills). This, however, further extends a newcomer's time spent on language training by at least another four months.

[27] This thesis does not comment on the orientation course, though I plan to dedicate future work to the subject.

1.2. The Place of Language in Integration and Belonging

As a central figure in the EU and a key international economic and political player, Germany has found itself confronted with its position as a major European country of immigration. Germany has taken steps to ensure the inclusion and management of existing and newly arriving migrant and refugee communities through liberalising its citizenship and immigration policies. While the topic of migrant integration has been a polarising topic in German political and popular discourse since the 1990s, seeking to facilitate migrants' full participation in economic, political and cultural life, many scholars argue that the term's ambiguity lends itself to underlying social and political aims. In his ethnographic study of UK citizenship testing, Khan (2019) argues that such processes are a symptom of a broader *assimilationist turn* which has gained traction across Europe in recent decades. In this way, requirements for citizenship, permanent residency–and, in the case of contemporary Germany–requirements for integration were introduced as a means of "dispelling suspicions and fears from state about the capability and willingness of migrants to join the national community" (Khan 2020: 3; see also Joppke 2010, 2013).

In many of the social sciences, integration policies are understood as tools for managing or controlling the movement and settlement of migrants into and within the 'host' country (see e.g. Doerschler and Jackson 2010; Schlueter, Meuleman and Davidov 2013). From a policy perspective, these policies involve the regulation of the social and economic inclusion of newcomers, ensuring their entry into the job and education markets, and their ability to actively participate in social and political life. These principles are reiterated in official definitions of integration in Germany, such as this statement put forward by the Ministry of the Interior, stating that German integration policy "involves that all people who are permanently living together in Germany are included in society. This means that refugees and immigrants should not only have access to the same rights and obligations as others, but also that they should be able to participate in social, economic and cultural life. Successful integration entails a sense of belonging to a community" the statement reads, and goes on to stress that "integration means living together, not living in parallel" (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2017: 1). As I have addressed in the introduction to this thesis, the notion of 'living in parallel' echoes popular discourse around the

perceived "failure of the guest worker system" (Gramling 2009: 131), whereby, lacking the prospect of potential long-term residence under German law and therefore trapped in a transitory state, the Southern and Eastern European and Turkish guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*) of the 1950s and 60s tended to keep close ties with their home countries. I will explore this point in some more detail here.

Until the 1970s it was widely assumed that the presence of more than 2 million foreign workers was merely temporary–as the term 'guest' would imply. It wasn't until the 1990s, following the large-scale settlement of guest workers, that immigration and naturalisation policies were revisited and liberalised in unified Germany, to allow former guest workers and their children access to permanent residency and citizenship (Brubaker 1992: 172-73). One remnant of Germany's guest worker agreements is the difficult notion that due to an absence of integration efforts on the one hand, and the unwillingness or inability of guest workers to actively participate in German society on the other, so-called *Parallelgesellschaften* (parallel societies) could form; creating a cultural rift between immigrant communities and so-called 'native' Germans (Forsythe 1989; Brubaker 1992; Wegmann 2014).[28]

To many scholars in the field of migration studies, anthropology and related fields, Germany's integration policy–along with other integration policies across Europe–is a reaction to the different waves and forms of migration and movement that took place in the country since the 1950s: from the southern and eastern European and Turkish guest-workers, to new waves of migration from Asia and Africa, and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall in the 1990s. European identity has for decades been characterised by this complexity and multidimensionality of forms and patterns of migration and mobility; a state which Vertovec (2007) called *superdiversity* and which Blommaert (2010, 2011, 2016) later adopted to include complex levels of linguistic diversity. Despite the reality of diversity and multilingualism, extremist attacks in New York and London–to name a few–in the early 2000s, paired with a continued rise in migration to Europe, sparked a series of policy reforms that were re-focused on stricter border control (Ros i Sole 2014: 60; see also Khan and McNamarra 2017). Similarly, debates about the implications of multiculturalism in Germany–sparked

[28] Germans without a migrant background, meaning they themselves are not immigrants nor are their parents or grandparents.

in the late 1990s–were revisited in 2004, after the assassination of Dutch film director Theo van Gogh by a Muslim Dutch citizen, to which Germany responded with a reinvigoration of the since-abandoned notion of German *Leitkultur*–or the need for a German 'guiding culture'–on the political right (Mandel 2008: 218). To many on the political right (and centre-right) the absence of a coherent dominant German culture left a vacuum that they felt was being filled with multiculturalism and thus threatening German national identity, and leading to the kind of "clash of civilisations" that had taken place in the Netherlands (ibid).

Though the concept of *Leitkultur* has largely been rejected, many scholars, including Holly and Meinhof (2013), Ros i Sole (2014) and Stevenson and Schanze (2009), have claimed that the term integration–in the European context–is a result of debates between assimilationist and multiculturalist positions from the political right and the political left, respectively. To Holly and Meinhof, the term acts as a compromising term under which, on the one hand, one may develop policies that would "take note of the undeniable fact that more than 15 million people in a population of 81 million in Germany have a migrant background, making them social, cultural and economic reality" (2013: 175). On the other hand, as Holly and Meinhof continue, integration represents an ambiguous umbrella term for the management and control of migrants' social and spatial mobility and sense of belonging into and within Germany, or rather, it is a "vague compromise formula for addressing and critiquing ways in which migrants are perceived to accommodate or not to their new society and ways of life" (ibid: 172). The result of this is that integration becomes "the formula, which everyone invokes and needs to engage with, but with different emphases, inflections and evaluations" (Holly and Meinhof 2013: 172). Increasingly, this involves an emphasis on host-language acquisition.

The term integration itself–as defined by social scientists–does not explicitly call for migrants to learn host languages. As we have seen, it has only been in recent years that European countries have begun to place renewed emphasis on the importance of host-language acquisition for migrant integration. This development is particularly striking in the European context, because much of Europe's identity–particularly since the dawn of the EU–has been characterised by cultural and linguistic diversity and

movement (Extra, Spotti and Van Avermaet 2009). Beginning with the Netherlands' Newcomer Integration Law in 1998, countries across Europe began introducing civic integration policies for migrants, requiring them to learn the host country's language, history and customs. Some countries such as the Netherlands and Germany run official integration courses with a set amount of required attendance hours and standardised testing procedures.

Like its predecessors, Germany's 2005 Immigration Act was largely based on the assumption that the economic and social integration of migrants is predicated on their German language skills. Following Chancellor Merkel, Germany's integration policies focus on promoting "the potential of immigrants as crucial for the 'societal cohesion and the economic future of our country'" (Bundesregierung 2007: 8 qtd in Mouritsen 2012: 92). Migrants' commitment and contribution to societal cohesion is thus rewarded with "the same chance of education and wealth, personal development and share in society" (ibid). Germany, in turn, fosters this reciprocal relationship through promoting linguistic integration efforts, making German language communication the centrepiece of sustainable integration and societal cohesion. To Gramling, such policies invoke a vision for Germany as a multicultural society with a unified language (2009: 132). However, Gramling points out that this vision fails to recognise the complexities of multiculturalism and migration and the multilingual realities attached to them. As he states, these policies do not acknowledge "the adverse web of circumstances a given speaker may experience amid the mutual imbrications of state power, transnational identity, multilingual subjectivity, and non-native speaking practices–not to mention the ethnic discrimination on non-linguistic grounds" (ibid).

Nevertheless, Germany tries to construct a very practical relationship between language acquisition and economic and social integration, framing it as a tool for social participation, and promising that "anyone who answers the call to active participation on a neighbourhood and national level embodies Germanness itself" (Gramling 2009: 130). However, as Mandel puts it, such "lofty language" of an inclusive and tolerant Germany does not answer questions about the consequences of not conforming to German integrationist ideals, and it also raises concerns about the degree to which social and

economic integration, and more importantly, access to rights and benefits, entry to the job and education market, as well as relationships with the native German community are contingent on language proficiency (2008: 211).

Doerschler and Jackson (2010)–both socio-legal scholars–identify two core reasons to question language-oriented integration policies. I have expanded these to four for the purpose of this chapter. Firstly, following Doerschler and Jackson, such policies are largely the result of political considerations, rather than systematic empirical analysis of the "effectiveness of language acquisition in facilitating integration", which means that we cannot answer questions about the direct relationship between language proficiency and social and economic integration, on the one hand, or the kinds of language courses that need to be designed in order to be effective, on the other (2010: 150). The first problem with language-focused integration policies is that they overlook other–non-linguistic–factors that affect integration processes, such as migrants' family situations, financial conditions, living situations, legal statuses, abilities and disabilities, and issues of discrimination and exclusion–often on non-linguistic grounds–by the 'host' community. Ignoring the important role of these factors means overlooking the fact that knowledge of German alone will not necessarily equal successful integration (ibid). Secondly, if integration strategies are going to focus on language, they will need to ensure that their language courses are effective. A study cited by Doerschler and Jackson, assessing the effectiveness of language courses in Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands, found a much slower progression of language skill through the courses than was initially expected. In Germany, it was found that only a few participants actually met the B1–threshold level–equivalent, indicating that the standards are set too high and that the course set up and structure do not meet the needs of individuals taking them (2010: 152).

A third issue is that invoking language and cultural knowledge requirements for migrants in this context seems to (consciously or unconsciously) ignore Germany's increasingly complex transnational and multilingual reality in favour of a monoglot ideal (Silverstein 1998; Blackledge 2000). As Ros i Sole (2014) argues, this points to the paradox of promoting national models of integration in an increasingly transnational and diverse Europe. The idealisation of the 'host' language furthermore

sends the message that migrants are an asset to society as long as they conform to the native community's language, customs and way of life (ibid: 60), meaning that instead of focusing on what migrants can contribute to the community, emphasis is placed on what they lack as potential citizens and residents (Stevenson and Schanze 2009: 90).

Finally, framing language as the key to successful integration–in the way that Germany does–implies that failing to learn German means a failure to integrate. With the installation of various departments, committees, offices and summits dedicated to maintaining Germany's integration efforts–*Integrationsbehörde, Integrationsbeauftragte, Integrationsbeirat, Integrationsgipfel*–also came a means of identifying successful as well as unsuccessful integration, with an emphasis on a migrant's ability and willingness to integrate, or lack thereof (*Integrationsfähigkeit/verweigerung*).[29] As Holly and Meinhof (2013) point out, the development of these integration 'formulas' offers scapegoats for a range of social issues, "so that criminality, youth violence, child poverty, unemployment, educational failure and other social evils particularly prevalent in big cities with large migrant populations can be explained away not as a failure of public policies but as problems caused by non-integrated migrants and their 'parallel societies'" (2013: 176).

As linguists and anthropologists have demonstrated, this distinction drawn between 'integrating' and 'non-integrating' migrants is a further example of the ways in which local and national communities construct a narrative of belonging and not-belonging. This dichotomy further implies that integration is possible only through the will and ability of newcomers to conform to the host community's standards.

[29] Integration bureau, Integration official, Integration council, Integration summit.

1.3. From *Jus Sanguinis* to *Jus Linguarum*? Ideologies of Linguistic Belonging

In German political discourse, the National Integration Programme is often regarded as a key example of sustainable migrant integration. However, the language-ideological underpinnings of language and integration policies are rarely questioned. Language ideologies, or normative sets of beliefs about language and its function and use in society, have the effect of not only prioritising some languages above others (such as German and English above Turkish and Arabic), but also to legitimise some languages over others as markers of belonging and societal cohesion. Such ideological positions are understood as being rooted in or responsive to "the experience or interests of a particular social position, although they may be presented as universally true" (Woolard 1992: 237). Language ideologies are very pervasive, particularly if they stem from political institutions, as these have the capability to subtly embed them in (particularly) the education, immigration and employment systems (Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero and Stevenson 2009). Language ideologies thus stand in "dialectal relation" to, and also strongly influence, social, discursive and linguistic practices (Woolard 1992: 238). For this reason, language ideologies easily lend themselves to political debates and policies around language and national identity, which seek to create a strong, normative link between the two. The language requirement thus perpetuates the assumption that there are clearly definable boundaries between the linguistic practices of one country and another, and that in order to actively participate within the bounds of that nation, one must conform linguistically.

Germany's linguistic integration efforts can be characterised by two seemingly contradictory yet simultaneously occurring processes: the unification of a *superdiverse* population through a common language, on the one hand, and the differentiation between those who succeed and those who fail to integrate into German society, on the other. As Gal and Irvine point out "the significance of linguistic differentiation is embedded in the politics of a region and its observers. Just as having an army presupposes some outside force, some real or putative opposition to be faced, so does identifying a language presuppose a boundary or opposition to another language with which it contrasts in some larger sociolinguistic field" (2000: 35). As Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero and Stevenson observe,

language has played a central role during the rise of the modern, interventionist state, which sought to make coherent, unified and manageable a whole variety of previously diverse practices within a unified territory (2009: 187). The perceived threats to national sovereignty brought on by migration flows into and across Europe, have increasingly prompted a view of society "in which differences are seen as dangerous and centrifugal and in which the 'best' society is suggested to be one without inter-group differences" (ibid), one which Blommaert and Verschuerren (1998) refer to as "the dogma of homogeneism" (1998: 194-195). As Hogan-Brun et al. argue, this has led national immigration policies to develop not only as a means of managing immigration, but as "part of a larger ideological process" (2009: 188), which Blommaert has called *language ideological debates* (1999). This language ideological process thus allows European nation-states to frame themselves as essentially monolingual, despite the very reality of multiculturalism and multilingualism.

As we have seen, the German community is thus imagined as what Mandel refers to as the "organic community" bound together by a shared history, tradition and language (2008: 207). This ideological view of a linguistically organic and homogeneous community, has, as Blackledge points out, the potential of excluding and discriminating against those "who are either unable or unwilling to fit the monoglot standard" (2000: 26). Language ideologies become embedded in cultural discourse, particularly in the discourse of authenticity, or rather, understandings of what it means to be authentically German. In linguistic anthropology, the notion of authenticity represents the consideration of speakers' negotiation of linguistic features and how these reflect (or do not reflect) their understanding of "unbroken, trans-generational transmission of traditions, timeless essentials, and reproduction of that which is already there" (Blackledge et al. 2014: 939). In this sense, the language-ideological construction of the 'organic community' means that Standard German becomes emblematic of inherent or authentic Germanness, and thereby de facto making other languages (and speakers) inauthentic.

As Brubaker, Forsythe, Mandel and others have pointed out, the continuous use of terms such as *Ausländer* (foreigner), *türkischstämmiger Deutscher* (German of Turkish origin) or *Deutscher mit*

Migrationshintergrund (German with a migrant background), continue to perpetuate the notion of difference between so-called 'native' Germans (or Germans without a migrant background) and non-native Germans. As Mandel explains, there is a "vision of the non-German as unchangeable in nature and therefore impossible to integrate" (Mandel 2008: 216), which is largely based on a fear of cultural loss presented by the "threat of immigration and the hybridisation or dilution of German values through multiculturalism" (ibid: 218). Thus, while migrants are encouraged to integrate, integration must entail the full embrace of German culture, language, and the pledge of loyalty to the German constitutional state. At the same time, the perceived conflict between German values and the threat of immigration continues to promote the idea of the migrant as 'unintegratable' and thus never fully part of Germany.

A key mechanism upholding the native/non-native dichotomy is the process of rendering certain linguistic features–and thereby also certain speakers–as emblematic of a given group or community. As Blackledge et al. point out, such features become recognisable and therefore may "reflect, bestow, and emphasise membership and belonging" (2014: 939). It is through this process that speakers are recognised as authentic or legitimate within a given context. Importantly, authenticity and legitimacy are not static, but rather are part of a dynamic process of negotiation. In this sense, language requirements and integration programmes become tools to reify these dynamics of authenticity and legitimacy, so that, as Gill (2007) notes, the authenticity of the native speaker becomes an idealisation, "with the unreflectingly fluent and competent language user's performance viewed in opposition to the inauthenticity of the nonnative language learner" (2007: 42), and thereby the non-native speaker, whose inability to meet the native-standard, renders her 'unintegratable'. We find this conflict of authenticity playing out in diaspora communities–particularly in urban spaces–where continued language contact between varieties of German and other locally spoken languages lead to hybridisation and the development of new sociolects such as *Kiezdeutsch*, a multiethnolect informed by varieties of German, Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Kurdish, which has commonly been associated with immigrant and diasporic communities. *Kiezdeutsch* is a grammatically complex communicative style and is an important symbol of hybrid cultural identity among Germany's urban youth (see e.g.

Androutsopoulos 2000; Auer 2003; Keim 2008; Wiese 2009). However, German media often represent *Kiezdeutsch* as a grammatically incorrect and a strongly reduced version of 'broken German', symbolising an inability or refusal to learn Standard German on part of its speakers. This is also paired with the apparent fear that *Kiezdeutsch* might negatively affect the standard variety (Wiese 2015). Though the dialect actually demonstrates innovation and creativity with some very complex grammatical features, *Kiezdeutsch* is often held up as further evidence that migrants need to be integrated culturally and linguistically. *Kiezdeutsch* is stigmatised for its seemingly non-standard word order and un-grammatical constructions such as the 'mispronunciation' of the / tʃ / (ch) sound in words like *Ich* and *Kirche* ("I" and "church") with the coronized 'sch' that has become a stereotyped marker of what is often problematically referred to as "Kanaksprach", derived from a derogatory term for a person of Turkish descent in Germany (Wiese 2009: 9). Contrarily, there is large body of research into the 'sch' among the Turkish, Arabic, Kurdish and Iranian diaspora communities in Germany that has demonstrated that such deviations from the standard are also common in regional dialects (such as Berliner German: *Berlinerisch*). While this feature is present in at least two non-standard varieties of German–*Berlinerisch* and *Kiezdeutsch*–their speakers are evaluated differently.

This is because features in regional German dialects are recognised as legitimate versions of authentic German language practices. *Kiezdeutsch,* on the other hand, is associated with problems of failed integration. As Gramling points out, "the linguistic subjectivity of veteran labour migrants–and particularly of Turks–was thus recast as a symbolic failure of the guest worker system" (Gramling 2007: 131). In an attempt to reconcile the 'failed' guest worker project, combined with its troubled past of German nationalism and decades-long division, Gramling argues that Germany's extensive revision of its citizenship and immigration policies, moving away from conceptions of Germanness as defined along the lines of *jus sanguinis*, at once forced it to acknowledge its position as a nation of immigration and multiculturalism, while at the same time seeking to find a narrative of social and cultural unity. To Gramling, the failed search on the political right to define a German guiding culture or *Leitkultur*, was quickly replaced with a linguistic model of civic belonging. This is what Gramling has defined as *jus linguarum*–the law of language–introducing a 'guiding language' (or *Leitsprache*) which, "implicitly

acknowledges the plurality of languages spoken among a given populace, but resorts to segregative strategies in order to minimise the effect of multilingualism on public life" (2007: 131). The notion of the guiding language thus seemingly paradoxically acknowledges linguistic diversity, while discouraging its public use, resignifying German "not as an inherited ethnic possession but as a pan-ethnic lingua franca" (ibid: 132). In this sense, while multilingual practice may be implicitly acknowledged, pathways to economic and social participation are still grounded in an individual's ability and willingness to learn German.

A further concern is that the vision of a diverse Germany bound together by a common language, is much less a practical means of ensuring the inclusion and participation of locals and newcomers alike, but rather is a symbol of Germany's ongoing search for national unity and the establishment of a robust *Kulturnation* (cultural nation/a nation with a definable culture). This involves the reinvigoration of the cultural myth of an *einheimische Volksprache* (indigenous vernacular/language of the people), the discourse of a defined German guiding culture with a unifying *Leitsprache* (guiding language). As Linke (2016) argues, by the making of nationals "through the medium of language, and its strategic deployment in citizenship and immigration politics, the nation engrafts a hegemonic memory of Germanness" (2016: 92). For centuries, the notion of a German language has at once been a symbol of national identity and a key mechanism in distinguishing and guarding the German *Volk* from its non-German neighbours. As Detering (2017) argues, "the fragile concern over an alleged *Überfremdung*[30] of the German by foreign, hostile linguistic material, which forces itself upon it, penetrates it, makes it its own–this concern is as old as the national consciousness itself" (Detering 2017: 57; my own emphasis and translation from German). From as early as the period of the German Enlightenment, the definition of Germanness through cultural and linguistic tradition has been promoted as a means of capturing the "German essence, German spirit" (Kremer 2016: 58) and freeing itself from the influences of others. In the works of Lessing and Dilthey in the mid 18th century, and later, in the writings of Goethe, the definition of an *einheimische Volkssprache* (indigenous vernacular/

[30] The term *Überfremdung* roughly translates to over-foreignization. The term has roots in Nazi Germany, but it still used in conservative and far-right political and popular discourse to stoke fears of cultural loss and the threats of immigration and multiculturalism (see e.g. Mandel 2008; Manz 2009).

language of the people) meant a subversion of the dominance of Latin and French amongst the political and scholarly elites (Kremer 2016; Detering 2017). Crucially, the search for a unifying national language became a key mechanism through which to draw ethnic, racial and otherwise biologically-rooted distinctions between those who were thought to be German and those deemed non-German (Kremer 2016; Detering 2017).

Agricultural migration from Eastern Europe–and predominantly Poland–during the industrialisation period intensified fears of cultural and linguistic hybridity brought on by the language contact between Germanic and Slavonic varieties. Under National Socialism, a core argument of *Kulturantisemiten*–Anti-Semites who based their racist hostility towards Jews on alleged cultural differences–claimed that Jews, as members of an inferior race, could never fully master the German language (Kremer 2017: 64-65). Though of course, the vast majority of the Jewish community across Germany spoke German as their first or dominant language, Anti-Semitic discourses of the 1930s and 40s attempted to distinguish between 'pure', High German and the "*jammern und jaulen*"–yammering and yelping–of Jewish Germans (Detering 2017: 58), thus constructing notions of linguistic purity along ethno-nationalist and racial lines.

As Mandel explains, there is a "vision of the non-German as unchangeable in nature and therefore impossible to integrate" (Mandel 2008: 216), which is largely based on a fear of cultural loss presented by the "threat of immigration and the hybridisation or dilution of German values through multiculturalism" (ibid: 218). As Forsythe (1989) argues, this is based on the "idea that the qualities and characteristics of German identity have become so unutterable that there is at once a longing for stability and a definition of Germanness, and a persistent anxiety that it will immediately be taken away" (1989: 152). For this reason, anyone who is not 'ethnically' German is considered a threat to the stability of German identity that is so desired (ibid). Forsythe describes a vulnerability at the core of Germany's national identification debates, one which is at once characterised by the 'unutterability' of Germanness following the Second World War and decades-long division in the Cold War era. Thus, while migrants are encouraged to integrate, integration must entail the full embrace of German

culture, language, and the pledge of loyalty to the German constitutional state. At the same time, the perceived conflict between German values and the threat of immigration, continue to promote the idea of the migrant as 'unintegratable' and thus never fully part of Germany.

Today, political and popular discourse on non-standard, urban speech styles such as *Kiezdeutsch* stoke fears over the 'bastardisation' and 'over-simplification' of German. As Detering argues, Germany's contemporary integration discourses only thinly veil a deep-rooted fear of the corruption of the German Self through the non-German Other (*die Durchdringung des Eigenen*). In this sense, Detering asserts that the model of linguistic belonging is not so much a shift away from the ethno-nationalist model of citizenship–*jus sanguinis*–but rather that the biological foundations of Germanness have permeated the linguistic model, resulting in the hybridisation of Germanness as language-body–*Sprach-Leib* (2016: 58). If language is inextricably linked to Germanness itself, then the non-ethnic German newcomer is thus precluded from being incorporated into the category of Germanness. In this light, the question that arises is what integration entails for newcomers in Germany and how this links to broader processes of belonging and citizenship.

1.4. Language and Integration Between Past and Future

As scholarship on language and integration policies and programmes shows, contemporary Germany's language and integration system should be understood as a future-oriented, modernising project, which is at once firmly rooted in (often imagined and idealised) notions of the past. Visions of an historically shared language invoke images of *how it was:* that there is and always has been a definable, shared language which the national community shares. On the other hand, Germany's contemporary integration programmes are a direct response to perceived failures to incorporate migrant communities of the past, and so, draw from the past to avert possible 'catastrophic futures' (vs. utopic futures). As Griffiths, Rogers and Anderson (2013) describe, "increased migration is often associated with anxiety over the future and even considered symptomatic of a distopic future. The popular idea that significant levels of mobility will lead to a future of social breakdown is a persistent one, but even migration policies tend to be catastrophe-driven" (2013: 27; see also Amin 2012). Linguistic integration, in this

way, becomes a tool through which to ensure movement *toward* a collective future; one which is characterised by diversity, yet unified through shared linguistic practices. Within this imagination of the future, following Wohlrab-Sahr (2004), newcomers are envisioned as leaving behind their pasts upon their physical arrival. As she writes, "nation-states, in order to integrate their population, somehow have to 'neutralize' and depose the different pasts people bring with them and the possible future projects that may arise out of them" (2004: 53). In a similar vein, Çağlar argues that both integration and the post migrant perspectives, approach and position newcomers, on the one hand "as if they were the contemporaries of the societies they are settled in" (2016: 959), meaning there is an assumption that when newcomers arrive, their past selves and migration experiences stop and that they now enter the present and partake in the practices relevant in the community of which they are now part. On the other hand, as the very notion of integration suggests, newcomers are framed as existing in "perpetual transition either from an inscribed and path dependent past or towards a normative future" (ibid). This tension between 'settledness' and 'not yet arrived', which Çağlar pin points, suggests that–stuck between past and future–newcomers experience *the present* as a liminal state.

As I have shown, while there has been substantial research on how language and integration policies become situated between notions of the past and visions of the future, less is known about how migrants and refugees experience language and integration systems in the present. In the same way, we know little about the temporal effects of such programmes: how language and integration policies, requirements and processes impact newcomers' sense of their own pasts and futures, as well as how temporal experiences are negotiated in the everyday.

The following four ethnographic chapters address these empirical and conceptual gaps by examining how newcomers in Berlin encounter and navigate various different–often socioculturally grounded temporal models, external expectations and bureaucratic processes. By studying the experiences of migrants and refugees in Germany, I show how static visions of integration and belonging are disrupted, while capturing how they are individually and collectively negotiated and re-imagined.

2. ‘Do You Want to Work in Germany?’: Language, Progress and Futures Delayed

A few months into fieldwork, in the fall of 2017, I began noticing a series of adverts running along the walls of Berlin’s underground train stations and on public billboards and bus stops. The adverts, run by the campaign *#Farbenbekennen* (#showyourcolours) and funded by the Berlin Senate, featured black-and-white portraits of displaced people from Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Somalia, Afghanistan and Palestine. The individuals depicted wore black shirts and smiled brightly into the camera. Superimposed on the images read the slogan, *Typisch Deutsch* (typically German) followed by such characterisations as ‘being dependable’, ‘following the rules’, ‘living in peace’ and ‘being respected the way you are’. As the layout of these advertisements suggested, men and women in this campaign associated these characterisations with qualities of typical Germanness. At the same time, the superimposition of the slogan *Typisch Deutsch* across their portraits suggested that they too were included in this category; the red and gold text against their black shirts making up the colours of the German flag.[31]

Image 3: Images from the 2017 campaign #Farbenbekennen run by the Berlin Senate (Farbenbekennen 2017)

Each portrait also featured a brief biography of the individual depicted. They were doctors, engineers, artists, writers and activists. Many were already working in Germany, and others were studying or enrolled in vocational apprenticeships. Each biography also featured their aspirations for life in Germany, stressing the importance of cultural exchange, mutual respect and collaboration with local

[31] These images are not under copyright restriction, however, they are included in this thesis with the written permission of the #FARBENBEKENNEN Campaign (https://farbenbekennen.de/en/award/campaign-2017).

communities. Most protagonists had been in Germany since 2014/2015 and were already very actively engaged in local social and cultural life. For example, one woman hosted a podcast series aiming to bring together Syrian and German culture. Another woman ran workshops to help fellow refugees integrate into the labour market, and another woman sang in an Arabic-German choir blending the two musical traditions. Many ads also seemed to address societal fears and misconceptions about refugees. As one biography read: "I don't want anything handed to me. I want to contribute", and another: "I want to show that we didn't just come here to take things. Germany gave me the chance to live in peace. It is my hope that we will have the opportunity to put our abilities to use".[32]

Over the five years I spent conducting this and related research, I have repeatedly encountered government-funded ad campaigns which thematised the place of migrants in Germany. Many sought to highlight the central role of language for newcomer belonging, often relying on integrationist discourses to appeal to migrant and diaspora communities. Such was the case for ads like *Ich Spreche Deutsch* (I speak German), (below) run by the German government in 2010. [33]

Image 4: Advertising Campaign by the *Deutschland-Stiftung Integration*, promoting German language acquisition. Ads depict television moderator Collien Ulmen-Fernandes (left) and rapper, Sido (right). © Deutschlandstiftung Integration (Murat Aslan).

[32] Translated from German to English by present author.

[33] Images of the ad campaign are included in this thesis for online publication via Oxford University's Research Archive (ORA) with the written permission of Deutschlandstiftung Integration.

This campaign depicts various German celebrities with migration backgrounds.[34] Their tongues are painted black, red and gold, and each image touts the slogan "Raus mit der Sprache, rein ins Leben", roughly translatable to "Speak up. Start your life". As the slogan (and image) seems to suggest, life in Germany begins with the ability to speak German[35] and reifies, in public view, the ideological notion that Germans are bound together by a common language and, furthermore, that immigrants can become a part of this community if they buy into the *monolingual habitus* (Gogolin 1994). Using German celebrities with migrant backgrounds further seems to suggest a link between their professional success and their ability to speak German, implying that success and inclusion are a product of German language acquisition. This ad campaign furthermore echoes principles outlined in popular and political discourse on integration by suggesting that these programmes are necessary in order to maintain social order, ensure labour market incorporation and allow inclusion within German social life (as the slogan "rein ins Leben" suggests). As Stevenson and Schanze have argued, integration discourses often focus on what newcomers lack as potential citizens, rather than on what they can contribute (2009: 90). In this way, notions of integration emphasise the steps newcomers need to take in order to achieve a pre-defined and often idealised form of belonging.

I was therefore initially hopeful when I saw the new ad campaigns, as they seemed to break away from the integrationist discourses I had been reading in policy papers and seeing in previous government ad campaigns. #Farbenbekennen's ads, by contrast, seemed to flip this narrative; depicting newcomers as *already a part of* and *already contributing to* Germany. The target audience, meanwhile, seemed also to have moved away from newcomer and diaspora communities alone, to German society at large.

Though the decision by the German government to grant asylum to thousands of displaced people was hailed internationally, and while the majority of Germans supported this asylum policy, the last six years have also seen a notable rise in xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-immigrant movements,

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[34] Having a migration background means that either the individuals themselves were immigrants or their parents or grandparents had immigrated to Germany previously.

[35] As Piller (2017) points out, this ad campaign makes several assumptions about immigrants' ability and/or willingness to learn German and become part of German life. First, migrants are unaware of the fact that they need to learn German in order to work and study and therefore, need to be reminded of this fact. Second, too few migrants and their families are learning German and therefore, third, that they have failed to do so by personal choice.

attacks and demonstrations (such as PEGIDA,[36] attacks on refugee homes in various cities across former East Germany). The recent success of the far-right political party AFD[37] and its ascension into German parliament, as well as political discussions (particularly from the centre right) about the place of Islam in an historically 'Christian' Germany (Wohlrab-Sahr 2004), has in turn sparked various movements and ad campaigns seeking to shift the perspective and provide migrants and refugees with a platform to share their experiences and to provide them with a voice in these debates. In an attempt to foster social and cultural exchange and understanding, campaigns like the 2017 #Farbenbekennen create sites through which displaced people can discuss their relationship to Germany, while also demonstrating the social, cultural and economic contributions they are making to their local and national communities.

The advertisements seemed to follow me on my daily commutes: plastered on public billboards at the overground train station near my apartment at *Friedrichstraße* and encased in plexiglass frames that lined the yellow-tile subway underpasses at *Zoologischer Garten* on my way to the LIC. The longer I conducted my research, the more these depictions stood in contrast to the everyday experiences my interlocutors relayed to me. Of course, advertisements often represent simplified or idealised depictions of the way things are or ought to be. But it was the ease with which ideas of progress, participation and professional attainment, and indeed ideas of the future, were illustrated in these narratives that further confronted me with a stark contrast between glossy images of successful progress and the everyday complexity, messiness and ongoing delays and redirections that my interlocutors described to me.

Above all, the ads seemed to present the tempo and direction of newcomer belonging with such ease and speed: the characters in the ads had learned German, begun working and studying and engaging locally within two or three years. The biographies made it look so simple to move from the integration

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[36] PEGIDA (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident) is a German right-wing nationalist and anti-Islam political movement.

[37] The *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany) (AFD) is a right-wing populist political party, known for its opposition to the EU and its anti-immigration stance.

course, to higher-level language courses, to vocational training programmes and university placements, to full-time employment and active community involvement.

Despite its inclusive tone, I wondered whether such ad campaigns run the risk of contributing to a very narrow image of integration and belonging, which firstly, may not be attainable to a large number of newcomers, and secondly, may not reflect their actual experiences, goals and expectations. Coupled with political and popular integrationist discourse, do visualisations of 'successfully integrated' newcomers such as those depicted in #Farbenbekennen create or otherwise cater to unrealistic expectations of what *progress* among migrants and refugees ought to (and therefore ought not to) look like? Though the campaign sought to include newcomers in the category of *typical Germanness*, the campaign did not expand its boundaries. Instead the campaign demonstrated how refugees adhered to pre-existing models of integration and participation, echoing many of the key tenants of the National Integration Plan (NIP) set out in 2007 particularly in its relatively straightforward portrayal of the link between language learning and socioeconomic mobility: "If you don't speak German, you can't integrate", one quote in a protagonist biography read.

As Çağlar (2016), Griffiths (2017) and others have argued, and as my own research demonstrates, institutional practices and bureaucratic procedures commonly operate with such a linear, future-oriented notion of an individual's progress over time. Khan (2019) has approached these kinds of requirements as "sites of becoming", whereby requirements for integration, residency and citizenship ensure that "the individual must undergo a trial in order to access resources" (2019: 4). In the context of migration to Germany, a newcomer is expected to cross over certain temporal thresholds: from temporary to permanent, non-German speaker to intermediate or advanced German speaker, unintegrated to integrated. Such is the underlying structure of industrial time: the time of of states and bureaucracies, wherein time is imagined as a straight line, leading to an as yet empty future to be populated by a sequence of events (Zerubavel 1981).

As I have mentioned previously in this thesis, a longstanding slogan of Germany's integration programmes has been S*prache ist der Schlüssel zur Integration* (language is the key to integration). In other words, learning German will enable newcomers to unlock various social and economic opportunities. Indeed this is how linguistic integration is framed by the Federal Office for Refugees and Migrants (BAMF), which coordinates and funds the programmes nationwide:

> Learning German quickly and well is of particular importance to the integration of immigrants. It takes on the function of a key: the sooner language skills are acquired in the new home country, the better the chances to explore all opportunities and to lead a self-determined life through full participation in society.[38]

Official discourses such as the one above construct a very linear view of language learning and socio-economic inclusion; one which emphasises speed and which places a strong onus on newcomers (see also Bernstein 1999; Baynham and Simpson 2010). Language-as-key in this sense brings with it the notion that doors will be unlocked as an individual progresses in their language acquisition process. In that way language learning is situated as a tool for accessing the future: the 'not-yet' possibilities standing on the other side of these doors (Adam 2004, 2009). Such discourses and, indeed, ad campaigns paint a picture of a utopic and shared future akin to Appadurai's (2013) notion of the *good life* (see also Nassehi 1994; Cwerner 2006). In this way, a vision of a shared collective future emerges, in which newcomers are included, provided they follow the necessary steps. As Griffiths, Rogers and Anderson (2013) point out, such imagined collective futures "engender a sense of shared purpose and as such are envisioned […] to encourage the assimilation of migrants (2013: 26; see also Bauböck 1998; Grand 1999; McGhee 2005). As Appadurai (2013) reminds us, however, research on such notions of futurity and future-making require a closer consideration of the ways in which cultural systems "shape specific images of the good life as a map of a journey from here to there and from now to then" (2013: 292).

In integrationist discourses as well as inside the integration classroom newcomers are imagined and imagine themselves as ascending the ranks of the CEFRL scale, achieving first the B1 integration course, then the B2 vocational German course, and finally, in some cases, the C1 advanced German

[38] Dossier on integration courses (BAMF 2019). Translated from German to English by present author.

language course (often required in the so-called 'high skilled' or regulated labour market). Progress is measured by the accumulation of certificates and qualifications (Baynham and Simpson 2010; Khan 2019), as well as the development of favourable positions towards German cultural and civic values, democracy and the constitution. This notion of *linear movement* is visible in the narratives constructed by policy makers, LIC textbooks and state-sponsored ad campaigns, whereby successful newcomers arrive in Germany, learn German, begin vocational training or higher education and engage actively in local community and economy. Many of my interlocutors viewed the LIC as a key stepping stone on their route to employment and various forms of security, independence and forward movement. It was also tightly intertwined with their visions of the future: learning German meant speeding up their access to employment and resuming livelihoods that had been temporarily suspended by migration.

Crucially, many believed that the steps between German language acquisition and employment were straight-forward; after all, that is how the process was presented to them by their German language teachers and by integration course advertising. In fact, for some the process was a mode of acceleration: particularly for those who were younger, university educated, single and who already spoke more than one language. But they were a minority among my interlocutors. Most, by contrast, experienced various forms of slowing, stalling and waiting as they pursued the language certificates. These experiences of slowed, empty and 'stopped' time in many ways reveal a tension between notions of progress and images of the future which policy makers attempt to create and the complex realities of migration.

There is no neat way to summarise the ways in which linguistic integration requirements affected my interlocutors. In fact, each of them had a different experience. However, there were some important overlaps: the first is that all of my interlocutors quickly learned that the process of learning German was not just a matter of taking courses and then simply moving on. Instead language qualifications, as well as underlying cultural and institutional assumptions about the importance of linguistic competency, were directly and intricately tied to the broader bureaucratic landscape that they had to negotiate. This meant that attaining work, permanent residency or citizenship would not happen as

quickly as they expected. Or rather, they experienced some kind of disruption or deviation in their timelines, or expectations of progress over time. Language courses (B1 and higher) took longer than initially expected: more than half of the participants of the LIC failed the final exam on the first try, if they had not already quit the course before then. The B2 course was even harder: in the course I observed only three of the 18 participants passed the exam. Waiting for exam results took as long as three months and after receiving their results many would have to wait three to four months until they secured a place in a new course (either a B1 repeater course or the B2). Of the over 60 newcomers I met during fieldwork, most spent at least two if not three or four years working to complete the required language courses.[39] Obtaining language proficiency certificates was furthermore deeply embedded in Germany's professional recognition and labour market procedures, which were by no means straightforward either. In fact, Germany does not have a clear-cut system for recognising foreign degrees and qualifications. As I will show, achieving professional, vocational and educational recognition of foreign qualifications has proved to be a long, complicated and confusing task for many.

As I have mentioned previously, migration scholars have demonstrated that newcomers often contend with various, conflicting tempos after they have physically arrived in a new environment (Cwerner 2001, 2004; Fuglerud 2004; Rosa and Scheuerman 2009; Griffiths 2014, 2017). These are often marked by intersecting forms of acceleration and deceleration, particularly when their own expectations and needs meet with the workings of state institutions, bureaucratic processes and institutionalised requirements. As I have found, the constant presence of these conflicting tempos lead to various strategies of progress, which my interlocutors develop both individually and collectively. Focussing on these strategies, and, more broadly, imaginations of the future, reveals the multiple ways in which newcomers in Berlin encounter and negotiate forms of temporal rupture (Griffiths 2014). This chapter explores notions and strategies of progress among six of my interlocutors who represent a range of migration experiences and occupational backgrounds. I examine how notions of progress become intertwined with ideas of the future and how these are discussed, imagined and negotiated by them. Historical anthropological scholarship and, indeed, the study of migration, displacement and

[39] Many of the interlocutors I am still in touch with are still taking German courses.

mobilit(ies) has, until recently, only marginally addressed notions of the future: both in its theoretical and experiential conception and in its role for shaping present actions, decisions and practices. This chapter contributes to emerging scholarship on the future, by examining the ways in which it is imagined and navigated by newcomers in Germany: unpacking their frustrations, anxieties, hopes and expectations as they encounter ongoing interruptions, redirections, periods of stalling, slowing and sudden acceleration. In so doing, my research adds to a growing body of work seeking to add further complexity to our understanding of the future and future-making.

2.1. Stalling, Stopping and Restarting

Fathi invited me to his apartment one afternoon in the spring of 2018. His mother Mariam was making falafel. It was Fathi's day off from his internship at the hospital where he was gaining work experience to strengthen his application to medical school. Mariam and I met in the first B1 LIC I observed in the summer of 2017. Though Mariam quit the class in favour of another course provider that fall, she introduced me to her son in the hopes that he would be able to teach me Arabic. What started as sporadic conversational Arabic lessons, quickly turned into regular meetings for long walks or for lunch at Fathi's apartment.

Fathi lived in a studio apartment on the top floor of a high-rise apartment complex. The space was sparsely decorated, as Mariam, her husband Mahmood and Fathi's brothers had recently moved out, taking most of the furniture with them to their new apartment. The grey linoleum floor was torn in places from years of use. A large red wrap-around couch divided the main room into a living and sleeping area. Until recently, Fathi shared the small apartment with his parents and two brothers. Fathi and his younger brother Hammed shared the couch, while his older brother, Waleed, slept on a mattress on the floor and his parents shared the bed. After two years of searching, Fathi found an apartment for his family, big enough for his parents and two brothers to share comfortably. Over the years, Fathi had taken on the role of mediator; as the family member most proficient in German, he coordinated all appointments and handled all administrative tasks.

We sat in the living area around a low table and ate the fresh falafel, tabouleh and warm pita bread. Mariam was preparing for her B1 exam (second try). "The Jobcenter says this might be my last chance", Mariam said in Arabic, shaking her head. "you'll make it!" I said, in German, trying to encourage her.[40] In that moment, Mariam burst into uncontrollable laughter; "we used to be rich and now we wait at the Jobcenter! How funny life can be!". "She makes that joke all the time" Fathi explained after translating to German. "My mother grew up in a rich household. And in Aleppo my father owned two carpentry shops. He has been a carpenter since he was 13 years old. He wants to keep working in Berlin, but his German isn't good".

"But once he finishes the German course, he could apply for an apprenticeship, right?", I asked.

"He doesn't see the point in that. He's 55 years old. He's been working his whole life, and he thinks, why should he become an apprentice for a job he already knows so well? He's doing some part-time work now though, so that helps a little", Fathi explained.

Much of Germany's labour market runs on a certified skill system, meaning most vocations in trade, craft, healthcare, the food industry, manufacturing, retail (and wholesale), among others–so-called *Ausbildungsberufe*–require vocational education in the form of two to three-and-a-half-year apprenticeships. Such vocational training involves both practical experience at small to medium sized businesses, as well as vocational education at accredited vocational schools.[41] Without vocational training certificates,[42] it is almost impossible for a newcomer (or German national) to receive permanent, formal employment in their craft or trade.[43] [44] In some cases, foreign qualifications are

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[40] Our conversation took place in Arabic and German. Mariam spoke to us in Arabic only and Fathi and I responded to her in German. Fathi and I spoke to each other in German. I use this English translation only, as this is how it was recorded in my field notes.

[41] Also referred to as dual vocational education and training (VET).

[42] Vocational training certificates are issued by the federal government, chamber of industry and commerce and chamber of crafts and trades.

[43] This excludes migrants in Germany with work visas.

[44] Foreign qualifications are recognised through an application process, often involving a so-called "adaptation period" (BMBF 2019).

recognised by the German state, meaning newcomers have faster access to permanent contracts. Despite the labour market policy reforms of 2014,[45] which sought to liberalise and ease refugee access to work, the recognition of foreign qualifications is a long, onerous and bureaucratically opaque process for all newcomers. It is especially difficult for older newcomers like Fathi's father, Mahmood, who do not have formal vocational training or official qualification certificates (Maroufi 2017).[46]

In order for Mahmood to officially and formally resume his carpentry work, he would first have to complete the language and integration course to at least the level B1 and then he would need to apply for an apprenticeship. Mahmood has been struggling to learn German since he arrived, enrolling first in a literacy course and then in a part time language programme. Assuming Mahmood completed an integration course in the average expected period of seven months, applied for and received an apprenticeship and finished this within three years, he would be around 59 or 60 by the time he had completed all necessary requirements. Even then, because of his age, he may not be successful on the job market. His wife Mariam is a home-maker and continues to pursue her B1 language certificate, which she feels will help her navigate everyday life more easily, handle administrative tasks and make social contacts in her neighbourhood. However, Mariam is ailed with health problems and is often forced to stay at home (and therefore also forced to break off her participation in language courses). To support her, and to supplement their small monthly government benefits, Mahmood makes due with informal carpentry contracts, but these are infrequent and do not enable them to become fully

[45] Institutional and legal reforms as of 2014 have eased labour market entry for refugees, allowing them to begin work after three months after registering as asylum seekers, and to take temporary work and unpaid internships (Maroufi 2017). This only applies to refugees with 'good prospects to remain' and not those from so-called 'safe countries of origin'. In 2018 'safe countries of origin included: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ghana, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Senegal, Serbia, all member states of the EU, and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Georgia, Morocco and the Tunisian Republic were under consideration (BAMF 2018).

[46] For the non-regulated occupations (amongst them more than 350 so called "state-recognised training occupations") recognition is no entry requirement to the labour market, but it is seen as an option in order to provide employers and companies with a better understanding of the foreign qualification (Eberhardt and Annen 2015). Assuming an applicant in this procedure has all of the necessary documents credited to their degree–which often is not the case, particularly for refugees–the foreign degree will processed through the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and its associated institutions (e.g. ZAB). The assessment procedure involves determining how the degree corresponds to a similar German degree or vocation. If the differences between the skills, competencies and other requirements necessary for the degree in the applications country of origin are too significant, or if further qualifications are needed in order for this profession or area of study to be carried out in Germany, then the applicants' degree will not be recognised (ZAB 2019; Andriescu 2019). This process often takes a long time, because institutions are overwhelmed by applications. In many cases applicants are also required to take an aptitude test to demonstrate their knowledge of the profession or subject area.

financially independent from the German employment office, which has become a great cause of stress to the family.

Migration scholars have pointed to the fact that many migrants tend to see their present in relationship to the future, and this is an important means of coping with uncertainty (e.g. through hope and aspiration). Mariam and Mahmood, by contrast, are still grappling with their relationship to the past and their past selves as they think about their present and future. Mariam's comment that afternoon over falafel, rendered visible a deep temporal rupture in her sense of self in the present, whereby past, present and future seem to co-exist in tension. However, Mariam's comment also reveals a tension in her expectation for 'normal life' to resume. Bryant and Knight (2019) have defined expectation as "a conservative teleology that gives thickness to the present through its reliance on the past" (2019: 50). In this way, expectation as a future-oriented affective position relies on, "familiar anchors to the ordinary" (ibid: 73), or rather the animate and inanimate facets of daily life, our daily practices and the orders that make up the everyday. And it is from the vantage point of these familiar anchors that we ground our expectations of the future. However, as Mariam's remark makes clear, experiences of displacement can–momentarily or permanently–tear individuals from those anchor points. Individuals experience a sudden "jolt into an uncertain future" in which one is led to seek new anchor points in the present. Remarking on the financial security and relative comfort she and her husband had in the past, Mariam also revealed how much of her future is tied to the workings of state and bureaucratic institutions (such as the receipt of funding for German language courses). As Allen (2005) and Edensor (2006) have demonstrated, various forms of migration involve a sense of 'abrupt transition', often involving encounters with bureaucratic requirements and institutionalised schedules and routines (Rose and Scheuerman 2009). Such encounters, according to Griffiths et al. (2013), have the potential to "dramatically override and thereby alter the temporal patterns and expectations of individuals" (2013: 24). Mariam's seemingly off-hand comment spoke to an underlying experience of uncertainty over the future that made her present seem "uncanny" and unrecognisable (Bryant and Knight 2019: 44). This sense of an *uncanny present*, following Bryant and Knight, emerges in those contexts where the future becomes unknowable, outside of the remits of control and anticipation. As Bryant and Knight write,

such an uncanniness is one which the present "suddenly seems to hover between past and future, taking on the burden of gathering the past and projecting it into the unknown future when the teleology that would ordinarily shape that temporal relation is lost" (ibid).

The challenges that older migrants face in Germany's integration system and access to the job markets may not seem surprising. In fact, recent studies show that participation in vocational training programmes among recent refugees drops significantly among those over the age of 34.[47] However, even for Mahmood's son, Fathi, who passed the language courses quickly and seemed to be 'ticking all the boxes', his route to employment was difficult to navigate.

Fathi's story presents a very common experience I observed during fieldwork: many of my interlocutors were educated and had work experience, but the combined difficulties of learning German and navigating German bureaucracy made it difficult to negotiate the future. Fathi's goal was to become a doctor and because he was so young when he came to Germany, he actually had enough time to learn German and have his secondary school marks translated and certified by the German education board so that he could–technically–apply for medical school around the same time secondary school graduates in Germany normally would (at 18-20). He had very good grades in Syria and he had taken the German secondary school equivalency exam. Still he wasn't getting into any medical schools. This is largely because Germany has a very strict system of accepting applications to medical school which are based solely on the applicant's final secondary school grades. Medical school in Germany is heavily over-subscribed, so applicants with the highest grade point average get accepted first (1.0 on a scale of 1.0 to 4.0). Everyone else has to wait.

In the meantime, Fathi decided he had to try a different route: work experience. In Germany, a common strategy of people who do not get into medical school on their first try or who do not have the grades to get into medical school is to spend a few years gaining work experience or enrolling in an apprenticeship to become paramedics, caregivers or emergency technicians. This extra training counts

[47] From 46 percent among those aged 24 to 34 to only 7 percent among those aged 34 and above (Liebau and Salikutluk 2016: 395-396).

towards medical school applications, as do the semesters spent waiting to begin medical school (so-called *Wartesemester*).[48] Fathi decided that he would apply for apprenticeships and try to get into medical school this way.

The plan was to either train as a paramedic or to train as a caregiver in a hospital. Both would involve a three-year vocational training programme. Fathi had all of his certificates in order and, on paper, qualified to apply for vocational training programmes. However, after months of applying and numerous rejections, it became clear that Fathi's refugee status was causing these roadblocks. Fathi, like many displaced Syrians was granted full protection in the form of a three-year residence permit (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*). Following those three years the residence permit can be renewed, or, depending on the individuals progress, can be extended to a permanent residence permit (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*).[49] Though Syrian refugees are by and large protected against deportation, Fathi told me that the programmes he applied to explained that his status as a refugee presented too much of a risk for them and therefore could not offer him a placement.[50]

Fathi was forced to re-group again, this time applying for paid internships and part-time work. Finally, in 2019, Fathi secured part-time work as a caregiver in an assisted living facility for young people living with physical and cognitive disabilities. Quickly this turned into a full-time position.
Crossing the threshold between unemployment and employment for refugees in Germany means achieving financial independence from the state, but it also means faster access to permanent residency.

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[48] Germany uses a ranked system of accepting applicants to medical school. This means students with the highest marks get in first (1.0 on the Numerous Clausus system). For students with lower grades (below 1.0-1.5), the time they spend waiting to get into medical school counts towards their overall grade: each semester a student waits adds points to their grade. So, say someone graduates secondary school with a final grade of 2.5, each semester she waits, the grade improves by one point (so, 2.4, 2.3, 2.2 and so on) until she is eligible for medical school.

[49] The Asylum Act and the Residence Act govern refugee claims in Germany: the Asylum Act determines the processes of granting and denying asylum (as well as the consequences), and the Residence Act determines the rule for entry and length of stay, as well as employment regulations. Refugee status is granted under the Geneva Convention and codified in section § 1 of the Asylum Act. Following policy changes in 2015-2016, asylum seekers may either be granted political asylum or refugee status and receive a three-year residence permit. This is subject to applicants proving that they are victims of political prosecution. Alternatively, they may be granted subsidiary protection (section 4 § 1 of the Asylum Act) if they are determined to be at risk of "serious harm". Recipients of subsidiary protection receive one-year residence permits, which can be extended by two years.

[50] Fathi did not explain this matter further, though it sounded as though this was a case of discrimination, rather than a real concern over his residency permissions. Further research on the decision-making processes and institutional biases of German vocational programmes is needed.

After a few months of steady work at the assisted living facility, Fathi became eligible for permanent residency, and with that, legal security. For Fathi, the period between physically arriving in Germany and securing employment felt like a period of uncertain waiting. An extended period of deceleration marked by a sense of limited agency. Building on the work of social and performance theorists including Schatzki, Bourdieu and Giddens, Bryant and Knight (2019) describe how achieving a 'normal' state of affairs' relies on certain predictable practices. Or rather in order to achieve certain ends, one must know the appropriate or required way in which to do so. Upon embarking on each new avenue of achieving his goal to find employment or access to medical school, Fathi also relied on the predictability of the steps he would need to take to get there. However, even though he seemed to have 'ticked all the boxes' in terms of language training and vocational qualifications, Fathi's first years in Germany were marked by recurrent forms of stalling, re-ordering and restarting, and this was precisely because the practices and steps, upon which the achievement of his ends relied, were shifting and unpredictable.

2.2. Strategies of Progress: Acceleration and Deceleration

I sat next to Ahmad one afternoon in December as the instructor, Marianne, explained the next course assignment. The class was now preparing for the final B1 exam, which would take place in February. We were conducting mock examinations over the next six weeks, which would each focus on different sections of the exam. This week, we prepared for the oral exam. The oral exam consisted of three parts: the biographical introduction, the image description and the ad hoc event planning conversation. Each portion of the oral exam took place in pre-assigned pairs, whereby each student in the class was randomly paired with another and these two would sit the exam together.

Today we were practicing the first part of of the tripartite oral exam: biographical introductions titled, *über sich sprechen* (talking about oneself). Ahmad's exam partner, Nasrin was out sick today so I paired up with him to practice the exercise. Ahmad had joined our class at the start of the A2.1 module in mid

October. This was his second attempt at the B1 course. He previously failed the final exam, narrowly, but was entitled to enrol in modules A2.1 - B1.2 and resit the exam one more time.[51]

We each had two minutes to introduce ourselves along the same six points (name, place of birth, place of residence, occupation/profession, family, language(s)). Adding to these points was allowed, but the priority was answering the points listed. With the remaining time the partner who was not introducing themselves could ask questions–just as the examiners might in the exam–these could be about interests and hobbies as well as facts and memories about their home countries, etc. Ahmad went first, he looked straight ahead at the opposing wall, and sped through the points on the page, shown below:

Original German:			English Translation:		
1	L:	Ok (.) wer bist du?	1	L:	Ok (.) who are you?
2	A:	Hallo ich bin-guten Morgen	2	A:	Hello I am-good morning
3		mein Name ist Hassan (.) Ahmad	3		my name is Hassan (.) Ahmad
4		ich komme aus Syrien (.)	4		I come from Syria (.)
5		genau Damaskus	5		more specifically Damascus
6		ich bin am achtzehnte sechste	6		I was born on the eighteenth of the sixth
7		neunzehnhundert-ein-und-neunzig geboren	7		nineteen-ninety-one
8		ich bin seit 2016 in Deutschland	8		I have been in Germany since 2016
9		ich wohne in Berlin (.) am Ku'damm	9		I live in Berlin (.) on the Ku'damm
10		und meine Eltern sind in Syrien	10		my parents are in Syria
11		ich bin hier alleine	11		I am here alone
12		meine Muttersprache ist Arabisch (.)	12		my mother tongue is Arabic (.)
13		außerdem spreche ich bisschen English	13		I also speak a little English
14		und bisschen Türkisch	14		and a little Turkish
15		ich bin vom Beruf Verkäufer im Einzelhandel	15		I am a retail salesman by profession
16		und meine Hobbies sind Bücher lesen (.)	16		and my hobbies are reading books (.)
17		Fußball gucken (.) und	17		watching football (.) and
18		Musik hören (.) neue Leute kennen zu lernen	18		listening to music (.) meeting new people

[51] The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees subsidises the B1 course for most newcomers. They also fund a so-called B1 repeater course which consists of four months revision from levels A2.1 to B1.2. B1 course participants are often a mixture of first-time course takers and repeaters.

The speed with which Ahmad recited his biography made it clear that he had memorised a text. This was common in the LIC: the oral exam was both the most challenging part of the B1 test and the easiest to prepare for. On the one hand, it included ad hoc conversation, partially with the examiners, and many worried that their nerves might cause them to stumble or blank on a word or phrase. On the other hand, parts of the oral exam, like the self introduction, could be memorised as the candidates were given the categories in advance. Teachers urged students to come up with a script before the exam as this section yielded a third of the points for the oral exam.

Ahmad embellished his script with other information: biographical notes that are not expected of students during self introductions. He specified his date of birth (lines 6-7), how long he has been in Germany (line 8), that his parents are in Syria and he is in Germany on his own (lines 10 and 11), and he listed his hobbies (lines 16, 17 and 18). Ahmad explained that he added these points because these were questions that examiners had asked him in his previous exam. He was thus hoping to minimise further questioning by preempting their usual follow-ups.

Because this was a mock exam and I assumed the examiners may have more questions for him, I attempted to ask him a few follow-ups (though he did seem to have covered all the basics). Before I could do so, however, I was interrupted by Ahmad who, through a mischievous grin, whispered, "I'm not really a retail salesman, I am actually a wholesale salesman. I am saying retail salesman because I don't want to have to explain what I mean by wholesale. It's easier". Ahmad explains that describing himself as a retail salesman–as he does in line 15–was a strategic choice. Through his experience at the last exam, Ahmad knew it would be far easier to describe his work in retail–by, for instance, saying he worked in a clothing store–than it would be to explain his work experience and vocational aspirations in wholesale, which might involve him describing the wholesale companies he worked for, the kinds and quantities of goods sold, the logistics of working in wholesale, and so on. He felt he could better predict the kinds of questions he might be asked if he described himself as a retail salesman, and so he altered his biography.

The seemingly innocuous alterations Ahmad makes to his biographical script allow him to determine what the examiners know about him and to direct the possible lines of questioning. In this way, his method of self presentation becomes a means of accelerating the pace of the exam and avoiding any possible roadblocks that may cause him to make mistakes that could be counted against his final score. He is thus making his use of his ability to present himself differently in different contexts. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), Goffman shows how multifaceted identity formations are performed differently in different contexts. In this context the purpose of *über sich sprechen* (talking about oneself) is reframed by Ahmad in such a way as to ensure the fastest and easiest route to passing the exam (and, thus, completing the B1 course), and so, Ahmad draws on aspects of his biographical identity in a way that is strategically meaningful and conducive to achieving this goal (See also Gu 2017).

I was struck by Ahmad's strategic approach to the self introduction exercise, and I wanted to find out more about the urgency he seemed to feel about getting through the B1 course, so we agreed to meet for coffee a few weeks later.

2.2.1. *In Ruhe Leben:* Speeding Up to Slow Down

I sat with Ahmad in a café nearby the LIC. It was a freezing afternoon in January as we sat on two opposing armchairs, still in our winter coats, hot chocolates in hand. The sun was already beginning to set and the café's overhead lights reflected brightly off of the low glass coffee table in front of us. I asked Ahmad about that day during the mock exam exercise. What was underlying his rush to get through the B1 course?

"I just want my life here to start",[52] he said, sipping from his hot chocolate, his trim, pointed beard catching some of the whipped cream foam as he moved the large mug down and away from his mouth. Ahmad explained to me that, while failing the B1 exam on his first attempt was a set-back, he

[52] Our conversation took place in German, however I have decided to use the English translation only to ease the reading flow.

decided that this just meant a shift in his original plans. "Its really difficult to learn German. I have lost so much time! Unfortunately, I still can't speak it well, but I absolutely have to learn it. Otherwise, I don't have the key to this country". To Ahmad, learning German quickly meant unlocking the door to job security and financial independence. He was practical about his relationship to the integration programme and spoke of learning German as a *key* to life in Germany. Many of my interlocutors spoke of learning German in this way; primarily because they knew that language proficiency was deeply intertwined with Germany's labour market processes and thus, was a key to unlocking forms of mobility that until now had been suspended. The promise of opportunity, Ahmad explained further, formed the basis of his efforts to move to Berlin once he had been granted refugee status. "It's a big city where you can build something for yourself: find work, meet new people. You have more opportunity here". Ahmad had arrived in Germany two years earlier from Damascus, where he spent several months in a refugee hostel in Aachen–in southwest Germany–then several more in Brandenburg, before finally moving to Berlin, where, after a short time in a refugee hostel in northeast Berlin, he found a room in a flat share in Charlottenburg, not far from where our language course took place. Now in Berlin, he built his expectation on the promise and potentiality the city seemed to offer (see also Bryant and Knight 2019).

While still in Syria, Ahmad worked for his father's wholesale distribution firm and planned to use his work experience to pursue similar employment in Germany. In order to do so, he would need to complete both the B1 and B2 language courses and, most probably, complete a vocational training programme: an *Ausbildung*. For Ahmad, learning German was part of achieving economic mobility, and so he devised a new plan: "I decided that as of 2018, I will be independent. That means no more help. That means working full time and paying for the electricity myself. Even if I don't earn that much at the beginning, as long as I am the one paying for the electricity–because, in Germany, if you pay for your own electricity and you are independent then you can live peacefully (*in Ruhe leben*). Without stress. Without mail from the Jobcenter and having to schedule 8am appointments. I am thankful for the Jobcenter; they pay for basically everything–my health insurance–but I don't want that anymore". While still officially unemployed, newcomers receive a broad range of financial aid from the

German government. This includes a small monthly income of up to roughly 350 euro a month (per single person),[53] a metro card (*Fahrkarte*), and health insurance (to name a few). Rent and utilities are also covered by the state, however accommodation needs to be approved by the employment office and may not exceed a predefined limit.[54] State financial aid is intended as a safety net while newcomers take the required language courses, however, as Ahmad reveals, financial aid comes with a great deal of interference from and dependence upon the state, which has contributed to his own feelings of stuckness, immobility and an absence of personal agency (see also Hage 2003 on 'stuckedness').

During our conversation in the café, Ahmad explained to me that when he thought about the future, he worried about how the recent arrival of the many thousands of displaced persons like him might affect Germany's political and social relationship to newcomers. And he worried that this may have implications for his life in Germany. "When I hear about what other *Flüchtlinge* are doing in Germany, like what happened last year at *Zoologischer Garten*. The guy was Tunisian, I think, but I think people think all people from this region do these things. They might think, maybe we shouldn't let in so many refugees in the future. Or maybe they will send us all back". Ahmad was referring to the 2016 attack at the *Gedächtniskirche* Christmas Market, where a young Tunisian man drove a truck into a crowd of people, killing 12 and injuring 56 others. Ahmad worried that incidents like this one would shape societal views of asylum seekers and refugees from the Middle East and that this may change Germany's asylum policy. He resolved to distance himself from the refugee community by learning German well and by demonstrating his ability to live self-sufficiently. Ultimately, he knew that in order to secure his future in Germany, he would need permanent residency. In this way, for Ahmad, achieving financial independence and secure employment was not only a form of progress, it was a means of attaining a sense of security and to live *in Ruhe:* to live peacefully, undisturbed and free from any possible government intervention.

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[53] See e.g. Flüchtlingsrat-Berlin (2019). The sum of monthly benefits differs slightly from state to state.

[54] In 2019 the maximum monthly gross ('cold') rent–excluding utilities–for a single person was set at 484.80 euro and 566.64 euro for two people. In a rapidly gentrifying city like Berlin, with an over-subscribed rental market, an average 30m^2 space costs around 17 euro per square metre. This means choices are extremely limited. So limited, in fact, that many of my displaced interlocutors found themselves still living in temporary shared accommodation (or "refugee hostels") for several years after their arrival in Germany.

Bryant and Knight (2019), argue that expectation is one of the primary ways in through which we define 'normal life', and, building on Schatzki's performance theory, achieving this sense of normal life depends on certain *teleoaffective* structures, or rather those "ends, projects, actions, and combinations thereof that participants should or acceptably pursue" (Schatzki 2010: 140). The ability to identify the steps needed to achieve what is anticipated for the future, creates the foundation of our ability to expect future outcomes. In a similar way, Ahmad's notion of *in Ruhe leben* takes on features Schielke (2015) has termed "grand schemes", or the "persons, ideas, and powers that are understood to be greater than one's ordinary life, located on a higher plane, distinct from everyday life, and yet relevant as models for living" (2015:13). However, as Appadurai (2013) points out, such images of the good life– or grand schemes and *in Ruhe leben*–are shaped in part by the cultural systems, norms, practices and histories in which they are imagined and pursued, and therefore inextricable from the broader national, institutional and bureaucratic contexts in which they are embedded (2013: 292). The strategies Ahmad employed to get through the German language courses quickly, became modes of navigating these contexts and of accelerating the process of linguistic integration as a means of achieving a sense of security and deceleration.

I describe Ahmad's strategic approach to the integration programme, the goals he set out to achieve and the means through which he decided to achieve them. However, in so doing, I am not suggesting that achieving access to work, education and employment for newcomers in Germany relies on the ability to make and follow through with concrete, rational decisions. Nor do I suggest that the experiences of slowing, stalling and redirection experienced by Fathi and his family are the result of an inability to be strategic or that they are in some way less driven than others. In fact, as I have found there is no clear-cut effective strategy for navigating Germany's bureaucratic systems, and rather the routes my interlocutors took as they pursued their futures emerged more out of necessity and opportunity than any rational decision-making. I bring in Ahmad's story here because it further illustrates the ways in which newcomers in Germany have to continually re-order their own expectations and how often they have to adapt to external requirements. Ahmad's story, furthermore, reveals how much of his experience in Germany is underlined by *factors of uncertainty*–from his legal

status, to shifting societal views, to unexpected exam results–and how these ongoing experiences of uncertainty form expectations of the future.

2.3. Routes and Misdirections

After class let out at 12:35 pm on a rainy Thursday in October 2017, Farzaneh and Arash led us down the *Ku'damm* to a Persian restaurant they knew and liked. Sam, a young American woman, raced ahead of the group exclaiming, "I know that place! Their Ghormeh Sabzi is so good!". She and her husband lived in the neighbourhood and were self-proclaimed 'foodies'; trying each restaurant up and down the *Ku'damm* and the adjacent *Kantstrasse*.[55]

Once a month, I invited anyone who was free and interested to lunch or coffee as part of our regular *Sprachcafé* (language café). We used the occasion of our meetings to practice conversational German, and sometimes discuss grammatical rules that were still unclear. In return for lunch or coffee, I was given consent to audio record our meetings, as I was particularly interested in capturing the kinds of interaction that took place during informal gatherings. We were a small group today: along with Arash, Farzaneh and Sam, I was also joined by Aori and Halim. We were offered a prominent table in the centre of the restaurant. Sam, the most gregarious member of our group, handled the food order as I went to the fridges by the counter to get our drinks. I returned with water and juice for the others, and a bottle of *Club Mate* for myself.[56] After I handed around the drinks and we finished ordering food, I used the opportunity to get to know Farzaneh who was sitting to my right. Farzaneh is quiet during class, speaking softly and succinctly when called upon by the teachers. Her quiet demeanour meant she revealed very little about herself, though during a recent classroom exercise, she did reveal that she used to work in education in Iran. "Farzaneh, you said you worked in education? Were you teaching?" I asked her.

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[55] Ku'damm (or Kurfürstendamm) and Kantstrasse are two parallel main streets in the Charlottenburg district of southwest Berlin.

[56] Club Mate is a mate tea-based lemonade popular in Germany.

"No." She replied softly, shaking her head, then turning to Arash for translation help, explained to him in Persian (Farsi). "She was in education management at a company" Arash clarified.

Weeks earlier, our teacher, Susanne, led the class in an oral exam preparation exercise called *über sich sprechen*, (talking about yourself), much like the mock exam exercise Ahmad and I took together. Students practiced short, biographical introductions, structured along a list of pre-set categories: full name, place of birth, place of residence, family, language(s) spoken and occupation/profession. The last one was always tricky, for two overlapping reasons. The first was that students had to negotiate between what their occupation or profession *was* before they came to Germany[57] and what they were currently doing. Because Germany neither automatically nor easily recognises foreign degrees or vocational qualifications, and because newcomers to Germany who are not on work visas are required to learn German before they are eligible for formal employment, my interlocutors quickly learned that they couldn't use their past professions in government and administrative documents, but instead had to write 'student'. This bureaucratic approach to biographical information was ingrained in many LIC participants, as much of their time was spent navigating bureaucratic paperwork.

The second reason was that because they were language learners at a relatively early stage, they did not yet possess the vocabulary to fully describe their occupational selves. Though teachers did often try to teach them the terms they were looking for, they often settled for more general, simple descriptions that they felt were easier to remember.

Such was the case for Farzaneh, who, in this exercise, referred to herself first as a student and then as a teacher. Though Farzaneh studied business and education in Tehran, she never formally worked as a teacher, but as a manager in the education branch of a large company. It was during informal gatherings like our monthly *Sprachcafé* meetings that members of the LIC were able to tell each other more about themselves. Often this was because they could draw on other languages to piece together

[57] The majority of students in the LIC were not in Germany on work visas. Most did not have formal employment at the time they attended the LIC.

biographical narratives and help each other translate, unlike in most classroom settings, where communication was largely teacher led and where the expectation was to speak only in German.[58]

Farzaneh's mention of her work roused Halim's interest, who had until then been sitting on the other end of the table talking to Sam. Both he and Sam worked in tech. She was a free-lance content developer and he had a background in IT and cybersecurity. Halim delighted in talking about work and business and leaned forward in his chair to Farzaneh, sitting across from him, and asked: "Did you work at a company? Here in Berlin?".

"No, in Iran", Arash explained as Farzaneh began to laugh, holding her hands to her mouth. "Work in Berlin?" Farzaneh began, briefly repressing her laughter. "No!" she said as she burst into laughter once more, and the rest of us along with her. Shaking off his laughter, Halim continued to probe. "Was it a private company? Or Iran government? What was the name of the company in Iran? Was it a private company or not private?" Halim asked enthusiastically and leaning forward further across the table.

"At IEH." Farzaneh asserted calmly. IEH is a large, multinational industrial engineering company with branches across Europe.[59]

"Oh!" shouted the group. "Its a global company!", yelled Halim, throwing himself back in his chair. "You could get a job at the company here, since you worked at the Iran branch", Halim assured her. "Take your CV to the central office".

"No, no", Farzaneh shook her head and began to sink down in her chair as Halim and Aori began to strategise over Farzaneh's next best steps.

"Do you want to work in Germany?" Aori asked her, noticing Farzaneh's sudden silence.

"No."

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[58] Our conversation in the restaurant took place largely in English, as most of those attending the lunch spoke English. Arash and Farzaneh spoke to each other in Persian (Farsi) and Arash translated into English. Though parts of this conversation did take place in German, I have decided, for the purpose of easing the reading flow, to present the dialogue in English only.

[59] The name of the company has been fictionalised to protect the anonymity of my interlocutors.

"She has to finish the German course first", Halim inserted. "I think she will need at least B2 or C1 for a management position".

"Yes, B2, yes", agreed Aori.

Farzaneh remained silent. Halim prodded her again. "Do you want to work?"

"Of course", Farzaneh began, "but. Very long", she joked as she reached out her arms on either side, indicating that it would take her a long time to get a job in Berlin. The group laughed, but ultimately agreed that Farzaneh would need B2, if not C1 level German if she wanted to apply for a similar position in Germany, and since we were only at the beginning of the B1 integration course, this would take her a long time.

The playful banter at the lunch table between Farzaneh, Halim and Aori revealed two things: first, it referenced the economic and vocational uncertainty they shared as newcomers in Germany. Secondly, it referenced the long, shared process of learning German and reiterates the ways in which access to work is linked to German language acquisition. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter Five, humour, friendly banter and laughter were important ways to ease shared frustrations and anxieties, particularly when it came to navigating employment trajectories and the dense, often opaque bureaucratic system. In this way, humour and laughter were important tools for establishing solidarity and intimacy (Coates 2007). It was in moments of informal and playful interaction that the messiness and complexity of their first few years in Germany were revealed. In fact, many sitting at the lunch table that day faced similar kinds of uncertainty, although their migration experiences and professional backgrounds differed. However, it was through interacting over shared experiences that the group began to imagine possible futures and plot the road ahead.

Because Farzaneh didn't share much with us, even on this day over lunch, it is difficult to piece together exactly how her professional qualifications, legal status and German language skills might affect her future employment search. She was in Germany on a spousal visa. Her husband moved to Berlin for work. Because she was in Germany through the spousal reunification policy, she needed to learn German and take state-funded integration courses unless potential employers were willing to hire

her and pay for her language courses and professional re-training.[60] Nevertheless, the group strategised by imagining what a possible future route into employment might look like for Farzaneh. Halim was encouraged by the fact that Farzaneh had previous middle-management experience in a large company with branches in Germany, and seemed confident that, as long as she finished the language courses, she could apply to that branch and safely resume position in a similar line of work. He had similar expectations of his own path to employment. With over 12 years of work experience in IT and cybersecurity, a bachelor's degree in computer science from a university in Damascus, and advanced English language proficiency, Halim believed that, based on his own research and consultations at the Jobcenter, as long as he achieved C1 level German and enrolled in some professional re-training courses, he would be able to secure a job in cybersecurity at a Berlin firm within a year or two.

Over coffee many months later, Halim and his wife Anisah told me that when they came to Germany they believed finding work would be easy because the German government was so involved in their integration. "We wanted to come to Germany. We could have tried Sweden or the Netherlands. Our friends there said it was very easy. There you don't need to learn the language as much as in Germany, but we wanted to come to Germany because we thought this would be better in the end". Anisah explained that she and Halim considered seeking asylum in the Netherlands and Sweden because the language requirements weren't as onerous.[61] However, they felt that because Germany had such a rigorous language and integration programme that they would be better prepared in the long run and that they could depend on greater governmental support at the beginning. In this way, the language and integration programme was a stepping stone to attaining a sense of security, financial independence and long-term employment.

Now, three years after arriving in Berlin, Halim had completed his language courses at levels B1 and B2 and was currently enrolled in a C1 course at university. He was also currently completing a

[60] There are several companies that fund language learning for their employees, particularly in cases where newcomers come to Germany on work visas. It is less clear how this process works for other newcomers, though there seem to be several programmes available across Germany (see e.g. NUiF 2016). This will require further research.

[61] Germany's language requirements set some of the highest standards for language proficiency in Europe (and even in most of the world). Comparatively, the Netherlands sets a proficiency requirement of A2, while countries such as Sweden require newcomers to move up one level in the CEFRL scale (based on the level they started with).

continuing education course in IT and cybersecurity at the same university. The *Weiterbildung* is designed for computer scientists who either need or want to further develop their skills in their disciplines, and, in Halim's case, equip them with the language and skills relevant in Germany. Technically, the steps Halim has been taking since arriving in Germany in 2017, are preparing him to resume his career. However, Halim was receiving strings of rejections from potential employers. Their reason: Halim had a two-year employment gap in his resumé. This gap was the result of two years of language and vocational training Halim underwent in preparation for these very job applications. According to Anisah, employers asked Halim why he spent two years learning German instead of beginning to work. "We have always been told that we have to learn German first and then we can work. Why are they telling him this now?" Anisah said, audibly exasperated. I was struck by this too: in the years studying Germany's language and integration policies and programmes, I was given the same impression Anisah was: learn German *in order to* work. I had never encountered a case where employers rejected applications *because* they had spent time learning German before applying for jobs. It also seems that Anisah and Halim were given limited, misleading or perhaps conflicting information about what they were expected to do. The Jobcenter–which is a recurring topic throughout this thesis–oversees newcomers' language learning and employment searches (among many other things). Jobcenter employees consult newcomers on their employment options and the requirements they need to fulfil in order to realise them (such as levels of German, vocational qualifications and documents needed). The advice Jobcenter employees give newcomers may conflict with the information they receive in the language courses, through the media, from friends, and indeed, with their own experiences.

At the lunch table that afternoon, Halim seemed certain that with enough planning Farzaneh would be able to resume work in Germany. It appeared straightforward: she would need to take language courses to the level C1 and once her job qualifications were translated and recognised, she should, presumably be able to apply to the Berlin branch of the company she worked for in Iran. Like Fathi and Ahmad, Halim applied this strategic framework to his own life: identifying the steps he would need to take in order to qualify for work in IT and cybersecurity. In this way, Halim, endeavoured to find

predictable anchoring points in an otherwise uncertain environment. In a comparable way to Fathi, Halim had spent his first years in Germany 'ticking all the boxes': collecting language certificates and professional qualifications which should–in theory–allow him to work. However, like Fathi, Halim continued to encounter roadblocks that neither the Jobcenter, nor the numerous other governmental and bureaucratic institutions he interacted with could prepare him for. These roadblocks, instead, were the product of the external expectations of potential employers who rejected his applications due to a two-year gap in his resumé.

As Bryant and Knight (2019) explain, expectation allows us to make the orders and practices of everyday life familiar–it can anchor them in a realm within our control. However, these orders and practices (or anchoring points) also have the potential to break with our expectations, and in this way, reveal how "expectation always contains uncertainty, or the possibility of its undoing" (2019: 73). This is in line with what Hage (2009) has termed "existential mobility" or the ways in which we can form a basis from which to expect and define our ordinary lives. This entails a sense of "going somewhere" rather than being stuck in the present (2009: 97). The repeated experiences of getting stuck, or what Hage (2003) has termed *stuckedness* are characterised by and contribute to ongoing feelings of "immobility, uncertainty and arbitrariness" (Bandak and Janeja 2018: 17). Encountering misleading and often conflicting information, which seemed to continuously morph and change as they met with new and often unpredictable institutional expectations, Halim and Anisah found themselves repeatedly stopping, restarting, accelerating and slowing. These experiences not only made their future less knowable, but it also made their present possibilities of action more uncertain. Navigating between moments where potential routes forward seemed predictable and sudden shifts to periods of uncertainty, contributes to a sense of *in-betweenness;* liminal periods of action and impediment. Knight (2016) has elsewhere referred to such liminal periods as *temporal vertigo,* "experienced as extended uncertainty, as a period that should be transitional but remains unpredictable" (2016: 75).

2.4. New Doors and Redirections

Leticia and her husband Danilo came to Germany in 2016 from Sao Paolo, Brazil, seeking better working conditions. Because Danilo holds dual Brazilian-Italian citizenship, he and Leticia could freely move to Germany thanks to the EU's Free Movement Act.

Leticia has two law degrees as well as a masters degree in education, and worked for several years a labour and employment lawyer as well as public defendant. She grew up in a small town outside Sao Paolo and began working for her father's business as a teenager. As she later explained to me, it was her experience working for a small company that drove her to pursue a career in labour law: she wanted to represent and defend workers whom she felt were being exploited by a corrupt and unjust socioeconomic system. After nine years of practicing law, Leticia became so disillusioned by the economic inequity and political corruption in Brazil that she and Danilo planned for a new life in Europe. He was a secondary school history teacher and felt that his line of work made him flexible enough to move and find teaching opportunities abroad. Leticia and Danilo decided on Germany because they had several friends in Berlin who were willing to help them relocate. They also felt, like Halim and Anisah, that Germany seemed to offer opportunity: a robust economy and labour market and a system of governmental support that would enable them to land on their feet and start anew.

When the couple arrived, they found a small apartment in the outskirts of Berlin–in Brandenburg–and began working in the warehouse of a mail-order flower company. Their friends helped them secure this job, as they too had begun working there when they arrived from Brazil a year earlier.

When I met Leticia a year later in the language and integration course, she was in the process of having her degree and employment certificates translated from Portuguese and would then send the documents out for official recognition. In the meantime, she had begun part-time work at a Brazilian waxing studio nearby the language school, and was also preparing applications to local law firms, hoping to pick up her legal work in Germany. So-called regulated professions such as lawyers and

attorneys are particularly stringently controlled in Germany and entail a strict recognition process which determines in how far foreign qualifications match the German equivalent.[62] Unsurprisingly, law is particularly tricky as it is usually taught and practiced following specific regional or national legal frameworks, so transferring these skills is not straightforward. Unfortunately for Leticia, she was not recognised as a legal professional able to practice in Germany. To do so, she would need to retrain, either by going to back to university to receive her German law degree or enrolling in an apprenticeship scheme to become a legal aid–all of which would have taken several years. At 41, Leticia was wary of the prospect of having to return to university and was unsure of the likelihood of finding a job even if she did retrain.

Most days, Leticia and I took the same overground train from school (the *S-Bahn*): She took it to the end of the line and then transferred to the tram out to Brandenburg. I lived in central Berlin at the time and took the train five stops to the central train station and walked home from there. As we sat in the train together one afternoon after class, Leticia told me she had made a decision: she was going to look into other job opportunities, this time relying on her masters degree in education. "I thought, what else can I possibly do here in Germany? Do I want to work for a large company? No. Do I want to work in an office? No. But maybe with children. That is what I will do", she told me as the train snaked along the tracks which cut through the *Tiergarten* park. It was late January and we were approaching the last weeks of the B1 course. Soon the class would sit the written examination, which Leticia was feeling confident about. It was the oral exam, which the class had taken a week earlier that worried her. The class would not receive their final marks until months later–for both the oral and written exam–until they had been processed by the Telc offices in Frankfurt. Until then, Leticia said, there was not much to do but wait and focus on those aspects of her future that she could control: preparing for the written exam and planning her next steps for work in child education.

[62] Under the Recognition Act (2012) 'recognition' is understood as a formal procedure assessing the qualification acquired abroad towards the German occupation. In some occupations (the 'regulated professions' e.g. doctors, nurses, lawyer, engineers) recognition is a prerequisite for access to the profession as well as for using the job title.

The course received their final marks in May. Leticia passed the B1 exam. While waiting for the exam results, Leticia began a work experience position at a German-Portuguese kindergarten in the city center. Now she would need to complete the B2 course, then send her Brazilian degree certificates and language certificates as a bundle to the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Cottbus to be evaluated for recognition.[63] This process would determine whether Leticia is eligible to work in child education in the state of Brandenburg and if so, at what level. It would also determine whether her qualifications fully or partially matched the German equivalent degree (or qualification type). For Leticia there were two problems. The first was that this was all going to take a long time. The B2 course takes fours months, and it would take another two to three months to receive the results. If she passed on her first try, she could send off her certificates for professional recognition. This too would take at least two months. The second problem was that because Leticia lived in Brandenburg her degree needed to go through the recognition process there. However, this recognition would only be valid in Brandenburg, not Berlin, where she intended to work. After receiving approval in Brandenburg, she would need to go through the same professional recognition process in Berlin.

The road ahead felt daunting, not just because she was making a career change in a new country, but because so much of it involved navigating complicated and slow-moving bureaucratic procedures that did not lead to a clear and definable outcome.

After the B1 course finished and we both moved on to other courses, Leticia routinely sent me voice messages over WhatsApp to keep me updated on her progress. By the summer of 2018, I was finishing up research in a second B1 course run by a different course provider in Schöneberg, while she was enrolled in a B2 course in Mitte. It took her two attempts, but by the spring of 2019 Leticia had successfully completed the B2 course and passed the exam. She called me on the day she received her results. Leticia felt that she had crossed another milestone. She had even more exciting news. She had interviewed at a kindergarten a few weeks earlier for a position as a child educator—*Kindererzieherin*—and it looked like she would get the job. There was one caveat, however: she would have to wait to begin

[63] The IHK Cottbus.

her position until she received her official degree recognition from both Cottbus and Berlin. Once she received recognition in Brandenburg, the kindergarten would take her on for a probationary period. As we spoke, she told me "I think passing the B2 course opened a lot of doors for me. I went to Cottbus myself to hand in my documents, and I have been calling them to check on the status". Being able to handle these bureaucratic tasks on her own gave Leticia the sense that she was not only making progress, but that she had more control over her progress.

Finally, in late 2019, Leticia received the results of her professional recognition application in Berlin.[64] The Senate Department deemed that her qualifications partially fulfilled the German equivalent and that she should complete a C1 level German course as well as a continuing education programme (*Weiterbildung*) in child pedagogy. She could do this alongside her current work in the kindergarten and this would ultimately lead to more secure working conditions in education.

Leticia and I spoke once she had received word from the Berlin Senate Department and I asked her how she felt about the requirements they set for her. "The situation is scary for me. It feels like the beginning of something. It's scary to work full time with German colleagues and to speak German all day. It's exhausting, but I continue to learn. Even though I am very tired, I feel like this is my last chance to do something meaningful in Germany, so I stay positive".

Leticia told me that the continuing education course would qualify her as a so-called *pädagogische Fachkraft* (an education professional). With this qualification she could eventually officially work at schools (not just kindergartens). Now, four years on, it finally felt like she had secured a vocational route in Germany. Along with the safety of having all necessary qualifications and certificates, Leticia had the certainty that she would now be able to work in an area in which she was extensively trained. However, Leticia became gripped with a sense of fear: she felt suddenly thrust into the future she had been working toward and all the complicated reality that came with it.

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[64] Leticia's recognition process was overseen by the Berlin Senate Department of Economy, Energy and Businesses (*Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Energie und Betriebe)* (EA Berlin 2020).

When Mariam described how unrecognisable her life in Germany had become (2.1), the uncanniness of the present stemmed from an experience of abrupt and frenzied transition into a period of extended slowness: a period of acceleration which broke into deceleration and stasis, in which the future was unknowable. Leticia, meanwhile, was transitioning out of years of slowness, stalling and redirections and had finally arrived at the anticipated goal. However, this future which she had been working towards appeared to now have arrived suddenly, bringing with it its own features of uncertainty and uncanniness.

2.5. Conclusion

As recent scholarship on time and migration has found, notions of linear (or vertical) progress are disrupted by migration. This is often because state-centric practices and ideals of future-making conflict with the temporal experiences and expectations of newcomers. As Golden (2002) describes in his work on Eastern European migration to Israel, newcomers are confronted with temporal-reordering when they encounter local communities' expectations for achieving shared imagined futures. Such future imaginings are, however, often contested by newcomers who disrupt expectations of 'bracketing off' or leaving behind their present circumstances in favour of a shared future (2002).

As Kyeremeh et al. (2019) point out in their study of Canadian immigration and integration policy, though such policies aim to promote the significance of newcomers' contributions to 'host' societies, a newcomer's ability to participate in society is often measured against the performance of the native-born population, paired with normative behavioural standards (2019: 2). This means that on an economic level, a newcomer's successful integration is measured by their ability to earn the equivalent or more of native-born members of society. On a social level, it is measured by their ability to uphold the country's values and attitudes, such as a commitment to democracy and the constitution (ibid). The issue here is three-fold. Firstly, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, the notion of integration in-and-of-itself is vague and often subjective (see e.g. Ager and Strang 2008; Alba and Foner 2015), which, by extension means that what counts as (un)successful integration is also opaque and based on subjective and often normative ideals of belonging and participation. Secondly, while we can establish a

framework of integration criteria, by analysing Germany's integration policy documents, these may be both unattainable and, in many cases, unrealistic or unnecessary for large numbers of newcomers. Finally, integration policy, discourse, and indeed research on it, does not sufficiently take into account the goals, experiences and expectations of the refugees and migrants who are subjected to these policies and institutional requirements. This means we don't know enough about how integrationist discourses and requirements map onto, interact with or even clash with the experiences and goals of newcomers in Germany.

Germany does not automatically recognise foreign degrees or vocational qualifications. Most migrants and refugees wishing to continue working in the professions and vocations practised before arriving in Germany or to continue studies in their chosen field are required to enter into an onerous credential recognition procedure. In her study of EU migrants in Germany, Andriescu (2018) has observed, and as my own research shows, vocational recognition applicants experience a great deal of confusion as they navigate the recognition process. This confusion, Andriescu explains, stems mainly from a procedural opacity, meaning applicable requirements and procedures are either unclear, presented in a way that is confusing or unclear, variously or conflictingly interpreted by local bureaucrats, or perceived as unclear by the applicant (2018: 471). Germany's foreign qualifications recognition process, thus, provides a significant barrier to newcomers' labour market mobility. Or rather, it significantly affects their trajectories of movement. This also means that many newcomers ultimately find themselves moving into vocations that they didn't plan for, did not previously practice or are at a different or even lower skill level than the work they carried out before migration.

For my interlocutors, ideas of progress are tightly interwoven with imaginations and discourses of the future, particularly as it pertains to professional and vocational mobility. Studies on the intersection of law, migration and bureaucracy frequently focus on the imposing and restricting practices of laws and policies, often framing migrants as "vulnerable and deportable subjects", lacking sufficient agency to navigate the often arbitrary, strict and onerous bureaucratic requirements placed before them (Tuckett 2015: 114; see also De Genova 2002). However, as Tuckett (2015) demonstrates, research on migrant

encounters with state bureaucracy can (and should) simultaneously acknowledge and critically approach bureaucratic procedures and immigration laws, while also detailing newcomers' *strategies of navigation*. As I have found, a range of navigation strategies emerge as newcomers in Berlin negotiate the complexity of Germany's bureaucratic processes and their own expectations for the future. Many spoke of the LIC as providing them a *key* through which to unlock the 'not-yet' future possibilities of Germany's economic landscape (Bloch 1986; Adam 2009). Progress, and, indeed, forms of navigation over time were measured by the speed with which future goals were achieved: in class, it was about the speed with which they progressed through the language course. Outside of class, it was the speed with which they secured professional recognition, a procedure which I have explored in some detail in this chapter. Obtaining professional recognition of foreign degrees is a messy, opaque process for many. Germany is strict about the kinds of foreign qualifications they recognise and how they map on to German equivalents. Often, newcomers are required to re-train and enrol in apprenticeship programmes to be permitted to formally work. For many, this process is experienced as a form of stalling and re-direction. For others, it is met with a sense of hope and opportunity as they build on their vocational and educational experience, expand their social networks and find some temporal certainty.

However, as the many newcomers I worked with soon realised, their own expectations of the future were met with integrationist discourses which often operated with a linear vision on newcomers' progress over time. Continued interactions with bureaucratic state institutions have the effect of on the one hand, shaping newcomers' expectations of their own progress–after all, the timeframes for language courses, training programmes, appointments, etc are laid out for them in neatly packaged chunks of time–on the other hand, these linear (and often static) models do not necessarily reflect the specific ways in which newcomer trajectories *actually* progress, nor do they necessarily accurately reflect the experiences of newcomers who are subject to integration requirements.

In fact, progress isn't necessarily exclusively vertical. Following Bernstein (1999), *horizontal discourse* is defined as "a set of strategies which are locally, segmentally organised, context specific and dependent,

for maximising encounters with persons or habits" (159). This means that achievement is mapped not only onto the vertical movement upwards through the accrual of qualifications, but also through "local communicative achievements that cannot be quantified in exam passes" (Baynham and Simpson 2011: 432), such as forming friendships with locals and neighbours, or handling administrative tasks independently. However, among my interlocutors, movement itself is characterised by continued truncation, stalling and redirection. Their trajectories are interwoven with continued contact to their families and friends in their home countries and with enduring ties to their former professions, their vocational knowledge and experience and their ways of identification. Meanwhile, the first few years of life in Germany are criss-crossed with institutional encounters and steered by bureaucratic procedures and long hours in the German language course.

3. *If You Pull too Hard on the Cord, it Comes Loose:* Boredom and Temporal Uncertainty

"If you had to sum up your experience in Germany so far, what would you say?", I asked Fathi as we sat together one afternoon in the summer of 2019 on the stone benches lining the *Weinberg Park* in central Berlin. "I'm bored. I am constantly bored", he responded. "I am doing everything they expect from me, and still, almost four years later, my life doesn't feel like it has started. I feel like I am at the bottom of a deep hole, and as I try to dig myself out, I am only making it deeper and wider. I don't have friends, I don't have a girlfriend, I'm not getting accepted to vocational training programmes or universities, I don't have security. What if they decide to send me back to Syria?" (Field notes, 11.07.2019).[65]

I introduced Fathi and his family in Chapter 2: the five of them arrived in Berlin in 2015 and had, until recently, shared a studio apartment in a high-rise apartment complex in Berlin's *Mitte* district. After three years of searching, Fathi found his family a new apartment–big enough for his parents and brothers to share comfortably. Now, at 23-years-old Fathi had his own place, which he was eager to furnish and eventually entertain in. Since Fathi arrived in Berlin, he not only secured apartments for himself and his family, but he quickly passed the B1, B2 and C1 level German courses, received his German secondary school equivalency certificate and completed an internship at a hospital.

Fathi and I lived near each other in Berlin during my main fieldwork period from the summer of 2017 to the fall of 2018, and we often met in the evenings to take a stroll by the natural history museum and around the Charité hospital campus. During one of our first walks, we stopped in front of the hospital's main building and sat down on the side steps. Fathi was telling me about his plan to study medicine. He had already begun studying chemistry in Syria and hoped to be able to convert some of his credits at a university here. As we spoke, he pointed up at the building, which was now being illuminated from below by the ground lights lining the walkways. "I will be the head surgeon here one

[65] Our conversation took place in German, however I use the English translation only as this is how it was recorded in my field notes.

day".[1] Fathi said this with such conviction, it was hard not to believe him. Since that moment in the fall of 2017, Fathi has been taking the steps to reach that goal.

He has since started a position as a caregiver in an assisted living facility for young people living with cognitive and physical disabilities, is financially independent and is eligible for permanent residency. However, now, two years after our conversation in front of the hospital, Fathi's confidence seemed to be waning. As I discussed in Chapter 2, Fathi had spent years applying for medical school as well as university courses and apprenticeships in nursing, patient care and paramedic services, but was turned away from all positions with the explanation that his refugee status presented too much of a risk for potential employers and vocational programmes. Fathi is one of the few displaced Syrians I met during my fieldwork who finished the required language training courses, found a job and an apartment and qualified for permanent residency within their first four years in Germany. And yet, Fathi felt stuck: he often described to me that he felt robbed of his *Jugend* (youth, or teenage-hood). He was barely 14 at the beginning of the Syrian civil war, and spent several months imprisoned for smuggling food and medicine into his besieged town. Now in Germany, he expected to make up for those years and experience the things he attributed to normal young adulthood: building social networks with other young people his age, forming romantic relationships and living without the burdens of caring for his family. He believed that if he learned German quickly, he would be able to enrol in university, find a job and resume a social life, which for so many years had been suspended.

It may not be surprising that processes of arrival, settlement, language learning and professional attainment take time; in fact, Fathi was willing to 'put in the time' to secure a new life in Berlin. However, it was the absence of a clear and palpable outcome following years of language training, re-qualifying and navigating Germany's opaque bureaucratic system that had begun to chip away at his confidence. "Kutr al-shad birkhi" (if you pull too hard on the cord, it comes loose), he would say to me,

illustrating a tension he felt of being pulled in many uncertain directions and yet, standing still.[66] It was this combined tension of stasis, lingering hope and ongoing uncertainty that Fathi described to me as *boredom.*

I had become used to hearing boredom described to me in similar ways by other interlocutors, though it was initially counterintuitive to imagine. Boredom permeated the integration classrooms I observed and participated in in 2017 and 2018, but it was a restless form of boredom that until my fieldwork I had not encountered.

In this chapter, I examine the concept of boredom as an aspect of migrant temporality in order to capture my interlocutors' aspirations, hopes, anxieties and frustrations as they worked through the gruelling hours of the integration course. In so doing, I contribute to our understanding of boredom, specifically in contexts of migration and displacement, which we still know little about. Boredom for the refugees and migrants I met inside Berlin's LICs was the result of combined and pervasive tensions between hope, uncertainty, stalling and confinement.

3.1. Boredom: Between Confinement, Waiting and Uncertainty

Historically, scholarship in the social sciences–particularly in Europe–has linked boredom to a sense of *ennui*; a state of listlessness and disengagement in moments of leisure or in the face of mundanity and everyday routine in the modern world (Anderson 2004: 741; see also Lefebvre 1984, 2005; Goodstein 2005). Such instances of boredom have been largely addressed in Western, secularised and capitalist societies, embodying, as Gardiner (2012) asserts, the "cause and symptom of the dilemmas, anxieties and experiences that mark the contemporary age" (2012: 43).

[66] According to Fathi, "Kutr al-shad birkhi" is a common Syrian expression (and perhaps exists in other Arabic varieties) to describe feelings of being overburdened or overwhelmed, or, relatedly, to describe situations when one person is putting too much pressure on another person. An alternative version of this idiom is "kuthr al-shad yarkhi", which means "if the pulling increases, it comes off" or "if you pull it a lot/hard, it comes off". I use Fathi's own translation of the expression here, as this is how he described it to me during our conversation.

Boredom has also been addressed in educational spaces–much like the ones in which my fieldwork took place–where it has been linked to a student's relationship to the material, perception of the value of instruction, as well as the language of instruction itself (Beerman and Cronjäger 2011). In the context of foreign language education or in educational settings where the language of instruction is not the student's first language, she may feel bored by not being able to understand the instructor, yet obligated to pay attention to the lesson. Importantly, however, the occurrence of boredom in an educational space does not necessarily imply students' inactivity or lack of attention. As Peacock (1997) shows, students can find an activity boring while simultaneously remaining "on-task", meaning there is a discrepancy between an outside observer's impression of "whole class motivation" and students' "self-reported boredom", which can be concealed by on-task behaviour (1997: 3). These approaches to boredom in many ways describe the gruelling routine and excruciating minutiae of learning a new language and spending four hours a day, five days a week, over several months in a classroom, while also explaining how boredom co-occurred with seemingly productive classroom activity.

Though my research took place in educational spaces, I found that the boredom that permeated the classroom was more than the mere tedium of everyday grammar lessons or the overabundance of time giving way to inattentiveness. It was a *restless boredom* (Anderson 2004: 749) produced by confinement and uncertainty, as well as the tension between the hope of achievement and frustration at the inability to progress quickly over time.

More recently, boredom has been explored by anthropologists and other social scientists as a central aspect of temporality. Barbalet (1999) has associated boredom with notions of meaninglessness and anxiety, while Sjørslev (2013) conceptualises it as part of the social rhythm, particularly when these rhythms are disrupted by the unexpected. Frederiksen (2013), meanwhile, describes boredom as a symptom of insecurity around the future. Insights from recent anthropological scholarship on boredom help address fragments of the kind of boredom described to me by my interlocutors, and the boredom I observed in the integration classrooms. However, and partly because there is still little scholarship

which examines boredom in the context of migration and displacement, a full picture of boredom as a temporal experience, is still missing.

As Khoury (2015) writes of her work with Syrian refugees in Jordan, "to highlight boredom in displacement is not to suggest that Syrian refugees are so comfortable that they enjoy some privileged tedium. The opposite is true. Their boredom results instead from the restrictions on their mobility, prohibitions on employment, and feelings of marginalisation" (2015: 1). While Khoury's work traces the lived experiences of displaced Syrians living in Jordanian refugee camps, the boredom endured by the participants of the LICs takes on several comparable dimensions of confinement, as many were subject to varying degrees of state control, facing bureaucratic hurdles, linguistic barriers and societal exclusion.

Persistent experiences of boredom were directly linked to a sense of hope and progress, disrupted by the long, processual and often opaque process of integration. During my time with my interlocutors in the integration classroom, I was frequently confronted with this all-encompassing sensation of boredom, which became the basis of our interaction.

As Gardiner (2012) argues, "although often dismissed as trivial, boredom can be understood as a touchstone through which we can grasp much wider anxieties, socio-cultural changes and subjective crises that are intrinsic to our experience of modernity" (2012: 38), and more broadly, following Mains (2004) and Weiss (2002), by focussing my examination on the discourses that emerge from the spaces in which boredom manifests, I am able to understand "the manner in which future possibilities are imagined and pursued" (Weiss 2002 qtd in Mains 2004: 661). Boredom, as I observed it among my interlocutors in the LICs, is linked to the relationship between time and progress, which became central to their experiences in their first few years in Germany. Boredom in this sense, is not merely momentary, but pervasive, characterising an underlying tension in their everyday lives. No, the conflicts and moments of joy and friendship emerged from this boredom: a sense of suspended mobility and agency which everything responded to.

3.2. *Ich Warte:* Waiting, Boredom and Liminality

"How would you describe your first few years in Germany?" I asked Zahra as we drank coffee together on her living room couch one afternoon.

"Ich warte", she said, shaking her head. I wait.

Just as Fathi had expressed in our conversations, Zahra described a sense of stuckness and uncertainty; however, it was linked specifically to time spent waiting. My analysis of boredom, therefore, would be incomplete without a consideration of its relationship to forms of waiting, which, like boredom, was a central element of everyday life for most of my interlocutors. Upon arrival in Germany, many had to wait for up to a year for their asylum processes to be finalised. Most waited for several months for placement in language courses, and then waited several more months for the results of their language proficiency exams. They waited for their own apartments, they waited to be reunited with their families, they waited for work and education opportunities. On a daily basis, they waited as they commuted to and from the language course, and they waited in governmental institutions. Even after successfully completing language and integration requirements, in the face of the uncertain qualities of belonging, all that Fathi, and the many other migrants and refugees I worked with, could do was wait.

While boredom in the context of migration is still underexplored, the similar yet distinct concept of waiting has received quite a lot of attention in recent anthropological research. Particularly in the context of migration and (im)mobility, scholars, including Mains (2007), Jeffrey (2010), Khosravi (2017) and Bendixsen and Eriksen (2018), have demonstrated the ways in which waiting is both a product and an institutional mechanism of unequal power dynamics, social and economic marginalisation and limited mobility.

In these contexts, those in wait are described as inhabiting a liminal space between expectation and reality. Following Turner (1969), liminality is the transitional stage between two social positions. People

are caught "betwixt and between" life stages. Turner draws parallels to liminality, marginality and vulnerability, whereby the individual's liminal status renders them structurally ambiguous and socially invisible. This means that individuals in liminal positions are often socially and structurally excluded and that their social lives are temporarily suspended (Turner 1969 qtd in Khosravi 2017: 81).

In his work on unemployed Iranian youth, Khosravi describes a state of liminality in which young, unemployed Iranians find themselves suspended in a period of waiting, which is the result of their social, temporal and spatial marginalisation and exclusion from the labour market and social participation. As he writes, "in the liminal state of *belataklifi*,[67] in which one has nothing to do but kill time and loiter, the individual's status is socially and structurally ambiguous, resulting in invisibility and vulnerability" (2017: 84). In their work with irregular migrants in Norway, Bendixsen and Eriksen, similarly describe liminal spaces as emphasising a "migrant's limited freedom of action owing to the severity of state control, the inactive time spent waiting, the fear of deportation and the lack of meaning" felt by those confined in these spaces (Bendixsen and Eriksen 2018: 88; see also De Genova and Peutz 2010). Jeffrey, comparatively describes the kind of "chronic waiting" endured by unemployed lower middle-class young men in the Indian city of Meerut (2010: 19-23). This means that waiting is not necessarily a momentary state, but is often pervasive, characterising an entire life-stage, or rather *waithood* encompasses an individual's feeling of stuckness, hopelessness and dependence (see e.g. Hage 2003; Honwana 2012; Finn and Oldfield 2015).

While the individuals in these studies, as well as in my own, are caught in in a stage of suspended mobility, uncertainty, and social and economic marginalisation, this is not to say that their waiting is passive or inactive. In fact, time for the refugees and migrants I met in Berlin was both highly structured through the bureaucratic processes that managed immigration and integration procedures, and filled with activity. As Marcel (1967) argues, waiting represents a spectrum from passive to active. When passive waiting entails a "general feature of confidence" (1967: 280) in the anticipated outcome,

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[67] *Belataklifi* is an emic term used by Khosravi's interlocutors to describe their feelings of "uncertainty, suspension, rolelessness, and purposelessness" (2017: 83). It also expresses boredom.

individuals are capable of biding their time until this outcome is achieved. Conversely, when this sense of certitude is lost, an "internal debate" or tension arises, which is characteristic of active waiting and the urgency which accompanies it (ibid). Waiting, in this context, was structured and entailed a sense of progress. That is to say, they were not waiting because there was an absence of an eventual outcome, they were waiting because the eventual outcome was uncertain.

As Bandak and Janeja (2018) and well as Olson (2015) and others argue, mechanisms of waiting such as lines, rooms, lists and rosters have the effect of "dictat[ing] an order of being received, and in doing so they may also influence the dignity and safety of those who are required to wait for jobs, housing, asylum or security from intimate terrorism" (Olson 2015: 517). In other words, waiting can be imposed upon individuals and groups in different ways, meaning forms of waiting can be unequal and can lead to potential harms (ibid). As Olson continues, waiting also has the quality of structuring time: "As it organizes the routines of our daily lives, waiting can serve—rightly or wrongly—as a measure of lawfulness or civility, and potentially as a justification for the removal or denial of rights. A worthy citizen waits appropriately or faces consequences" (Olson 2015: 517). In this light, the question is, how experiences of prolonged waiting such as those endured by Zahra, Fathi and the many other refugees and migrants I worked with in Berlin, can be understood as institutionally imposed mechanisms of the German bureaucratic system. What is more, following Olson, how can we understand the processes of waiting within the context of Germany's expectations for newcomers, and the requirements of refugee and migrant integration more broadly?

Following Lucht (2012) and Anderson (2015), as well as Bandak and Janeja (2018), waiting is institutionally imposed on people in transition as a form of "sanctioning used to slow down movement", as a means to dissuade and keep migrants in a state of lingering "as they await decisions beyond their control" (Bandak and Janeja 2018: 6). Institutionally imposed forms of waiting can thus be understood as *technologies of governance*, through which power is effectuated in its exercise over other people's time (Bourdieu 1977). By making them wait, particular forms of subjectivities are generated. Auyero (2012) extends this notion in his work on poor people in need of state social and administrative

services in Buenos Aires, arguing that through such unequal power relationships, financial dependency and political subordination, waiting produces the ideal state subjects by providing "temporal processes in and through which political subordination is produced" (2012: 90). What is more, such processes maintain situations of transience and simultaneously of "scrutiny and objectification in the form of external assessments" (Bandak and Janeja 2018: 6). Heinemann (2018), makes a similar argument in her comparative work on German and Austrian integration programmes, stating that "subjects are formed and produced to inhabit a space that we might call 'inside-out-side'. A space which seems to be within society, but which, when one takes a closer look, is actually located at the outer margins of society" (2018: 179).

Thus, the integration process places newcomers in Germany in a liminal space between physical arrival and access to the resources, rights and benefits necessary to pursue their goals. It is the in-between space, where newcomers acquire the skills necessary to take part in civil society. As newcomers learn German, they are waiting for their lives to begin: to have access to jobs, higher education, vocational training and legal residency status. Linguistic competence symbolises a newcomer's commitment to German society, her desire and willingness to belong, while also representing a transformative process: from a subject that needs to be contained, controlled, cared-for and educated to an *informed, responsible, competent* and *self-sufficient* and integrateable foreigner (who is still and always will be foreign).

Waiting is often conceptualised in a similar way to my understanding of boredom: waiting is linked to the central figures of hope, doubt and uncertainty (Bandak and Janeja 2018: 1). This is because, waiting is understood to represent a "period, short or extended, [in which] an individual or a collective finds itself placed in a situation where what is hoped for or anxiously anticipated has not yet been actualised" (ibid). Like boredom, waiting represents a process of "uncertain interplays between hoping and doubting" (Bandak and Janeja 2018: 5), entailing "oscillations between these variegated stances; it is a form of becoming emergent in the very oscillations between doubting and hoping but also of suspending both" (ibid). It is in this liminal space of waiting that my interlocutors spent their first years

in Germany. One core mechanism of institutionally imposed waiting is the LIC where my research was situated for fifteen months, and where boredom became a lens through which to observe the interplays between hope and stasis; the tension between stuckness and the urgency to manage time meaningfully. It was a lens through which to capture the various strategies students of the LIC employed to form and maintain relationships to other spaces and temporalities, and where their own liminal positions between arriving in Germany, integration and belonging were negotiated.

3.3. "I Have A Lot to Do!" Boredom Between Hope and Stuckness

Halfway through my fieldwork I was attending the second of two B1 integration courses. This one, known informally as the *Wiederholerkurs*–the repeater course–differs slightly from my first B1 course in that it primarily catered to participants who had previously failed the B1 language exam. The course started at level A2.2. on the CEFRL scale, running for 300 hours–or roughly four months–as opposed to the 700 hours of the standard B1 integration course. Like the B1 integration course, the repeater course is subsidised by the German state; in this case, however, it is designed to give migrants and refugees the opportunity to repeat three modules before resitting the B1 exam. This course is also open to participants who are taking the course for the first time, but have previous knowledge of German (and therefore don't require training in levels A0-A2.1.).[68] The course I observed ran in the afternoon from 2 to 6:15pm from late March through mid-July 2018, and the summer heat and late hours meant the class was prone to agitation.

One March evening, during one of our first sessions, we sat finishing up an exercise worksheet; photocopies from an old course book that the instructor Jan had passed around to keep the class practicing conjunctions: *seit/seitdem, bevor, während, nachdem* (since/ever since, before, during, after). We had about an hour left of class and the sun had almost finished setting, filling the room with dull, grey light. Jan flicked on the ceiling lights, and as we worked silently we could hear the buzzing of the

[68] When migrants and refugees apply for placement in LICs, they take a so-called *Einstufungstest*–or placement test–which evaluates their level of German language proficiency. This determines at which level they begin their German language education, meaning courses will receive new students at the beginning of each new module.

lightbulbs overhead. “Are you finished?” Jan asked the room.[69] Receiving no reply, Jan sat down behind his desk and continued to read on his smartphone. Students whispered to each other as they worked through the sheet. Those who had finished, sat tapping their pens, gazing out the window at the office buildings across the street, or watching the hands of the clock next to the door, moving slowly towards 6pm. After some time, and sensing the restlessness in the room, Jan looked up from his phone. “Should we share our answers now? Yasmin, why don’t you try?”. Yasmin, who had been waiting quietly in her chair, leaned forward and began to read. (1) Sentences containing the conjunction since/ever since:[70]

(A)

	Original German	English Translation
Y:	Seitdem (.) seitdem ich in Deutschland bin	Ever since (.) ever since I have been in Germany
	lerne ich Deutsch	I have been learning German
J:	Sehr gut Yasmin	Very good Yasmin
	nicht?	right?
	Seitdem ich in Deutschland bin	Ever since I have been in Germany
	lerne ich Deutsch	I have been learning German
	spreche ich besser	I have been speaking better
	verstehe ich viel mehr	I understand much more
	ok (.) wer möchte als nächstes?	ok (.) who would like to go next?
	Nasim?	Nasim?
N:	Seitdem ich eine Wohnung habe	Ever since I have had my apartment
	bin ich glücklich	I have been happy

“Very good”, Jan says to Nasim, who had been sitting across from Yasmin. Jan then turns to the class and begins to elaborate, “that means I now have my new apartment. Two months. Before then,

[69] The spoken interactions I discuss in this chapter take place in German. In the text, German utterances are given in “quotation marks”. I provide the English translation in (brackets). In the interest of space, and to provide an easier reading flow, I, in some cases, omit the original German utterances and use the English translation only in “quotation marks”. Please note that I use *italics* for emphasis in other parts of the text for emphasis and to highlight certain concepts or terms (often German).

[70] I take a mixed-method and experimental approach to the presentation of my transcribed material. In some cases, such at this excerpt, I present the talk as it is uttered in German (left) and the English translation next to it (right). I do this for longer dialogues and to illustrate the kinds of back and forth interactions that were common during classroom interaction.

Wohnheim.[71] Ever since I've had my apartment, until now, until 5:50pm, since then until this moment I have been totally happy". Jan pauses and turns back to Nasim. "Or, Nasim, you could say, 'since having my daughter, I have been happy', or 'since I started my job, I have been happy'".

"Yes. I know.", Nasim muttered back, and slapped his hand down on the table as he slumped back in his chair. Jan continued with the exercise, this time looking over at Zeynep, who sat in the front row.

(B)

J:	Möchte jemand noch?	J:	Would anyone else like to go?
	Zeynep (.) möchten Sie?		Zeynep (.) would you like to?
Z:	Seitdem ich die B1 Prüfung bestanden habe	Z:	Ever since I passed the B1 exam
	bin ich glücklich oder-		I have been happy or-
J:	-aber Sie haben die Prüfung noch nicht bestanden!	J:	-but you have't yet passed the exam!
Z:	Was?	Z:	What?
J:	Nein! Wir sprechen über Heute	J:	No! We are speaking about today
	die Prüfung findet in der Zukunft statt		the exam takes place in the future
	wir haben die Vergangenheit (.) Zukunft		we have the past (.) future
	und die Gegenwart (.) Heute		and the present (.) today

Zeynep is visibly frustrated at Jan's comment–after all, this is just an exercise. It is often the seemingly mundane grammatical exercises such as this one that reveal the hopes, promises and aspirations that lie on the other side of the integration course, while underlining the processual structure of a newcomer's first few years in Germany. As students practice their knowledge of German conjunctions, they draw on actual as well as aspirational scenarios: Nasim, like many of his classmates, still lives in a temporary living facility with his wife and infant daughter, and is still hoping to find an apartment of his own. Though he worked as a tailor in Syria for many years, he is not currently working in Germany, but instead is trying to complete the B1 course, now on his second attempt, in order to become eligible for an apprenticeship in a tailoring business. Nasim sees the integration course as a necessary step in the

[71] The word *Wohnheim* roughly translates to hostel, residence hall or dormitory. Here Jan is referring to the temporary shared-living facilities known as *Flüchtlingsheime* or *refugee hostel*, where most refugees live during the first few months, and in many cases, years, in Germany.

process of realising his aspirations for life in Berlin. Repeated grammatical exercises like the ones (A and B) above become rituals through which progress and possibility are imagined. At the same time, the course content, paired with teachers' instructional narratives, reiterate the link between German language acquisition and the achievement of future goals.

Mains (2007) captures a comparable dynamic in his work on unemployed young men in Ethiopia, whereby their experience with secondary school education "conditioned them to expect to lead lives that involve progress. Education is a progressive process in that it involves gradual linear improvements" (2007: 665). The language classroom, similarly, offers this sense of progression: moving from chapter to chapter of the course book, advancing from one module to the next, and ultimately, sitting the B1 exam and graduating to the next phase of education or employment.

Structured through classroom exercise and mediated by teacher narratives, students continually engage with the hope of progress offered by the integration course. However, grammatical exercises like this one have the side-effect of marking stages of progress that have not yet been reached (such as finding an apartment and passing the B1 exam). Nasim and Zeynep's frustration calls attention to the fact they are *still in progress*; that they have not yet reached the threshold of the liminal space of the integration course, or as Mains explains, for unemployed Ethiopian young men, frustrations with their perceived inability to progress over time, were contrasted with a life that involved change or improvement (2007: 660). These moments of frustration are all the more acute in the 'repeater' course, where many are attempting the exam for the second time, exacerbating the distance between life in the integration course and the promise of work, accommodation and security, while reiterating the uncertainty of their trajectories.

During a later interview with Nasim (before the course ended), he explained to me that he interned at a local tailor when he first arrived in Germany. "I was speaking German there. I was talking with my colleagues, and I was working. I want to work". Nasim's brief experience of work marked a form of progress he had been expecting from life in Germany. "Everyone wants to come to Germany". But

now, in the B1 course for the second time, these grammatical exercises underlined a sense of stalling and lack of progress that were not part of the plan. Following Anderson (2004), "boredom discloses how life can be at risk of lessening", while at the same time bearing traces of "that which is paradoxically 'not-yet'" (2004: 740). Borrowing from Bloch's conception of the not-yet, Anderson argues that boredom is closely linked to experiences of hope: "the functionary of what has never been, of the possible New" (Bloch 1986: 6), a virtue of the not-yet, representing the possibilities of chance and newness (see also Adam 2004, 2009).

Within this conception, boredom is intrinsically linked to contrast, wherein the present moment is held in comparison to the "not-yet elsewhere or elsewhen" (Anderson 2004: 749). Boredom thus takes shape as the "restless tension" which comes to index "mild dissatisfaction that provides, first and foremost, the impetus to enter into different relations i.e. it takes place as a form of affectively based imperative *to* something else where that movement is possible" (ibid). Comparatively, the notion of progress and movement can be found in Hage's (2003; 2005; 2009) examination of *searching for hope*, which is contrasted with feelings of *being stuck*. "Stuckedness" in Hage's interpretation is characterised by "invisibility, immobility, uncertainty and arbitrariness", and the absence of the feeling of "going somewhere" (2005: 474). In this sense, boredom is produced or re-produced through moments of stuckness, the sense of lessened progress over time, and the constant comparison between the present moment and the possible outcomes that the course might offer. What makes boredom so pervasive in the first few years my interlocutors spend in Germany is the omnipresence of these moments of stuckness: the grammar exercise that reminds them of what they have not yet achieved, the B1 course they have to repeat, the next course they have to apply for, the forms that they have to fill out in German but do not yet understand fully, and the physical confinement in the classroom, in the metro commuting to the Jobcenter, and in the waiting rooms of bureaucratic institutions.

After the class finished discussing their answers on the conjunctions exercise sheet, Jan decided to fill the last half hour of class with an 'icebreaker' game, seemingly with the intention of demonstrating how diverse and multilingual we were as a group. The game involved translating basic German

phrases into our first languages, and writing these on the board ("hello", "how are you", "good evening"). Quickly, we had gathered quite a collection of translations, from Arabic, to Persian, two varieties of Kurdish (Kurmanji and Sorani), Turkish, Polish, English, French, Tigrinya, Twi, and Vietnamese.

As Jan went around the room collecting translations, he paused in front of Francesco, who had been fidgeting in his chair. "Francesco, tell me how to say 'how are you?' in Italian", Jan asked. Francesco immigrated to Berlin 20 years ago from Italy, but had never previously learned German. Now in his late 50s, Francesco works as a cook in an Italian restaurant and is taking German in his free time.[72] He turned away from Jan and spoke angrily under his breath, as his neighbour Karolina touched his arm to quiet him. He protested that we weren't working in the course book, which everyone was required to purchase at the beginning of class for €14, and that we were wasting time speaking other languages, when we should be learning German. "You have Google Translate, don't you?", he finally responded. Jan began to explain to him that engaging with each other informally is an important part of creating a supportive classroom dynamic, and would only help him learn German better. Unsatisfied with this explanation, Francesco gathered his things and headed out of the classroom. When Jan asked why he was leaving, Francesco simply replied: "Ich habe viel zu tun" (I have a lot to do). Such confrontations were a frequent occurrence in all three of the classrooms I attended and revealed how much of their aspirations for life in Germany were channelled into their expectations for the class itself, as well as their experiences of time, work and progress. What is more, it revealed the sense of urgency which underpinned all classroom activity.

Classroom interactions were filled both with a sense of urgency and stasis. There was at once an urgency to get through the day in order to make it to appointments, go to work, pick up children from day care, call friends and family members and apply for apartments. There was an urgency to make it through the course quickly, receive the language certificate and continue on the next stage of job

[72] Francesco was one of three course participants who have been in Germany for over five years, and thus does not fit into my category of *newcomer*.

applications, apprenticeships and higher education. At the same time, the class felt suspended in a state of immobility and waiting. When Francesco stormed out of the classroom, he signalled that he felt his time was not being filled with meaningful content. In Goodstein's (2005) analysis, the production of boredom is based on the existence of a notion of progress, in which "the future is expected to be different and better than the past. That is combined with a sense that the actual reality of life is not equal to what one had imagined" (2005: 667). In this sense, frustrated stances reveal how boredom is, on the one hand, directly linked to hopes and expectations of progress, or rather, a sense of *time lacking progress.* On the other hand, it is related to the sense of urgency to manage and use time meaningfully, meaning there is a direct relationship between boredom and control, pointing towards an enduring tension between "who is able to act on time, and who is acted upon" (Bandak and Janeja 2018: 20).

The absence of progress and control over time extend to experiences of stuckness and boredom, which O'Neill argues are closely linked to their experiences, hopes and expectations of the *global elsewhere*. In describing the boredom experienced by homeless labourers in Bucharest, O'Neill discusses how they continuously compare their life in Romania to their past experiences abroad, such as working in Spain where the living conditions were far better for construction workers, or their dreams of moving elsewhere in Europe to find better work and better living conditions. Drawing on the work of Berlant (2011), O'Neill describes how homeless Romanian labourers' narratives of life elsewhere in Europe become "objects of desire", or rather that images of life *over there* become "a cluster of promises" (2019: 9). Many of my interlocutors described to me that they saw Germany as a land of opportunity, where they would be able to work and live freely. However, after arriving, their first few years in Berlin were proving that the reality of life in Germany was far from their expectations, and they now experience the "viscerally felt distance between bodies and the promises that cluster just out of reach" (O'Neill 2019: 13). For the students of the LIC, the global elsewhere was not only a desired object standing just out of reach at the other end of the integration course. Instead global *elsewheres* and *elsewhens* were intertwined with the experiences and interactions of everyday life in the classroom. Boredom, thus, allowed me to capture the ways in which relationships between other spaces and temporalities were formed and maintained during classroom activities.

3.4. Other Worlds: Between Here and Elsewhere

B1 course 352 sits in a fourth-floor classroom in a tall office building opposite the over ground rail (S-Bahn) station. The building's façade is primarily of dark-tinted glass and juts out over the busy street below like a large black shard. The room itself is shaped like a triangle and the long desks lining the classroom are placed together in a v-formation. One day in June, the 17 of us sit close together as Georg, the instructor, goes over yesterday's homework with us on the white board: *Sätze im Konjunktiv II* (writing sentences in the general subjunctive case). It is 30 degrees Celsius today and the heat and dust from the street is wafting into the classroom through the open windows. The class runs from 2pm to 6:15pm, and the afternoon heat paired with rigorous grammatical exercise leaves the class sleepy and restless. Every so often, groups of students break out into whispered side conversations, which Georg interrupts with a series of alternating high and low-pitched whistles.

Sitting at the desk opposite me, Minh is dipping into the arrangement of snacks she has lined up along the edge of the table. A few desks over, Serbest is tilting back in his chair, absent-mindedly eating from a pack of chocolate-chip cookies he has resting on his chest. The sound of Georg's whistling sends him jolting back upright as he reaches for his pen and notebook. Once Georg has our attention again, he returns to his lesson on the general subjunctive—*if it weren't so hot today, we would all be paying more attention*.

I am sitting next to Sami who until now had been slumped in his chair, typing on his phone. He too had been startled upright at the sound of Georg's high-pitched, incessant whistling. Sami is in his early 20s. He grew up in Daraa, Syria and has recently arrived in Berlin. He is one of the few students in the class who is taking the B1 course for the first time. He had picked up quite a bit of German through his part-time job as a computer mechanic in a small electronics repair shop in Berlin. Once he completes the course, he plans to apply for an apprenticeship programme to become an insurance broker. Sami is short with an athletic build and meticulously groomed facial hair. On most days, he wears a tight v-neck t-shirt and jeans, and often walks into class 20 minutes late, jostling his prayer beads or a lanyard with keys between his hands as he finds a seat.

On this afternoon, following our grammar lesson, Georg assigns us to independent letter-writing exercises. Letter-writing is a key component of the written exam, and is frequently practiced during class. The class begins writing their letters. Through the open windows, the sounds of traffic and the intermittent slowing, stopping and starting of the commuter train across the road punctuate the silence of independent work. Sami writes a few lines on his sheet and then stops to pull out his phone; he is receiving a video call. He answers, and the image of a young man sitting in a stark room appears on his screen. He points the camera on his phone towards me and I wave. "My friend", Sami whispers to me. He starts to chat with his friend quietly, under his breathe, looking up at Georg every so often to make sure he's not watching. Georg is busy helping Ayşe with her letter and has his back turned to us. He points the phone at me again. "Sami, is your friend in Berlin? Maybe we can talk to him later?". "No, not in Berlin", he whispers without explaining further. Sami returns to his letter-writing, but keeps his phone on, propped up against his course books on the desk. His friend on the other end of the screen sits and watches silently. Every so often, Sami will mumble something to him quietly in Arabic. The friend rarely responds.

These silent FaceTime calls happen regularly in the classroom. Due to time differences and the intense lesson schedules, students often use the quieter moments of class to make their phone calls. If they are not making calls, then they are texting, hiding their phone in their laps, behind books and under their desks. Or they are passing around images of their friends and family members to classmates, or posting them in the course's WhatsApp group. This was not the distracted or absent behaviour of disinterested or disengaged students, but rather a manifestation of the urgency they felt to be at various places at the same time. On a daily basis, students of the integration classroom are moving between various time zones and various spaces without necessarily leaving the classroom, as they maintained often vital ties to friends and family elsewhere. As O'Neill (2019) points out, "boredom is not passing but persistent and is as much about relationships to distant spaces as it is about immediate moments" (2019: 2).

Observing the strategies through which these relationships were maintained became a big part of my research, as it was in these moments that students shared aspects of their lives with me–unprompted, as

they might otherwise be in interviews or focus group discussions. Students would show me photos of their home countries, their cities, friends and family back home, by holding their phones out to me under the table.

One afternoon, I sat next to Nasim as Georg explained the class's work assignment: exercise 2c, chapter 10 of the course book: "Das bin ich. Schreiben Sie Sätze über sich. Verwenden Sie sowohl… als auch, weder...noch, entweder…oder, nicht nur…sondern auch. Sprechen Sie in der Gruppe" (This is me/this is who I am. Write sentences using as well…as, neither…nor, not only…but also. Share with the group). Georg called on Adnan and Minh to share their example sentences:

A:	Ich habe sowohl eine Schwester	A:	I have a sister
	als auch einen Bruder		as well as a brother
M:	Ich gehe weder joggen	M:	I neither jog
	noch schwimmen		nor swim

As Georg went around the room, discussing each student's sentences, Nasim nudged me on the arm, directing me to look down at his phone. "Ich habe sowohl einen Neffen, als auch eine Nichte" (I have a nephew as well as a niece), he whispered as he tilted the screen of his phone towards me, revealing the image of two young children. The picture appeared to have captured the children mid play, as one of them was holding up a small blue ball, and the other was turning on her heels, extending out one leg, as if in the act of running. The children played in front of a low, rectangular mud brick house, behind it a squat stone wall and tall trees. "This is a typical Kurdish house", he explained, as he swiped through more shots of the children in front of his home. "We build them with mud so that they keep us warm in the winter, and cool in the summer. My family built this one," he pointed to the wooden slats jutting out of the façade, just under the flat roof. As class carried on, and students continued practicing their syntax, Nasim quietly gave me a tour of his village in Northern Syria; a small, agricultural community whose residents have since largely fled to Europe, some to Iraq.

The exercise in the course book was designed in such a way that it prompted students to talk about themselves, as the description in the instructions implies; *Das bin ich* (this is me). Exercises like this lent themselves to my research, as I could piece together little bits of biographical information as the course went along. However, the whispered side exchanges the students and I engaged in alongside this structured interaction afforded me insight into a wholly different region of classroom activity, allowing me access to aspects of their lives that they might otherwise not have shared in more formal contexts.

Throughout my time in the integration classroom, boredom became a way for me to observe the kinds of "back region" (Blommaert and De Fina 2017: 6-13; see also Goffman 1959) activities which took place alongside conventional classroom instruction, out of sight of the teachers and outside of the interactional structures designed by course providers, and even by my own semi-structured interviews. Boredom was a lens through which to capture the kinds of peer-to-peer communications which took place alongside the "front space" activities lead by the teachers (ibid).

In their discussion of *chronotopes*–or timespace configurations–Blommaert and De Fina (2017) demonstrate the ways in which these configurations come to define "the scenarios and conditions within which identity work takes place" (2017: 6), particularly inside the classroom:

> Daily lessons are regularly divided into activities that take up specific times (for example math lessons and foreign language lessons have the same duration but happen on different days) and require particular space configurations (desks aligned in certain ways, occupied by students sitting in places assigned to them by the teachers, teachers sitting or standing at the front center table or going around from desk to desk) (2017: 7).

Back region activities, by contrast, break from these spatiotemporal structures by disrupting the routine and ritualised nature of 'front region' activities (or 'front stage', see Goffman 1959). As Blommaert and De Fina argue, timespace configurations completely change in back region activities; from the timing and manner of interaction (e.g. whispered spurts at particular intervals of time), the proximity of interactants in the room, to shifting focal points (e.g. towards the neighbouring desk and away from the

teacher's desk at the front of the room). Space thus becomes reconfigured without any physical alterations to the room (2017:9). It is through these timespace reconfigurations that back regions can simultaneously become front regions, or rather that front and back regions interact at various stages of classroom activity. Importantly, as Blommaert and De Fina continue, the coexistence of these different timespaces, reveal the existence of different identity formations; from "typical chronotopic identities" which are dominant in most student to teacher interaction, to "liminal identities", which emerge through back region activities (2017: 10).

While this chapter does not delve into literature on identity work, I draw from Blommaert and De Fina's analysis of the intersections between back and front region activities to capture the ways in which relationships, across various timespace configurations, are developed and maintained by individuals caught in liminal positions. I extend the notion of back region activities to include the digital forms of communication, such as texts, video calls and the sharing of photographs, as a means of addressing the various spaces and temporalities students in the integration classroom move between on a daily basis.[73] In what they have termed "multi-layered transnational fields", Levitt and Glick Schiller describe "domains of interaction where individuals who do not actually move maintain social relations across borders through various forms of communication" (2005: 1009). Through the concept of the transnational field, it is argued that a newcomer can simultaneously inhabit one space while maintaining transnational connections to various, dispersed networks (ibid). Though I do not adopt the concept of *Transnational Fields* in this chapter, I do incorporate the notion of simultaneity into my understanding of the links between boredom and back region classroom activities.

The expression of boredom during classroom activity allows me to capture the transnational connections my interlocutors maintain with their families, friends and home communities, and the ways in which these enduring relationships intersect with their negotiations of belonging and meaning-making in Germany. At the same time, these back region activities reify their liminal positions; between

[73] I do not comment on digital technologies as objects of analysis here. Nor do I discuss the specific role that digital communication devices play in the maintenance of transnational relationships. Though I find this to be very important, it goes beyond the scope of this chapter and requires further research.

physically arriving in Germany and achieving their goals; between the present moment and the not-yet future possibilities; and between the strict temporal structures of the integration classroom and the urgency to be *elsewhere* and *elsewhen* at the same time (Anderson 2004).

During my fieldwork in Berlin, I joined a number of WhatsApp groups formed by LIC members. Each class had their own group, which served as a king of message board where students could share homework assignments, compare test scores and post questions about institutional procedures. Over time, other groups formed around smaller friend circles–I was included in a few. Minh, Serbest, Yasmin and I formed a group called *Freunde in der Sonne* (friends in the sun) to organise group picnics, lunches and excursions outside of class. Over time it became an important social channel for us, especially after the LIC finished. Minh, Serbest and Yasmin used our WhatsApp group to chat about shared everyday experiences, to exchange photos and playful memes.

Minh, Serbest and Yasmin were among the younger, multilingual and comparatively educated branch of my interlocutors. At the time, Serbest was in his early 20's, Yasmin in her late 20's and Minh in her early 30's. All three had studied or begun studying at home before coming to Germany. Serbest began taking film and fine art courses at University in Iraq and intended to continue pursuing an arts degree in Berlin. He spoke seven languages and was one of the few forcibly displaced persons I met who had very quickly secured their own apartment and had established a sizeable social network with other young people in Berlin–many of them German. Yasmin had been in the middle of completing her bachelor's degree in French and education at University in Damascus before the civil war forced her to flee to Europe. Though she initially planned to continue her studies in Berlin once she completed the language courses, she had, over the two years of being in Germany, developed an interest in law enforcement and now aspired to become a police officer. Minh studied business administration in Vietnam and had worked for a UK-based organisation specialising in cultural and educational opportunities in Ho Chi Minh City. There, she met and later married a young German IT consultant and moved to Berlin with him six months prior to enrolling in the LIC. After completing the B1 and B2 courses, Minh planned to enrol in an apprenticeship programme for business administration. Such

apprenticeships, known as *Ausbildungen* are part of Germany's longstanding vocational training programmes, or the dual vocational education and training model (VET), through which individuals acquire both the practical experience and educational qualifications for their professions (as I describe in detail in Chapter 2).

Early on in our group chats, while we were still in the B1 course together, Minh, Serbest and Yasmin decided that once they all passed the B1 exam they would enrol in the same B2 course together. This decision was followed by frequent discussion comparing different course providers, timelines and enrolment criteria. In this way, the WhatsApp group not only became a site where everyday life played out, but where possible futures were imagined and planned. During one of our last B1 classes in June 2018, my phone buzzed in my pocket. It was Minh texting our WhatsApp group. I looked up at her from across the room. She had perfected a very clandestine style of texting during class; holding the phone in her lap with one hand, while continuing to take notes in her course book with the other. "What do you think you will do after the B2 course? I think I will do an apprenticeship", Minh wrote. Serbest responded, "I haven't decided yet, but I just started working at a vegan restaurant. Maybe I will stay there". Serbest's style of in-class texting was far less stealthy than Minh's approach; rocking back in his chair with his phone right by his face. He was quickly caught by our instructor, Jan, who knocked on Serbest's desk, yelling "hello, hello! Serbest! Here we are. Please pay attention!". Startled, Yasmin, who had been typing a response to our chat, slid her phone under her open course book. Minh was undeterred, responding, "you should talk to the Jobcenter. We need skills to work in Germany. What we have from our home countries is not enough". Upon receiving Minh's message, Serbest and Yasmin looked up at her. Yasmin nodded in agreement, and then turned to shrug at me.

Alongside classroom instruction, Minh, Serbest and Yasmin engage across different domains of communication to imagine a life beyond the integration programme. Still in the B1 course, the group begins to plan their lives after they have finished their language training altogether. However, even within this imagined world, progress is uncertain and seemingly obstructed by bureaucratic processes beyond their control. The idea that the skills acquired at home in Vietnam, Iraq and Syria are not

sufficient enough even in the imagined future world beyond the integration classroom, reifies the notion of a newcomer's dependence on the German bureaucratic system.

Examining boredom allowed me to access the multiple other worlds my interlocutors inhabited simultaneously. Importantly, however, these other worlds included both their day-to-day experiences in Berlin, as well as their future, imagined worlds. The latter in particular were accessed and shaped by *outside experiences* (Baynham 2006) which students brought into the classroom: their outside encounters with other institutions, administrative workers, government bureaucrats, friends, neighbours and strangers on the *U-Bahn*, shaped both how they interacted with their course mates, as well as how they negotiated their future trajectories as a group.

Back region activities within the context of boredom reveal the strategies through which hopes, aspirations, anxieties and frustrations are negotiated and discussed. At the same time, they provide a window into the various ways in which students in the LIC maintain ties to other worlds, both real and imagined. Caught in the liminal space between physically arriving, integrating and belonging, back region activities in moments of boredom become sites where emerging social positions are navigated, contested and maintained.

3.5. Conclusion

Boredom is often considered a banal fact of modern life, particularly in educational spaces where the mundanity of everyday grammar lessons and long hours of repetition and revision dull the sense of time, which might otherwise be filled with more excitement. However, I argue that the boredom endured by participants of the LIC extends beyond the tediousness of daily language learning as well as the classroom in which lessons are facilitated. This boredom is a product of the liminal positions migrants and refugees are kept in during their first years in Germany.

Germany's complicated and often opaque integration and immigration policies and day-to-day bureaucratic and administrative procedures have the effect of confining newcomers in spaces of

transition and waiting. Within these spaces, the potential outcomes of integration requirements remain uncertain for most, creating a pervasive tension between hope, expectation and progress and the experience of stalling, powerlessness and urgency.

As recent anthropological studies have demonstrated, and as my own research confirms, boredom is the result of restrictions on mobility, limited access to information and resources, experiences of alienation and marginalisation, as well as the feeling that one is waiting without the certitude of a desired outcome.

In this chapter, I approach boredom as a lens through which to observe the aspirations, hopes, frustrations and expectations of migrants and refugees enrolled in Germany's state-funded language and integration programmes. Through this analytical lens, I was able to capture the ways in which future goals were imagined and pursued and the ways in which these interacted with the strict and onerous requirements and procedures of the integration system. While the migrants and refugees in these spaces have specific aspirations for life in Germany, these are often met with a sense of stuckness as they face ongoing bureaucratic, administrative and linguistic hurdles. The tension that results from these intersections, allows me to understand the ways in which time and progress are negotiated and policed.

At the same time, boredom allowed me insight into regions of classroom activity that take place alongside the temporal structures of classroom interaction. By investigating the kinds of *back region* activities that take place during class, I was able to observe the strategies through which biographical narratives were constructed and shared, through which new friendships were formed and through which relationships across different spaces and temporalities were developed and maintained.

4. Being Here and Being There: Timespaces and Time Practices of Belonging

"What stops me progressing is the constant interactions I have with Germans, where they tell me 'you have to learn German'. I know I have to learn German, but I don't know how long it will take. I need time".

Zahra was the first person I interviewed during fieldwork. It was October, six weeks into my stay in the B1 LIC 126. She requested an interpreter and I scheduled an appointment with Asmaa, a German-Lebanese friend-of-a-friend who works professionally as an interpreter for a local NGO.

One day after class, the three of us met at a Starbucks near the language school. I bought us coffees and we sat upstairs on two opposing couches. We talked about the LIC. In weeks prior, Zahra had often expressed to me that she was frustrated with her progress in the course. She felt that she couldn't keep up with the pace, and that her age–at 55–put her at a disadvantage among her course mates, some of whom were in their early 20s. Most of all, however, Zahra felt that she was contending with external expectations of progress that she could not meet–at least not in the same way.

Zahra arrived in Germany from Syria along with her son Farid in 2015. The two spent the better part of a year in a temporary refugee facility in Hamburg–known colloquially as a refugee hostel–waiting for their asylum process to be finalised. Farid is now attending dental school outside of Berlin, though he already worked as a dentist in Syria. Her second son, Mahdi, arrived in Berlin months before the rest of his family, as an architecture student, and now practices at a small firm in Berlin. Her husband Badr joined Zahra through Germany's family reunification policy in the summer of 2017, shortly before Zahra and I met in the LIC.

As Zahra and I talked, I was struck by the fact that she was just now beginning her language courses. Germany is strict about requiring newcomers to enrol in integration courses quickly, but many of my

interlocutors told me that it took upwards of six months to a year for them to be allocated to a course once they enrolled. Zahra told me that she had taken courses sporadically in months prior, but the uncertainty around Badr's application for spousal reunification left her too distracted to focus on German lessons. She ultimately broke off the course and waited until Badr was safe in Germany with her to re-enrol. During this time, she felt ongoing pressure to meet external expectations of language learning not only socially, but also institutionally: "When I went to the Jobcenter, the person working there would say, 'you've already been here for a while. Why can't you speak German yet?', and I would think, how can I learn German? My husband is still over there in danger and I am here and supposed to learn German?". As I discuss in other chapters (e.g. Chapter 2), German language competency is strongly interlinked with socioeconomic (im)mobility: language certificates are required by most potential employers and higher education institutions. For this reason, state-wide funds for the language and integration course are allocated through the local employment offices (Jobcenters), and Jobcenter employees oversee newcomers' progress and employment search.

The preceding chapters have illustrated the ways in which newcomers to Germany are confronted with different, often conflicting temporal models, including social and institutional expectations for their progress over time: integrationist discourses, on the one hand, paint a very straight-forward picture of the relationship between language learning, integration and socioeconomic mobility. Such discourses construct a vision of a shared future, which is achievable through the completion of certain pre-defined steps (language learning, professional recognition, vocational training, and so on). However, many of my interlocutors quickly learned that the routes between physical arrival and socioeconomic inclusion were far more complex, messy and winding than they had come to expect. As a result, their continued encounters with bureaucratic institutions and legal requirements contributed to experiences of stalling, redirection and long periods of waiting. Their first years in Germany were thus marked by extended periods of temporal uncertainty, revealing a stark tension between expectations of progress and the complex reality of Germany's bureaucratised integration and labour market systems.

This tension was palpable in Zahra's description of her encounters with the German public and with Jobcenter employees, rendering visible the conflicting notions of progress, speed, and markers of success newcomers have to negotiate on a daily basis. However, my conversation with Zahra also revealed a further tension: the ways in which these temporal frameworks variously imply notions of arrival. As she describes, Jobcenter employees and other members of the German public seem to hold underlying assumptions about language competency, which are indexed through temporal markers.These are expressed in communicative encounters, such as the Jobcenter employee's apparent surprise that though she had been in Germany "for a while", Zahra did not possess the language skills they expected she would by this time. As Bryant and Knight (2019) argue, expectations are often grounded in normative beliefs, which set a "standard for evaluation" through which someone's ability (or failure) to achieve certain outcomes is measured–or rather, if they are "meeting expectations" (2019: 63). In this sense, Zahra's retelling of her meeting at the Jobcenter shows how institutions formulate what newcomers *ought* to achieve and, crucially, that 'being here for a while' entails a specific temporal framework within which these achievements are expected to take place.

However, at the time of her meeting at the Jobcenter, Zahra was still waiting for her husband to arrive and consumed by the uncertainty and stress of being separated from her partner, who was still stuck in Syria waiting for his spousal reunification application to be approved. As Zahra's story reveals, and as I have continuously found during my research, institutions and bureaucracies rely on very static temporal models, which are often inflexible to other modes of inhabiting, managing and experiencing time. It also demonstrates that migration experiences entail coming into contact with various socially and institutionally grounded relationships to time, and that these relationships, in turn, shape underlying expectations of newcomer integration. Such temporal frameworks, furthermore, invoke very specific relationships to community and belonging, and therefore also implicate notions of space and how it is temporally configured. Evident in Zahra's narrative is the frequency with which she is confronted by expectations of *being here*, and so must contend with the question of what it means to *be here* in Germany. What does it mean to have physically arrived, to be present and participating in a given community?

Çağlar (2016) examines the ways in which post-migration discourses position newcomers within notions of belonging, arrival and participation, arguing that these represent "a particular temporal frame, which positions migrants and links them to a predefined space" (2016: 959). Through what she terms "post-migrant" perspectives, Çağlar argues that these discourses approach and position newcomers on the one hand "as if they were the contemporaries of the societies they are settled in" (ibid), meaning their past selves and migration experiences stop and that they now enter the present and partake in the practices relevant to the community of which they are now a part. On the other hand, as the very notion of integration suggests, newcomers are framed as existing in "perpetual transition either from an inscribed and path-dependent past or towards a normative future" (Çağlar 2016: 959). This tension between 'settledness' and 'not yet arrived', which Çağlar pinpoints, is one that many of my interlocutors have described to me and which I have observed in the interactions between teachers and course participants in particular. Teachers often discursively position their students in this way: as, on the one hand, having now arrived in Germany and ostensibly part of the larger community and, on the other, as in need of further integration.

In this way, various socioculturally and institutionally embedded notions of time can serve two simultaneous effects. As social science research on time has demonstrated, it can be invoked as a symbol of community cohesion and shared practices, from references to a shared history–and the commemoration thereof–to a shared sense of time and the cultural traditions which surround it, to shared everyday practices of time keeping. Temporal practices can, furthermore, serve to bolster convention and maintain a sense of shared values. At the same time, notions of temporal difference can serve to identify and uphold boundaries between communities. This is particularly acute in contexts of migration, where perceived differences between migrants and 'host' communities may be employed to signify the non-assimilation of newcomers to dominant practices around time (Bastian 2001; Cwerner 2001; Griffiths, Rogers and Anderson 2013). As Bastian (2001) argues, time and temporal relationships can inflame conflict, complicate inter-personal relationships and serve as mechanisms of exclusion. In this way, "the language of temporal difference is used to identify foreign Others, generate points of exclusion and conflict, or vocalise feelings of dissonance" (Griffiths et al.

2013: 23). Importantly, as Gal (2016, 2019) demonstrates, the construction of difference through the comparison of different practices reveals underlying ideological positions which can serve to identify group membership on the one hand, and point to beliefs about cultural difference on the other.

In Chapter 3, I considered, how observing boredom in the classroom allowed me to access the kinds of *back region* activities that occurred during instruction. In so doing, I discussed the ways in which my interlocutors interacted with various different timespaces at once (such as being active in the here-and-now of classroom activity, while texting their friends and family at home, or collectively imagining and discussing their future in group WhatsApp threads). In this chapter, I explore the various ways in which newcomers encounter different, socioculturally grounded models and practices of time including routines, schedules and time-keeping practices. I also consider how these various models and practices reveal a tension between often idealised notions of everyday German time and the messy and complex realities newcomers experience daily. Turning now to the *front region* classroom activities (or teacher-led interaction), I show how time can be used as a marker of perceived cultural difference by integration course instructors, whose modes of comparing different time-based practices have the effect of drawing further boundaries between notions of *being here* and of *not being here*.

4.1. Morning to Evening: Chronicles of Order and Messiness

Weeks before my interview with Zahra, the two of us sat next to each other in the LIC, where we paired up to work on a course book exercise. The day's exercise: "Von Morgens bis Abends" (from Morning to Evening). This was a time-telling exercise where students learned how to narrate their day chronologically, using common time expressions like "viertel vor vier" (a quarter to four), instead of "drei-Uhr fünfundvierzig" (three forty-five), which is less commonly used. The class had recently learned how to tell time in German, and this exercise was designed to teach students to apply time-expression to everyday scenarios and to structure their daily activities.

Our teacher, Susanne, instructed us to complete exercise 3a, chapter 4 in our work books, "Deutsch im Alltag" (German in everyday life).

Six brightly coloured drawings labelled A-F depicted various stages in the life of a young, blond man named Walter Baier. Our task was to order the sentences 1-6 below the images, so that they matched the events in the drawings above. Zahra and I did so together, writing down the narrative of Walter Baier's day in our notebooks. The ordered text read:

> Walter Baier wakes up every morning at 6 am. He showers for ten minutes. He eats breakfast and reads the newspaper from 6:15 to 6:45 am. Work starts at 7:30 am. He works for eight hours a day. He takes a lunch break from 12 to 12:30pm. After work, he goes grocery shopping. He arrives home at a quarter to 5pm. He eats dinner at 6:45 pm and then he watches television.[74]

Once we finished exercise 3a, Susanne instructed us to continue with exercise 3b. Remaining in our pairs, we were instructed to take turns chronicling our typical daily schedules.

Zahra sat back in her chair, reading glasses propped on her forehead, arms crossed over her stomach, as she meticulously read through the exercise instructions in the course book. "Every day is different!" she said finally, with some irritation. "Ok. Well. I wake up at 5:30 am and I have breakfast and talk on the phone. To my family. My sister is in Croatia. I have more family in Syria. I live in Weißensee[75] and I need an hour and a half with the *U-Bahn*[76] to get to the German course. Every day! Back and forth. I leave the apartment at 6:30 am. In the train, I often take a nap, a *rafwa,* or I chat with my friends and family on WhatsApp. The German course goes from 8 am to 12:35 pm. We have two breaks: one from 10 am to 10:20 am and from 11:40 am to 11:50 am. After class is always different. Sometimes I go shopping. I have to go to the Jobcenter a lot–I am looking for an apartment for me and my husband. Or I have to go to the immigration office because I need to translate my records from Arabic to German and have them approved. Sometimes, I go to workshops after class. I am attending one at the moment about intercultural communication. I arrive home around 3 or 4pm, usually, and I cook and talk on the phone with my family. In the evening, I do my German homework; usually from 5pm to 6 or 7pm. Then I make dinner and I watch TV and talk on the phone. I try to go to sleep at 11pm, but I

[74] Translated from German by present author.

[75] Weißensee is a district in the North-East of Berlin. The course takes place in Charlottenburg, in Berlin's South-West.

[76] The U-Bahn is the underground commuter train in Berlin.

have trouble sleeping. Sometimes I am awake until 3am". (translated from German; field notes 10.09.2017)

Zahra and Badr live in a small studio apartment in the city's northeast.[77] Because she was initially registered in Charlottenburg, Zahra was only eligible to take the integration course in that district, and thus commutes three hours a day back and forth to the course.

The fictional account of Walter Baier's day in the course book details a regimented work day in the life of a young, white, German man. The description invokes many of the stereotypical trappings of German work-life: disciplined work schedules, references to punctuality, order and organisation. His daily schedule is presented as one which is precise, predictable and which neatly repeats itself.

Though this is arguably just a simple course book exercise, such seemingly innocuous classroom exercises illustrate underlying cultural relationships to time, while also laying bare the spatiotemporal ruptures many of my interlocutors experienced in their first years in Germany.

On its face, the example maps clock time–or time which is standardised and "divisible into ever smaller units" (Griffiths et al. 2013: 3-4)–onto the everyday, demonstrating the ways in which days are temporally organised into routines and schedules. As Edensor (2006) describes through his conception of "national temporality", notions of everyday temporality are often organised by routines: "the repetition of daily, weekly and annual routines, how and when to eat, wash, move, work and play, constitutes a realm of 'common sense[…] [h]abits', which organize an individual's life" (2006: 532). The description of Walter Baier's day thus serves as an illustration of these notions of ostensibly common sense, everyday temporal routines: the *Alltag* (everyday).

These habits, as Griffiths et al. explain, are shaped by three interconnected *time-types*: biological/ natural time, which cannot be standardised or altered (such as age, the seasons, length of daylight);

industrial time, regulated by technologies and bureaucracies; and cultural time, which describes the organisation of time into routine *ways of being* and synchronous events. Communities and nations might easily draw a sense of identification and unity from shared ways of organising and marking time (e.g. through the celebration of national holidays, certain temporal customs or traditions such as common meal times, ideas of punctuality, etc.), and these can inform notions of 'normalcy' and 'culture' (see also Karimzad 2020). Because these course books are designed to teach newcomers about German language and everyday life, they may also implicitly be creating an image of the everyday, 'normal' organisation of local 'German' time.

As my interaction with Zahra during this classroom exercise elucidates, her days are unpredictable, *messy* and fluctuating. One could argue that this is merely a common symptom of encountering new temporal relationships or adjusting to a new life in a new environment. However, as Cwerner (2001) and others demonstrate (and as I show in Chapter 2), newcomers' encounters with new national contexts contribute to experiences of temporal disjuncture and adaptation. On a more pernicious level, Zahra's account of her daily schedule reveals how much of her time is tied to institutional schedules–the required course hours and continued appointments with the Jobcenter, immigration office and various other bureaucratic institutions. She also spends large portions of her day commuting back and forth to the language course and to various appointments. Zahra's free time is largely spent communicating with her friends and family members in Syria and elsewhere in Europe.

As Mavroudi (2017) points out, migrants and persons in transition are often navigating "journey[s] over time and space, morphing and cross-cutting at different speeds and rhythms, juxtaposed between here and there in potentially fragmented, jarring and confusing but also multiple, hyphenated, fluid ways" (2017:1). My conversation with Zahra during the interview weeks later revealed a clear tension she had to contend with: negotiating societal and bureaucratic expectations of her progress with her own experiences of temporal uncertainty. Our seemingly mundane classroom exercise, meanwhile, rendered visible the complex ways in which time-based practices are embedded within notions of community, national temporalities and ideas of 'ordinary life'. Such configurations of time and space

are akin to Bakhtin's concept of the *chronotope,* or the "intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships" (1981: 84).

This notion has more recently been applied in sociolinguistic and linguistic anthropological research to explore the "construction of understandings of reality and relations within different discursive and semiotic practices, the emergence and negotiation of identities, the circulation and transformation of frames for meaning-making in a variety of domains" (De Fina and Perrino 2020: 67). Similarly, Blommaert (2016) argues that the chronotope ought to be understood as a context, or rather a set of features "that enable particular identities, configurations of meanings, actions and rules of behaviors with associated value judgements" (2016: 52). In other words, the chronotope captures the dynamic ways in which meaning-making and identity formation interact with and are informed by sets of temporal and spatial relations, which are value-laden. The notion of *chronotopes*–or timespace configurations–thus allows us to explore in detail how timespace is negotiated discursively (Blommaert 2010; Perrino 2015; Blommaert and De Fina 2017).

In this sense, returning to my conversation with Zahra in the café weeks later, it can be argued that the Jobcenter employee's comment to Zahra during their meeting had a crucial discursive effect: it invoked a very specific, normative constellation of time and space, as well as expectations for actors and their activities within it, such as the notion that being here 'for a while' entails speaking German at a specific level, and thus implying that a central marker of *being here* is German language proficiency.

In this way, the fictional description of Walter Baier's day in the course book invoked, as Blommaert describes, a particular "ordered complex of attributions that defines the plot (what can happen and how), the actors (who can act, and how), the moral or political normative universes involved in what happens, the trajectories of plot and character development and the effects of what happens" (2016: 51). Chronotopic formulations of *being here* thus involve specific temporal practices: organised routines, and clear and punctual work schedules which are delineated from free time activities (which occur at different set times). The rift we find in this example, however, is the agency with which Walter Baier

can organise his day. This stands in clear contrast to Zahra's *typical* day, which is determined overwhelmingly by the institutional schedules and requirements that she is subjected to as a newcomer.

The following two sections examine five excerpts of one larger classroom discussion around social time, routines and time management. The first section will expand upon the concept of the chronotope through the discourse analysis of a teacher-led discussion of 'leisure time' activities in which he invokes a number of normative time-based practices. In so doing, the teacher positions himself and his students across various *scales*, or individual spatiotemporally distinct timespaces. Scaling, in this context, involves modes of comparison between different constellations of time and space, activities and positions (Blommaert 2010, 2016; Gal 2016; Goebel and Manns 2020). Scales represent levels or dimensions of "seeing and standing in the world" and are semiotic tools for invoking and comparing different chronotopes (Carr and Lempert 2016: 10). Importantly, as Carr and Lempert remind us, scale-making practices–or the construction of modes of comparison–can easily become "institutionalizing projects", whereby a certain way of seeing or being in the world becomes socially enforced and, in that way, privileges one perspective over others (ibid: 9; see also Gal 2016).

In the second, larger section, I analyse the remaining four excerpts of the same interaction in order to discuss the ways in which time–and specifically beliefs around time-keeping–becomes a discursive tool for marking cultural difference. In this section, the practice of punctuality is introduced by the teacher to describe what he feels are incompatible relationships to time between himself and his students. In this way, as I argue, punctuality becomes a scale-maker within discourses of *being here* and *not (fully) being here.* Importantly, this approach to discursive interaction enables us to unpack both the ways in which culturally-embedded temporal relationships and practices are expressed and maintained, and, crucially, how they are disrupted and challenged.

While this first section focussed on the B1 LIC course 126, the next sections explore interactions that took place in the B1 LIC course 252, the second of two B1 courses I observed during fieldwork. This one, known colloquially as the *Wiederholerkurs* (repeater course) differs slightly from the first B1 course in

that it primarily caters to participants who have previously failed the B1 language exam. Instead of starting at level A1.1. on the CEFRL scale, this one begins at level A2.2. and runs for around 300 hours–or roughly four months–as opposed to the 700 hours of the standard B1 course. Most of the participants in the repeater course have been in Germany comparatively longer and have a broader range of German linguistic resources from which to draw. The purpose of this course is to give migrants and refugees who have failed the B1 exam on their first attempt an opportunity to repeat three modules (A2.2 – B1.2) before resitting the exam. Like the standard B1 course, the repeater course is subsidised by the German state. The course is also open to participants who have not yet taken a B1 course (nor sat the exam), but have previous knowledge of German (and therefore don't require modules A 1.1 and A1.2).

Like in the B1 class, students would drop out of the course and new students would join–usually at the beginning of each module. At any one time, there were around 17 participants from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences: many were refugees from Syria, Iran, Iraq and Eritrea; others migrated to Germany from Vietnam, Ghana, Turkey and Ukraine to find work or join their families.

In the following, I unpack the ways in which the teacher, Jürgen, positions himself and his students within and across different time-related practices, as well as how these positions are negotiated and disrupted by his students Adnan, Yasmin and Nasim.

4.2. ‘We are in Germany’: Chronotopes of Belonging

It’s the middle of an exceptionally hot summer day in June 2018. We are nearing the end of the four month B1 repeater course. Our instructor, Jürgen, has called Adnan up to the front of the classroom and asks him to lead the class in a “Bildbeschreibung” (image description) exercise. The class turns to page 110 in their course book, “Deutsch im Alltag” (German in everyday life). Adnan begins describing an image of two young women sitting in a café. Jürgen uses exercises like these to get the class practicing their vocabulary. Jürgen, like many of the teachers I met, has a background in German studies (“Germanistik”). All the teachers I worked with have university degrees; some in linguistics, others in philology and literature studies. Most began working for the language and integration programmes full time after teaching German on the side for several years. Jürgen, now in his late 50s, is eccentric both in his manner of dress–he often wears pastel, monochrome outfits–and in his teaching style, which employs comedic devices, physical humour and language play. He also routinely moves from course book exercises to lively classroom discussions, interactive exercises and conversation-based lessons. It was thus not uncommon for him to ask students to lead lessons, come up to the board or even sit in front of the class and steer conversations.

He asks Adnan to describe what the women are wearing, their hair, what they are eating and drinking, the café they are sitting in, and so on. Adnan, who has been sitting in a chair in front of his classmates, begins to squirm. Adnan is one of the youngest members of the class at 20 years old–though you could not tell this by looking at him: he is around 195 cm tall,[78] with a trimmed beard, and a quiet, reserved demeanour. He worked as a truck driver in Damascus and is planning on continuing his work in transportation in Germany once he finishes the required language courses. He has reluctantly and quietly begun describing the picture in the course book, but is visibly uncomfortable sitting in the spotlight in front of 16 of his course mates.

[78] 6ft 4inches.

Seven of the students, including Adnan, are observing Ramadan this month. Dry Berlin summer days of 30+ degrees Celsius[79] paired with the long hours of German grammar lessons are making their fast particularly gruelling. The class is noticeably subdued. Jürgen pauses the *Bildbeschreibung* exercise and turns to Yasmin, who, much like Adnan, is reserved, quiet. Yasmin had been studying French and education at university in Damascus before the war broke out. She has been in Berlin for two years and is still living in a temporary facility for refugees. Today, as on most days, Yasmin has been sitting quietly at her desk taking notes.

In moments when the class is particularly quiet, Jürgen likes to encourage his students to relate the content of the current exercise to their own lives, to get them talking about themselves in German. In the interaction below, Jürgen asks Yasmin about her leisure activities:[80]

		Original German			English Translation
1	J:	Yasmin (.) was ist Ihre Meinung?	1	J:	Yasmin (.) what is your opinion?
2		Gehen Sie manchmal in ein Café?	2		Do you sometimes go to a café?
3	Y:	°Nie°	3	Y:	°Never°
4	J:	NIE?	4	J:	NEVER?
5		Bleiben Sie immer zuhause?	5		Do you always stay at home?
6	Y:	Ja	6	Y:	Yes
7	J:	Wir sind in Deutschland (.)	7	J:	We are in Germany (.)
8		Sie dürfen in ein Café gehen	8		you are allowed to go to a café
9		also es ist kein (Verhängnis) ja?	9		I mean it's not a (disaster) yeah?
10		(hhhh)	10		(hhhh)

By asking Yasmin whether she goes to cafés, Jürgen's talk invokes a chronotope of everyday social activities valid in the local, *social time* of Berlin life. Social time describes activities, routines and practices marked by "the rhythm of social life" and is commonly derived from collective activities (Griffiths et al. 2013: 4; see also Adam 1994). This includes notions of *free time* (or down time; leisure time) and the norms and activities associated with it by different social actors.

[79] Upwards of 86 degrees Fahrenheit.

[80] Teachers and students address each other using the formal second person nominative pronoun, "Sie", which I translate as "you".

This interaction involves a number of scale jumps, which Blommaert (2010) has described as timespace moves that are converted into "interactional patterns that index norms, expectations and degrees of generalness of positions" (2010: 35). In other words, such social interaction is converted into "statement[s] that index social order" whereby certain qualities or practices are marked as indicative of a certain way of being or doing–both real and imagined–rooted in the perspective of the speaker constructing these relationships (ibid).

The first scale jump is achieved through Jürgen's initial question (line 2), "do you sometimes go to cafés?", which invokes a chronotope that goes beyond the current site of interaction (i.e. to a different timespace), or rather moves the interaction from the local, situated context of the classroom to the *general*, invoking practices which have "normative validity" beyond the here-and-now (Blommaert 2010: 36). There is a shift from ordinary, teacher-led classroom activity (such as grammar exercises, classroom discussions of course book material, etc.) to a focus on one student's personal free time preferences outside of classroom hours, potentially involving different social actors, activities, linguistic practices and interests.

Yasmin's response in line 3, "never", is met with disbelief, as Jürgen, jumping up from the desk on which he was sitting, exclaims, "NEVER? Do you always stay at home?" (lines 4-5). This reaction signals a perceived incongruity between Yasmin's personal free time preferences and the chronotope of normal everyday activities that Jürgen is implying, and thus shifts focus to Yasmin's free time activities, this time in relationship to public and private space (e.g. going out or staying in).

Yasmin's reply in line 6, "yes"–signalling that she prefers to stay home rather than visit cafés–prompts Jürgen to explain: "we are in Germany. You are allowed to go to a café" (lines 7-8). This again, and more explicitly, invokes everyday activities and notions of everyday life in Germany, or rather, a chronotope of *German social time* referencing a specific national context within which time that is not occupied with work, study, childcare, etc., is filled with certain socially derived activities. As Gaudio (2003) further points out, the normalisation of going out for coffee ('coffee talk') as a social activity has

emerged more recently as a practice among the middle-class. In this way, it is important to consider that Jürgen is speaking not only from an historically configured national context of free time activities, but also from a specific class-based relationship to notions of free time and leisure activities.

Jürgen's statement, furthermore, invokes notions of movement and arrival, particularly through the use of the timeless present–"we are in Germany. You are allowed to go to a café"–which invokes Germany as a community larger than just Jürgen and his students. Thus, Jürgen's response to Yasmin re-centres the conversation about her leisure activities to a *higher scale-level*: that of the larger national community and societal environment of which both are ostensibly part. Yasmin's own leisure activity preferences are countered with an invocation of general rules and norms valid 'here', i.e. in Germany. Jürgen's assertion also serves as a reminder to his students that they are now in Germany, as opposed to some other past place from which they travelled, and that there are certain customs and social practices of which they need to be made aware. As Karimzad (2020) argues, chronotopic approaches to discursive interaction reveal how social actors "perceive, construct, organize, and evaluate normative behaviour" (2020: 108). Karimzad employs the idea of *chronotopization* to examine how perceptions of normalcy or normative behaviour are discursively produced and organised in relationship to time and space, as well as the actors involved in the interaction (ibid). In this sense, when Jürgen states, "we are in Germany. You are allowed to go to a café" (lines 7-8), he is producing an image of public behaviour on a national scale, and this is constructed in relationship to the organisation of free time activities in public space.

This is produced, in part, through simple grammatical operations in Jürgen's utterance, such as his use of 'we', as in, "we are in Germany" (line 7). Following Blommaert (2010), the use of 'we' in this context, invokes different participation frameworks. This is again achieved through the use of 'you' in the following line (8), "you are allowed to go to a café", which creates a juxtaposition between the 'national we' and the individual 'you'. Gal (2016) has elsewhere referred to these kinds of discursive comparisons as scale-making. Following Gal, scale-making necessarily involves positioning–either of oneself or others–and thereby producing a perspective (or mode of comparison) from which to evaluate aspects of the world (2016: 91). Scales, or "models for scaling", are interactionally situated

and therefore have the effect of contextualising "experience, imaginatively placing the phenomena of experience in wider (or narrower relational fields)" (ibid).

As Wortham (2008) points out, such shared understanding of the social markers of free time and how this understanding is delimitated is influenced by participants' "trajectories of socialisation" (2008: 95). These trajectories, following Blommaert (2010), contribute to the growth of inequalities (e.g. inequalities in background knowledge and the implications of not gaining such knowledge), but they also contribute to the construction of perspectives and ideologies. In this sense, Jürgen's use of semiotic material such as the we/you and the timeless present not only invoke chronotopes of German social time, but also allow him to interpret Yasmin's preferences as incongruent with these chronotopic formulations. In so doing, Jürgen assumes a discrepancy of socialisation trajectories, whereby Yasmin is lacking background about what she is 'allowed' and 'not allowed' to do in Germany.

This discrepancy of socialisation trajectories appears to occur with implicit reference to gendered behaviour. The fact that he tells Yasmin, a young Syrian woman, that in Germany, she is "allowed to go to a café" (line 8), seems to rest on his own stereotypes of Syrian culture, such as the idea that women aren't allowed to visit public cafés. As Sensoy and DiAngelo (2006) describe in their work with white female student teachers in the US, the invocation of the archetypal "oppressed Muslim woman" reinforces a commonly held gendered and racialised Western stereotype rooted in a binary view of gender and religion within non-Western communities (2006: 1).

In this case, reference to seemingly divergent trajectories of socialisation in the context of free time activities runs the risk of reinforcing the notion that students from Muslim-majority countries in particular need linguistic and cultural integration. As Loring (2013), Poveda (2003), Wortham (2008) and others have demonstrated, such underlying ideological views and cultural assumptions can be easily transmitted through teachers' instructional narratives and play a role in how teachers interact with their students, as well as how they approach their speech. Importantly, as I have found, the invocation of racial and gendered cultural stereotypes has the effect of erasing the complexity of

students' identities and migration experiences. By assuming Yasmin believes she is not allowed to go to cafés on her own, Jürgen not only reproduces stereotypes, but also fails to acknowledge the probability of other factors that may be keeping Yasmin from visiting cafés, such as acute experiences of social alienation, the lack of financial means for leisure activities, or her own personal preferences for how her free time is spent (see e.g. Gaudio 2003).

Thus, a seemingly ordinary interaction around leisure activities reveals the ways in which Jürgen positions both himself and his students in a particular time and place, which he fills with particular norms and expectations. This kind of discursive positioning is what Blommaert (2010) refers to as "vertical move" in which some scales, or scale levels, are placed above others in a "stratified, hierarchically layered system" (2010: 35). In this case, national and social norms and practices win out over individual preferences, which are presented as disrupting normal social behaviours on the national scale.

Yasmin stops responding to Jürgen's questions after he begins laughing (line 10), and instead, picks up her pen and resumes taking notes on the *Bildbeschreibung*. Jürgen is still animated, however, and immediately follows up his conversation with Yasmin with a story about a former Syrian student in one of his past B1 classes. He tells the class that this woman–a smoker–would go outside during the breaks to have a cigarette–as would Jürgen. The building in question had a recessed entrance way, so the area immediately outside of the entrance doors was roofed-over by the rest of the building, which jutted out over the pavement. Usually, the smokers in the classroom would stand just outside of this roofed entrance way, directly on the pavement where a public ashtray had been set up. This woman, however, would smoke her cigarettes under cover of the entryway, often tucking herself into a corner, away from sight. Jürgen explains that this behaviour puzzled him: "why was this woman hiding in the entrance?". When he asked her why she smoked her cigarettes in the corner of the entryway and not on the pavement with everyone else, she reportedly explained that she didn't want people to see her smoking. "Why would she hide this?", He asks the room. Adnan responds to this inquiry by suggesting that public smoking among women is uncommon in Syria and seen by some communities as a social taboo.

To this Jürgen again responds that "we are in Germany" and that this woman should feel free to smoke in public.

At first, this story seems like an abrupt addition to the topic at hand, but it soon becomes clear that what Jürgen is doing is elaborating on practices among his Syrian students that he finds strange. Both this story and his interaction with Yasmin entail culturally-situated evaluations of gendered behaviour rooted not in inherently true or fixed qualities, but in Jürgen's own perspective of what constitutes normal behaviour in Germany versus elsewhere (in this case, Syria).[81] Both entail explicit juxtaposition and comparison of free time behaviours that take place in public space: going to cafes and taking a cigarette break. Such comparative work, as Gal and Irvine (2019) remind us, is inherently perspectival: it involves a "sphere of relevance" construed by the speaker. Such forms of comparison are described as *perspectival models* in which scaling practices are grounded in certain points of view of the situational context , and these are necessarily ideological (2019: 225). In this way, Jürgen's own historically and culturally grounded relationships to time and temporal practices form the basis of comparison.

[81] I comment only briefly on the gendered aspects of belonging here, and how these are discursively invoked and navigated. It is striking that Jürgen is commenting specifically on the practices of his female Muslim students. Scholars including Fernando (2014) have demonstrated that European public and political discourses around Islam often focus on women. This topic will need further future investigation.

4.3. ‘Why are You Punctual for Ramadan, not for School?’: Temporal Asynchronicities

Jürgen turns back to Adnan, who has remained sitting in the chair at the front of the room. “Ok, Adnan. Let me ask you this–it’s kind of mean what I did here, but tell me what you think”. Jürgen proceeds to tell Adnan, and the rest of the class, about one of his B2 students at a different school, who arrived 25 minutes late for class:[82]

(A)

	Original German	English Translation
1 J:	Und ich hab den Schüler gefragt (.)	And I asked the student (.)
2	"entschuldigung (.) warum?"	“excuse me (.) why?”
3	– aus Syrien (.) ne –	– from Syria (.) right –
4	ich hab ihn gefragt "warum?"	I asked him “why?”
5	– fast alle Schüler dort aus Syrien (.)	– almost all of the students there from Syria (.)
6	ne? (.)	right? (.)
7	Ich hab ihn gefragt "warum?" (.)	I asked him “why?” (.)
8	hat er gesagt "ich habe geduscht"	He said “I was showering”
9	also ich war richtig geschockt (.) ne?	well I was really shocked (.) right?
10	Ich fand das– ((exhales))	I found that– ((exhales))
11	"ich habe geduscht" ((scoffs))	“I was showering” ((scoffs))
12	und dann hab ich gefragt	and then I asked him
13	"wie lange? Fünf Stunden sechs Stunden oder?"	“how long? Five hours six hours or?”
14	(hhhh) Gut (.) am Freitag war es sehr warm (.)	(hhhh) Good (.) on friday it was very warm
15	ne (.) 30 Grad (.) 32 Grad	right(.) 30 degrees (.) 32 degrees
16	[turning to Adnan] Würden Sie in Syrien (.)	[turning to Adnan] would you in Syria (.)
17	wenn Sie zu spat kommen	if you come late
18	25 Minuten zu spät kommen (.)	come 25 minutes too late (.)
19	würden Sie sagen "Ich habe geduscht"?	would you say “I was showering”?
20 A:	Nein	No
21 J:	das glaube ich auch nicht	I don’t think so either
22 A:	Manchmal auch man kann nicht rein komm[en]	Sometimes also one can’t come [in]
23 J:	[ja]	[yes]

[82] J: Jürgen, A: Adnan

24	manchmal sagt der Lehrer	24	sometimes the teacher says
25	“Sie warten jetzt vor der Tür bis zur Pause”	25	“you wait in front of the door until the break”
26	oder so (.) ne (.) gut ich möchte auch nicht	26	or similar (.) right (.) good I also don’t want
27	wie im Kindergarten arbeiten (.) ne	27	to work like in a kindergarten (.) right

Jürgen’s account opens with the re-telling of a dialogue between himself and his student–whom he does not name–from the B2 course. In this dialogue, Jürgen asks the student what caused his tardiness of 25 minutes (lines 1 and 2). Situating his story in another classroom, Jürgen’s narrative jumps from the current, here-and-now scale of the B1 classroom to a specific past interaction involving a different classroom and a student who is not a member of the current course, but who is now taking German-language courses on the next highest level of the CEFRL.

The discursive separateness of these two timespaces is disrupted, however, in line 3, when Jürgen breaks from his narrative re-telling to introduce contextual information: the student in question is, like Adnan and Yasmin, from Syria. This move marks a distinction between the tardy student and the situated context, a B1 German language course in Berlin. His assertion, “from Syria”, again invokes movement, whereby Jürgen signals that the student in question came to Germany from somewhere else (Syria), and thus reifies the student’s newcomer position. Jürgen references Syria again (line 5), when he explains that not only is this particular student Syrian, but most of the course participants are as well. It may be that he is trying to appeal to his students to weigh in on the other student’s behaviour (which seems to happen later in line 15), but effectively, he is introducing what Gal (2016) refers to as an “anchor category” or “person type”, which becomes the focus of contrast (2016: 96; see also Agha 2005).

In this sense, lines 3 and 5 have the effect of identifying a particular group of people and, in this way, can be used to forge generalised indexical relationships between the subjects and their characteristics, thus allowing for the construction of contrast between subject groups and stance-based evaluation (see also Schulte 2019). Figures of personhood are often discursively performed by invoking a particular timescale setting, creating “a logic of deployment and expectation” (Agha 2005: 39). Through his

examples of the tardy student (beginning in line 1), he is also linking current Syrian students to this behaviour by asking them to identify with it, e.g. "would you in Syria (.) if you come late, 25 minutes too late (.) would you say 'I was showering'?" (lines 15-18). In so doing, he is connecting participation frameworks across different scales, prompting his students to weigh in on and evaluate an interaction taking place on a different scale.

When Adnan suggests (line 22) that Jürgen ask the tardy student to wait in front of the door, or otherwise deny him entry to the classroom, Jürgen responds, "I also don't want to work like in a kindergarten" (lines 26-27). This is another scale jump, whereby Jürgen invokes the behaviours of kindergarten students as well as the responsibilities of kindergarten teachers (e.g. reprimanding students for arriving late). Furthermore, this response implies that, because the student is now *here in Germany*, he ought to know that a) he should be on time for class, b) showering is not an acceptable excuse and c) Jürgen should not have to remind him.

As I have alluded to elsewhere in this thesis (see e.g. Chapter 2), tardiness was a common occurrence in the LICs. This was because the course ran four hours a day, five days a week and students had to schedule all other matters around course hours. This was challenging for many reasons. Some students worked (mainly informally) alongside class–often in the service industry–so if work ran late or their shifts conflicted with class hours, they would miss parts of the lesson. Next to taking German lessons, students had to handle other urgent issues, such as applying for renewals of their temporary protection, filing for state-subsidised housing eligibility,[83] applying for professional recognition, enrolling their children in school and filing for spousal reunification. All of this required scheduling appointments with administrative and bureaucratic institutions like the Jobcenter and the immigration office. These appointments often conflicted with class hours, as did doctors appointments and mosque visits. Despite the frequency of student tardiness, teachers were under pressure from the course providers to stringently note absences and late arrivals. In some cases, tardiness would count as an

[83] In order to qualify for eligibility to live in state-subsidised housing in Germany, individuals and families must demonstrate that they live under a certain income threshold. The *Wohnberechtigungsschein* or WBS is an official certification verifying a person's financial hardship and, thus, eligibility to live in state-subsidised housing.

absence. Students were only allowed a small handful of absences before they were removed from the course. Though teachers were expected to keep strict attendance, they tried, where possible, to be lenient. Jürgen's frustration over his student's tardiness–expressed by frequent scoffing, sighing and other cues signalling irritation (such as in lines 10 and 11)–therefore seems to stem from the student's reason for arriving late ("I was showering"), which Jürgen seems to take as a form of provocation.

In this sense, classroom attendance becomes less an issue of adherence to the customs around clock time than a question of priority and value.[84] Thus, punctuality as a virtue of ordered time-keeping becomes the lens through which the priority and value given to a certain event is measured.

Jürgen's narrative does not stop here. In what follows, notions of punctuality increasingly become markers of cultural difference, as Jürgen builds a comparative framework between classroom attendance on the one hand, and the time-keeping traditions relevant during Ramadan on the other:

(B)

28	J:	Gut (.) dann habe ich den Schüler gefragt	28	J:	Good(.) then I asked the student
29		"machen Sie Ramadan?"	29		"do you do Ramadan?"
30		Er sagt "ja natürlich" (.)	30		He says "yes of course" (.)
31		natürlich (.)also(.) ja (.) gut	31		of course (.) so (.) yeah (.) good
32		dann habe ich ihn gefragt	32		then I asked him
33		Adnan wie finden Sie diese Frage?	33		Adnan what do you think of this question?
34		Es war eine böse Frage oder?	34		It was a mean question right?
35		Also (.) ich habe ihn gefragt	35		So (.) I asked him
36		"um wie viel Uhr beginnt der Ramadan?"	36		"at what time does Ramadan begin?"
37		"Um wie viel Uhr endet der Ramadan?"	37		"At what time does Ramadan end?"
38		Und er sagte (.)	38		And he said (.)
39		"naja ganz pünktlich um 21:32"	39		"well punctually at 21:32 sharp"
40		ne?	40		right?
41		Bis (.) eh (.) keine Ahnung (.) 6 Uhr (...)	41		Until (.) eh (.) I don't know (.) 6 am (…)
42		gut (.) Adnan (.) also ich hab den Schüler gefragt	42		good (.) Adnan (.) so I asked the student
43		mit dem Beginn des Ramadan 21Uhr so und so	43		with Ramadan beginning at 9pm or so
44		und dem Ende des Ramadan (.)	44		and Ramadan ending at (.)

[84] In the context of 19th century Australia, Davison describes how punctuality became a symbol of self-regulation in everyday life and an "essential feature of [Australians'] moral atmosphere" (1993: 79).

45		Ich hab keine Ahnung (.) 5Uhr	45		I have no idea (.) 5 am
46		da sind Sie pünktlich?	46		for that you are punctual?
47		Hat er gesagt "ja natürlich"	47		He said "yes of course"
48		dann habe ich den Schüler gefragt	48		then I asked the student
49		"entschuldigung (.)"	49		"excuse me (.)"
50		"warum sind Sie beim Ramadan pünktlich"	50		"why are you punctual for Ramadan"
51		"und in der Schule nicht?" (hhhh)	51		"and not for school?" (hhhh)
52		Was denken Sie?	52		What do you think?
53		Das heißt doch ganz einfach	53		That quite simply means
54		die Schule ist für ihn nicht wichtig oder?	54		the school is not important for him right?
55	A:	Ja	55	A:	Yes
56	Y:	Ja	56	Y:	Yes
57	J:	Oder? ((exhales loudly))	57	J:	Right? ((exhales loudly))

Continuing his narrative, Jürgen describes that he asked the tardy student whether he observes Ramadan (line 29), jumping now from B2 course interaction to the more general practice of celebrating religious holidays. Confirming that this student does, in fact, observe Ramadan, Jürgen describes asking the student what time of the day the Ramadan fast begins and ends (lines 36-37), to which the student reportedly replies, "well punctually at 21:32 sharp" (line 39).

Jürgen is beginning to link certain time-keeping practices around Ramadan. In so doing, he is also beginning to build a contrast between the student's time-keeping practices in the classroom. Though only implicitly present in excerpt (A), the notion of punctuality is explicitly named in excerpt (B) beginning in line 39, whereby Jürgen depicts the tardy student–whom Jürgen presents as giving classroom time such little priority that he comes late to class–as practicing very strict and precise time-keeping when it comes to observing a religious holiday.

Jürgen continues, this time identifying the temporal markers of the daily Ramadan fast, "beginning at 9pm or so and Ramadan ending at (.) I have no idea (.) 5 am" (lines 43-45), for which, as he establishes in lines 46 and 47, the student is punctual.

The most explicit contrast is achieved in lines 50 and 51, where Jürgen describes asking his student, "why are you punctual for Ramadan and not for school?". Such a comparison is what Gal (2016) and others have referred to as "re-scaling", whereby, "ignoring many contrasting features of the two cases, [he] instead identifies a few key relationships as the same in both" (2016: 94). Invoking time-keeping practices involved in the observation of Ramadan implicates practices valid outside of the classroom as relevant to the situated context of the language course. As Gal argues, it is "the combination of model-plus-situated-invocation that constructs comparison and thus the imagination of scale" (ibid). In this way, specific similarities are created that may not be based on historical or actual fact, but are imagined to be related, and thereby imagined to alter social realities (Gal 2016: 94).

As Blommaert notes, identities, practices and positions always occur in reference to dominant chronotopes, meaning they have an "*epistemic-evaluative* effect of truth, importance and relevance" (2016: 56). In this way, Jürgen is evaluating his student's time-keeping practices based on his own experiences of time-management and punctuality–notions which may not apply in the same way to all classroom participants.[85]

"That clearly means that school isn't that important to him, right?" Jürgen asks (line 54). In this sense, punctuality signifies the value and priority given to a certain event. While relatively implicit during his conversation with Yasmin, Jürgen's story of the tardy student now explicitly addresses the culturally-embedded time-keeping practices of his students, which he describes as incommensurable with the time-keeping practices expected of them in the classroom. Jürgen is implicitly drawing a line between those who are willing and able to participate in orderly time management and those who require further knowledge of the rules and norms valid in the classroom.

[85] There is an historical link between conceptions of modern Germanness and prescribed practices of orderly, regimented time-keeping. One such practice is the observation of punctuality, which is presented to integration course participants as a crucial facet of modern German time management distinctly tied to institutional and bureaucratic orientations toward time and planning. German notions of punctuality are said to have their roots in Early Modern Calvinism (see e.g. Engammare 2010), wherein being on time was part of a broader practice of order and discipline.

Once Yasmin and Adnan agree that coming late to class indeed signals that perhaps the course is not that important to the tardy student from the B2 classroom (lines 55-56), Jürgen perks up. This time he has a further question for the group:[86]

(C)

58	J:	Was sagt der Qur'an	58	J:	What does the Qur'an say
59		über die Uhrzeit wann Sie wieder essen dürfen?	59		about the time you can eat again?
60	S:	Über Ramadan?	60	S:	About Ramadan?
61	J:	Ja	61	J:	Yes
62		keine Ahnung?	62		no idea?
63	Y:	Ich habe die Frage nicht genau verstanden	63	Y:	I haven't understood this question exactly
64	J:	Ok (.) der Qur'an sagt	64	J:	Ok (.) the Qur'an says
65		Sie dürfen in der Nacht essen	65		you may eat at night
66		wenn es dunkel ist	66		when it is dark
67		ok (.) bis wann?	67		ok (.) until when?
68		Der Qur'an sagt folgendes	68		The Qur'an says the following
69		((whistles))	69		((whistles))
70		achtung! Achtung!	70		attention! Attention!
71	N:	Ich weiß aber ich kann nicht sagen	71	N:	I know but can't say it
72	J:	((whistles)) Auf Deutsch!	72	J:	((whistles)) In German!
73	N:	Wenn die Sonne untergehen	73	N:	When the sun goes down
74	J:	Ruhe! Nein	74	J:	Quiet! No
75		der Qur'an sagt Sie dürfen so lange essen	75		the Qur'an says you can eat as long as
76		wie Sie einen schwarzen	76		a black
77		und einen weißen Faden	77		and a white string
78		nicht unterscheiden können	78		cannot be distinguished
79	N:	Ich weiß	79	N:	I know
80	J:	Schuldigung(.) in Berlin	80	J:	Excuse me (.) in Berlin
81		in Berlin wird es nie so dunkel (.)	81		it never gets that dark in Berlin (.)
82		machen Sie in Ihrer Wohnung mal alle Lichter aus	82		turn off all the lights in your apartment

[86] S = Serbest, N = Nasim

83	A:	Ja (.) deswegen	83	A:	Yes (.) therefore
84		wir machen jetzt eine maximum Stunde	84		we now have a time limit
85	J:	Sie dürfen in Berlin auch Nachts nicht essen	85	J:	You may also not eat at night in Berlin
86		ja (.) tut mir leid (hhhh)	86		yeah (.) sorry (hhhh)
87		weil Sie in Berlin einen schwarzen	87		because in Berlin a black
88		und einen weißen Faden	88		and a white string
89		immer unterscheiden können	89		can always be distinguished
90	N:	In der Stadt (.) ja Sie sehen	90	N:	In the city (.) yes you can see
91		aber im Dorf Sie können nicht sehen	91		but in a village you can't see
92	J:	Ja aber Sie sind jetzt in der Stadt	92	J:	Yes but you are now in the city
93		entschuldigung aber der Qur'an sagt nicht	93		excuse me but the Qur'an doesn't say
94		hier astronomische Zeit 21:32 Uhr	94		here astronomical time 9:32 pm
95		der Qur'an sagt weißer Faden (.)	95		the Qur'an says white string (.)
96		schwarzer Faden (.)	96		black string (.)
97		tut mir leid	97		sorry
98		Sie dürfen Nachts nichts essen in Berlin	98		you also may not eat at night in Berlin

In the excerpt above, Jürgen takes on a surprisingly authoritative position, testing his students' knowledge of the Qur'an. It was not uncommon for Jürgen to bring in his own knowledge of different cultural practices during class. In fact, during one of our many conversations, Jürgen told me that he does a lot of research on various religious beliefs, languages and culturally embedded practices in his spare time. He does this because he wants to show his students that he is taking an interest in them and their backgrounds, hoping that this may encourage them to take an interest in German social customs. This, however, can often become a point of confusion and contention for his students, particularly when he introduces issues around religion and religious belief. As we see above, the first problem is that students don't understand *why* Jürgen is asking them about the Qur'an: Serbest appears both surprised and confused by Jürgen's line of questioning when he asks for clarification in line 60, and Yasmin states that she doesn't understand the question (line 63). One reason for confusion in this particular case is that, although many of them are from Muslim majority countries or themselves have a Muslim background, quite a few of the students in this class are secular, including Serbest and Yasmin.

Moreover, it is important to note that though many students are practicing Muslims, they may simply not know what exactly the Qur'an says about Ramadan (there are also many ways of interpreting it).

The second issue is that, because they are still at the beginner-level stages of language learning, most students neither have the tools to defend their views in the kind of nuanced debate that Jürgen introduces,[87] nor to answer his question in much detail. Nasim tries to interject several times (e.g. lines 71, 73 and 79) to assert his knowledge of the Qur'an, explaining that though he knows the answer to Jürgen's question, he doesn't know how to express it (line 71); instead, he offers that you may break fast when the sun goes down (line 73). Jürgen is moving very quickly and abruptly here and promptly dismisses Nasim (line 74).

Jürgen then explains that the Qur'an states the fast can be broken only when a black string and a white string can no longer be distinguished (lines 75-78), meaning the break of Ramadan fast involves total darkness. Nasim interjects again in line 79, explaining that he already knows this. In this way he is disrupting the authoritative position Jürgen is assuming on the matter.

As if uncovering an otherwise unknown fact, Jürgen triumphantly explains that due to light pollution in big cities like Berlin, it will never get dark enough so as to make a black string and a white string indistinguishable and, by this logic, the Ramadan fast could never be broken (lines 80-89). Cwerner (2001) has described that migrants often encounter temporal rifts when they navigate life in a new environment, tears between different rhythms and flows of events that break down the 'meanwhile' time of everyday life (2001: 22; see also Anderson 1983; Bhaba 1994). Cwerner describes temporal asychronicity from the perspective of the migrant, who is negotiating different temporal modes and adapting to various–often conflicting and cross-cutting–timespace relationships. However, in this interaction, it is the teacher (Jürgen) who, by referencing an historical text, seems to be drawing out an asychronicity in his students' methods of time-keeping: a relationship to organising the rituals and practices of religious time that is *out of sync* with the organisation of modern, urban time.

[87] Jürgen probably isn't trying to start a nuanced debate about Ramadan, but rather to tell his students his interpretation.

In Koselleck's (2004) view, modernity is characterised by a secularisation of time (2004: 265), particularly in Western countries in which prognosis and rational planning have–at least symbolically–replaced religious ideas of time. As Koselleck writes, significant events in Western history have created an understanding of the future open to human planning and intervention (ibid; see also Bandak and Janega 2018: 13). This means that, as Jeffrey (2008) notes, the institutionalisation of chronological time associated with the onset of modernity in Europe and North America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was also "accompanied by particular understandings of how social lives should be mapped onto chronological time [becoming] enshrined in new laws and public institutions" (Jeffrey 2008: 955). The characteristics of *modern time,* as Bandak and Janeja (2018) point out, "centrally revolve around particular orderings of time. Hence, the clock and the calendar have been instrumental in organizing the lives of individuals and collectives in their function as social forms of discipline, regimented routines, and technologies of the imagination" (2018: 14). As Bear (2014) argues, though modern time has not yet been sufficiently explored anthropologically, it is crucial that we understand how modern time became and remains a "central epistemological underpinning to local conceptions of time, also when various rhythms and social times are placed hierarchically in relation to it" (2014: 6). In this way, Jürgen is suggesting that the rules of *natural time*–the time of the seasons, of sunrise and daylight, of sunset and darkness–cannot apply in the same way in the modern, urban and light-polluted environment in which his students now live.

I do not comment on the teachings of the Qur'an here, or on how exactly the rituals of the Ramadan fast are organised within it; however, it does seem plausible that the onset of modernity, and with it the introduction of industrial time, has led many religious rituals and practices to adapt to new schedules and routines governed by clock time. In fact, Adnan interjects to point this out to Jürgen in lines 83 and 84, explaining that it is precisely because it is not always dark enough for a white and black string to become indistinguishable that the beginning and ending of the Ramadan fast have adopted the rules of clock time. As he says, "wir machen jetzt eine maximum Stunde"–we now have a maximal hour of the day until which we have to fast (line 84).

I sat with Adnan and a few other classmates later that day, during a brief break between classes, and we spoke of this subject again. Adnan was confused by Jürgen's analysis of the Ramadan fast, precisely because no one he knew practiced it following the rules of lightness and darkness, black string and white string. They used the clock because that was a much more practical reference point in a big city like Damascus, where it also never went totally dark. "And besides", Adnan added, "we don't break fast at the exact same time every night. It changes every day by one minute". Ramadan fast is broken after the sun sets and the exact time that the sun finishes setting differs by one minute every day, meaning that Adnan is already accustomed to adapting to different temporal practices.

Despite Adnan intervening to point this out to Jürgen, Jürgen remains steadfast, repeating again that the rules of the Ramadan fast as they are written in the Qur'an would be impossible to implement in a city like Berlin because it is simply too light at all hours of the day.

Nasim begins to explain that it is possible to follow the Qur'an in villages because it gets dark enough outside of urban environments (lines 90 to 91), implying that the temporal frameworks applied to the observation of the Ramadan fast will differ between rural and urban settings. As I have described in Chapter 3, Nasim himself is from a small Kurdish village in northern Syria. I never asked Nasim about his religious beliefs or practices–though he has described himself as a devout Muslim–but during an interview a few weeks after this interaction took place, he did describe to me that he struggled to reconcile the strict class hours with his own prayer schedule when he first enrolled in the integration course–Muslim students were, for example, not exempt from class for Friday Prayers. He thus encountered forms of temporal asynchronicity around class time, clock time and religious time quite early on–as did many other integration course participants who practiced Islam.

What Jürgen seems to be suggesting is that his students are not yet in sync with the temporal orders, routines and rules valid in Germany and that they need to adapt further. Cwerner (2001) has referred to this as a process of *synchronisation*, whereby newcomers are expected to adapt to national orders of time-keeping. As Cwerner writes, "the process of synchronisation […] celebrates a national identity

that is grounded in one and the same flow of time" (2001: 24). As we see in Jürgen's conversation with Yasmin (section 4.2) around *free time*, Jürgen's analysis of Ramadan invokes notions of movement and arrival, as he repeatedly reminds his students that they are now in Berlin (e.g. lines 80, 85, 92), a modern, urban environment where their time-based practices are out of sync with the 'meanwhile' time of everyday life (Anderson 1983).

Wohlrab-Sahr (2004) has similarly discussed the ways in which European nation-states, and particularly France and Germany, conceptualise differing relationships to time as a threat to their project of creating a collective and secular–though pluralistic–future. In this sense, the religious practices of newcomers are considered facets of their "religious pasts and the traditional practices referring to these pasts" (2004: 53). As Wohlrab-Sahr writes, such views implicitly assume a mode of religious freedom which relies on the practices associated with religion remaining private. Muslim communities in Germany and France are under particular scrutiny, with tension arising when religious practices become publicly visible (including debates around veiling, the building of mosques and the practice of public animal slaughter during Eid al-Adha). I would like to reiterate here that Jürgen's discussion of the Qur'an was immediately preceded by his conversation with Yasmin about her leisure time practices, as well as his account of the student who hid away from the street when she took her cigarette breaks. In all three cases, he addresses his Syrian students directly and follows this with explicit reference to religious practices. Again, in so doing he constructs what Gal (2016) refers to as an "anchor category" or "person type", which becomes the focus of contrast (96). In this way, Jürgen identifies certain relationships to and practices around time, which he perceives to be culturally and religiously grounded. These practices, furthermore, are identified as *visibly* at odds with his own perception of everyday time practices valid in Germany.

This discussion of the Qur'an is also directly preceded by his story of the tardy student who, though seemingly adherent to the strict temporal frameworks of the Ramadan fast, is unwilling to be or incapable of being punctual for class. Punctuality in this sense becomes a scale-maker: a point of

comparison from which to mark cultural difference and to further delineate the temporal dimensions of *being here* (or *not being here*).

Juxtaposing notions of punctuality with notions of tardiness in the context of religion implicitly suggests that a) Muslim understandings of punctuality only apply when it comes to observing religious holidays, b) these understandings of punctuality are incompatible with or cannot extend to German notions of punctuality and, further, c) there is a link between conceptions of modern *Germanness* and prescribed practices of orderly, regimented time-keeping. One such practice is the observation of punctuality, which, though rooted in Protestant notions of orderliness and discipline, is presented to integration course participants as a crucial facet of modern German time management distinctly tied to institutional and bureaucratic orientations toward time and planning.

Having now pointed out to the class that ordered time-keeping practices need to be adaptable, Jürgen slumps down in his chair and turns to a different student, Zlata, who has only recently joined the course for the final module (A2.2 – B1.1). Zlata immigrated to Germany from Kiev a few years ago hoping to find better working conditions. She is a trained nurse, but is currently working as a caregiver in an assisted living facility for the elderly. She works eight hour shifts most days, meaning she often comes to class directly from her shift. She has a quiet, stern demeanour and rarely speaks in class, and it was perhaps for this reason that Jürgen turned to address her instead of continuing his conversation with Yasmin and Adnan. Jürgen now returns to the subject of the tardy student, suggesting that, perhaps, he will need to discipline him.[88]

[88] Z = Zlata, M = Minh

(D)

99	J:	Zlata was soll ich machen?	99	J:	Zlata what should I do?
100		Ich bin der Lehrer (.)	100		I am the teacher (.)
101		ich kann ihn doch nicht– [slaps the air]	101		I can't just– [slaps the air]
102	S:	Ohr-feig (.) ohrfeigen	102	S:	sl-ap (.) slap him
103	J:	Ja ohrfeigen (.)	103	J:	Yeah slapping (.)
104		das ist in Deutschland verboten	104		that is prohibited in Germany
105	N:	Schule nicht ein Jahr	105	N:	School is not one year
106		zwei Jahr–ein Monat	106		two years–one month
107		12 Jahre (.) 14 Jahre Schule (.)	107		12 years (.) 14 years of school (.)
108		aber Ramadan ein Monat	108		but Ramadan is one month
109	J:	Der Kurs dauert vier Monate	109	J:	The course is four months
110	M:	Näh aber du hast ein Monat bis Prüfung	110	M:	Nah but you have a month until the exam
111	N:	Ein Monat	111	N:	One month
112	J:	dieser Kurs dauert vier Monate (.)	112	J:	This course takes four months (.)
113		ein Skandal	113		a scandal
114	N:	Ja es gibt Unterschied zwischen	114	N:	Yes but there is a difference between
115		Lehrer und Schule und mein Gott	115		teacher and school and my God

Jürgen asks Zlata what he should do about this tardy student of his in the B2 course (line 99). Before Zlata can answer, however, Jürgen begins to elaborate on his question (lines 100-101). Though it is clear to everyone that Jürgen is the teacher, his move in line 100, "I am the teacher", positions him as a figure of authority and re-centres the interactive frame with him as the focal point.

He slaps the air in front of him, in line 101, to which Serbest calls out *ohrfeigen* (to slap) in line 102. Serbest watches Jürgen cautiously as Jürgen continues to make slapping movements in the air. He, like the rest of the class, seems confused by Jürgen's implication here that the tardy student should receive punishment. Jürgen suggests that, though he is the teacher (i.e. a figure of authority), he cannot physically discipline his student for coming late to class (he cannot slap him). Lines 100 and 101 together shift the scale to a broader discussion of a teacher's realm and appropriate disciplinary actions.

I sit across from Nasim, who has become noticeably restless and, at several moments during this long interruption from course work, thrown his head back in irritation. Nasim interjects in lines 105 through 107, arguing, "school is not one year. Two years-one month. 12 years. 14 years of school". Here, Nasim implies that school (e.g. primary through secondary school) takes as long as 14 years. In line 108, he adds, "but Ramadan is one month". In this sense, the length of time involved in each case becomes a scale-maker in Nasim's evaluation, implying that a distinction needs to be made between an educational process that continues over several years (or rather is an element of biographical time) and an event that takes place for one month every year. There is, thus, something distinct about this event, while education over a particular period of life course is more ordinary. The language and integration course, in this sense, is part of a broader period of education and, crucially, distinct from a recurring religious holiday.

Appearing to misunderstand what both "school" and year/month refer to, Jürgen attempts to clarify that the present course takes four months (line 109), jumping back from the general (period of education within a given lifetime) to the situated here-and-now of the classroom. Minh (line 110) follows up, this time attempting to clarify that "one month" refers to the amount of time left before the final exam.

Jürgen implies that there are scalar tensions between time-keeping practices whereby more priority and value are given to punctuality in the context of observing Ramadan than in the context of classroom hours. Nasim, however, rejects this representation, appealing to a different chronotopic organisation whereby Ramadan is so distinct from classroom life that any form of comparison between the two is rejected.

In the classrooms I observed and participated in, teachers instilled the value of punctuality in their students, not only as a practical matter in terms of maintaining group progress, but also as a virtue of politeness, respect and discipline within German cultural norms. Though punctuality is often invoked as a stereotypical German trait, it is indeed regarded by many German nationals as a cultural virtue.

In a 2019 piece for the online magazine *Politeknik*, education scholar Michael Fingerle wrote: "the Germans, so the rest of the world says, are punctual. And we like to say that about ourselves too. Though the English, Scandinavians and the Japanese equally value punctuality, no other nation or culture has ever considered turning a necessary social-industrial fetish into the symbolic cornerstone of their collective identity" (2019:1).[89] Punctuality, according to Fingerle, has evolved to a cardinal virtue of authentic Germanness and has been marked as a key *Zugehörigkeitskriterium* (a criterion for belonging) and thus for *being here*. In fact, recent reports have posited that punctuality, along with language acquisition, is seen in popular discourse as a decisive barrier to newcomer integration. As Hamann and Karakayli (2016) point out, "publicly voiced suspicions about refugees' willingness to integrate are mainly related to behavioral attitudes such as punctuality, continuous participation in activities provided by host communities (such as language or integration courses), and more generally in regard to the adoption or rejection of the dominant social norms in German society" (Hamann and Karakayali 2016: 81). Such social norms–and punctuality in particular–reveal quite explicitly the temporal dimensions of integration requirements. They can be invoked to suggest that a newcomer's failure to be punctual is a rejection of dominant conventions around time management and, by extension, of notions of politeness, orderliness and discipline. Punctuality as it is presented in classroom discourse thus describes a particular normative and future-oriented positioning towards time embedded in the institutional and administrative frameworks of the integration system.

However, punctuality also assumes that people have control over their daily schedules–that they can plan when they will be where and for how long. The question is: how can we think about the role of punctuality and similar expectations around time management practices in contexts of migration? When I sat with Zahra, chronicling our daily schedules during the time-keeping exercise (section 4.1), it became clear that there was a stark difference between the ordered routine of Walter Baier's day and Zahra's own messy and unpredictable schedule. Most of her time was not her own; instead, it was tied to institutional schedules and requirements. The ways in which Zahra inhabited and moved across time were furthermore in constant conflict with external expectations of language learning and similar

[89] Translated from German by present author.

markers of participation and belonging. The tardy student's excuse for his lateness to class may arguably appear insufficient for a classroom context. However, Jürgen's invocation of punctuality as an issue of priority and value renders visible the ongoing temporal rifts and asynchronicities newcomers to Germany navigate.

4.4. Conclusion

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, newcomers to Germany encounter a range of different, socioculturally grounded models and practices of time including routines, schedules and time-keeping practices. Such models and practices reveal a tension between often idealised notions of everyday German time and the messy and complex realities newcomers experience daily. Shared relationships to time and time-based practices can be invoked to maintain community cohesion and bolster group identification. However, perceived differences around time and temporal relationships can also mark difference and uphold boundaries. In this way, I show how the everyday experiences of my interlocutors involve continued negotiation of the boundaries between arriving and not yet fully belonging. I show how repeated encounters with state-employees (including Jobcenter employees and LIC instructors) reveal conflicting notions and expectations of temporal adaptation: from adapting to external expectations of progress to the practices associated with everyday life in Berlin. Seemingly mundane classroom exercises like chronicling everyday schedules, show the messiness and unpredictability of newcomers' lives in Germany. Classroom interaction meanwhile shows how time can be used as a marker of perceived cultural difference by integration course instructors, whose modes of comparing different time-based practices have the effect of drawing further boundaries between notions of *being here* and of *not being here*. I show how seemingly ordinary everyday classroom interaction around leisure activities, time-keeping practices and culturally-rooted relationships to time reveal the ways in which teachers position both themselves and their students in a particular time and place, which they fill with particular norms and expectations. As I demonstrate this kind of discursive positioning is rooted in value-laden and perspectival understandings of time which are, furthermore, intricately embedded within notions of place. In this way, instructors draw on specific, historically grounded configurations of time and space to identify the actors, practices and attributes which they

perceive to be valid in their conception of *German time*. Herein, notions of punctuality become scale-makers within a teacher's discursive comparison of *class time* and *religious time*. Punctuality, thus, becomes an issue of priority and value, against which students' relationships to time are measured and evaluated. In this case, national and social norms and practices win out over individual preferences, which are presented as disrupting normal social behaviours on the national scale. However, as I show, these spatiotemporal discourses also become a site of resistance where students disrupt and reframe teacher-led narratives of belonging.

5. *Scheibenkleister!* Disciplinary and Rebellious Humour in the Classroom

We were well into the middle third of the day when Ahmad opened the door to the classroom and hurried down toward the end of the room to his seat. It was a freezing morning in early December, and Ahmad was bundled up in a large black puffer coat with a fur-lined hood. As he walked through the room, he flipped the hood off his head and unzipped the coat, the neck of which zipped all the way up to his nose. The class was practicing ad hoc dialogues using verbs with dative and accusative objects. The instructor, Juliane, split the class into small work groups. I sat with Rashid and Saiid, both young men from Damascus, and Onur, who had taken on the role as group mediator for the exercise. Onur had worked as teacher at a secondary school in Istanbul teaching history and physical education for many years. His calm and patient demeanour, as well as his basic knowledge colloquial Arabic, lent itself well to structuring group exercises, as he could explain instructions plainly and respond to translation questions easily. He was also the oldest member of our work group, at 38, which gave him an air of authority in a classroom that was largely composed of young men and women in their mid twenties to early thirties (much like our exercise group). Onur jotted down his first question, based on the verb "schenken" (to give), and then turned to Rashid to begin the ad hod dialogue. However, Ahmad, who had pulled up a chair to join our group, interjected before Rashid could answer:

Original German			English Translation		
1	O:	Hast du deiner Mutter	1	O:	Did you give your mother
2		etwas zum Geburtstag geschenkt?	2		something for her birthday?
3	A:	Wann hast du Geburtstag? (hhhh)	3	A:	When is your birthday? (hhhh)
4	O:	Nein nein nein! (hhhh)	4	O:	No, no, no! (hhhh)

Arriving in the middle of the exercise, Ahmad missed Juliane's instructions, and instead, playfully asked Onur about his birthday (line 3). Onur laughed as he attempted to explain the rules of the exercise to Ahmad, explaining that the point of the exercise was to construct yes or no questions containing dative and accusative objects. The respondent, meanwhile, should elaborate their yes or no

answer with an explanation, e.g. an answer to Onur's original question might be, "yes, I gave my mother something for her birthday. I gave her a book". Assuring Onur that he had now understood the rules to the exercise, Ahmad decided it would be his turn to ask the group a question:

5	A:	Ok	5	A:	Ok
6		was kann ich dir zum Geburtstag schinken?	6		what can I ham you for your birthday?
7	S:	Nein! Schinken?! SCHENKEN! (hhhh)	7	S:	No! Ham?! GIVE! (hhhh)
8	A:	[waves towards Saiid]	8	A:	[waves towards Saiid]
9		Was kann ich dir zum Geburtstag schenken?	9		What can I give you for your birthday?
10		[taps wrist] Willst du diese Uhr? (hhhh)	10		[taps wrist] Do you want this watch? (hhhh)
11	***	(hhhh)	11	***	(hhhh)
12		Was immer du willst mein Bruder	12		Whatever you want my brother
13		möchtest du mein Auto? (hhhh)	13		do you want my car? (hhhh)
14		Steht unten (hhhh) hier sind die Schlüssel	14		It's downstairs (hhhh) here are the keys
15	***	(hhhh)	15	***	(hhhh)

Ahmad's apparent misunderstanding of the rules of the exercise prompt laugher and teasing amongst his colleagues. In line 6, he not only fails to ask yes or no question, but he also realises the open-mid front unrounded/low-mid front unrounded vowel [ɛ] in *schenken* (to gift) as a near-close front unrounded vowel [ɪ], making it sound as though he is saying *Schinken* (ham).[90] The joke is further amplified by Ahmad's late arrival, his sudden interjection into the group's exercise and his clear misunderstanding of the task at hand. Saiid engages in parodic mockery–parroting Ahmad's error–and playful repair in line 7, which Ahmad waves off in line 8, taking the joking further by making the situation even more playful, performative and over-the-top as he offers his course mates his wrist watch (line 10) and his car (line 13). Ahmad is known to be playful and goofy and frequently jokes around

[90] It was common for Arabic speakers in the LIC to substitute or approximate [ɛ/e] for/to [ɪ/i], as this vowel quality is uncommon in many Arabic varieties, so, as a rule, many did not distinguish between [i] and [e] when they spoke German. In Modern Standard Arabic and in several non-standard varieties, there are only three contrastive vowel qualities: /i, a, u/. In some varieties [e/ɛ] and [o/ɔ] do exist, but only as realisations of /i/ and /u/, respectively. As a rule, Arabic speakers don't contrast [i] and [e] in their native phonology (see e.g. Al-Ani 2014; Watson 2002), so they don't always distinguish between these vowel qualities when they speak German. It is possible that speakers approximate [e] for what their native realisation of /i/ would be in this context–though the exact context for these realisations is not clear, i.e. I have not analysed my data in order to determine whether these realisations only take place between consonants–it seems that they map German [ɛ] onto their /i/.

with his classmates. It was also through his frequent playful banter that Ahmad performed intimacy–much like he does in lines 9-14 (see also Coates 2007). Moreover, through this playful performance, he deflects from the cause of his course mates' laughter: his repeated failure to follow the instructions of the exercise, preceded by his late and abrupt arrival to class.

Ahmad had been to the Jobcenter that morning. As I have described in Chapter 2, he is planning on applying for apprenticeships in wholesale management–a job he has previous experience in working for his father's firm in Damascus. He would need a B2 level German certificate to be eligible. In the meantime, he had begun a part time job at the Berlin office of a large online retailer to gain more work experience and expand his employment options. At that morning's meeting, he inquired about options for B2 courses and possible vacancies for vocational training. This was Ahmad's second B1 course, having just narrowly failed the first B1 exam on his first attempt. Now he was eager to complete his language training quickly and start working full time. It was not unusual for students to arrive late for class–particularly for morning courses like this one, running from 8:30am to 12:35pm. This was often because their appointments at the Jobcenter were set at odd hours, and because the time-intensity of the language and integration course made it difficult to schedule appointments that did not clash with course hours.

Noticing Juliane eyeing our group from other end of the room, Ahmad leaned forward in his chair and lowered his head over the exercises sheets, pretending for a moment to read through the example sentences. Once the coast was clear, he sat back up again, this time apologising to us for his late arrival and explaining that he tried to time his Jobcenter appointment so that he would arrive during the class's 20 minute break, allowing him to slip in quietly. Unfortunately, his appointment ended earlier than planned, forcing Ahmad to wait outside for the break to begin. He bided his time smoking cigarettes in front of the building downstairs, but was ultimately driven in by the cold.

Juliane, once again noticing the chit-chat at our table, walked over and leaned in to our group to check our progress:

16	J:	Schon fertig mit der Übung?	16	J:	Already done with the exercise?
17		Das war aber schnell! (hhhh)	17		That was quick! (hhhh)
18	A:	Ja (.) wir besprechen	18	A:	Yes (.) we are discussing

Looking over our empty exercise sheets, Juliane sarcastically congratulates the group on our quick progress (lines 16 and 17), and begins to laugh playfully as Saiid, Rashid, Onur and Ahmad quickly pick up their pens and stared intently at their sheets. Juliane stood and waited for us to resume our exercise after Ahmad assured her that we were in the middle of discussing our work (line 18). We sat quietly scribbling until Juliane walked away from our table. Once Juliane was busy working with another group at the other end of the classroom, we resumed our discussion of Ahmad's trip to the Jobcenter that morning. Ahmad was frustrated at the increased frequency of his Jobcenter appointments. As I have discussed elsewhere in this thesis (see e.g. Chapter 2), the Jobcenter not only oversees newcomers' enrolment in and funding for the language and integration courses, but it also consults them on their employment trajectories (both of which are intricately linked). Ahmad, seeking access to employment in wholesale, was therefore dependent on their guidance on professional recognition, vocational training and higher-level German language courses.

Just as Ahmad began to tell us more about his meeting, Saiid interjected abruptly, asking the group, in Arabic, whether we had seen a recent video by Omar Meslmani, a Syrian comedian who posts short parodic skits on YouTube about his experiences in Germany.

Saiid tells us about his latest video: *Ausländer im Jobcenter* (Foreigners in the Jobcenter), a comedic skit about interactions between a Jobcenter employee (played by a white, blond bespectacled man) and a range of clients of different nationalities, all played by Meslmani. The clients are based on stereotyped caricatures of migrant and diaspora communities in Germany. The first, *der Türke* (the Turk): a German-Turkish youngster who shouts angrily at the employee; *der Russe* (the Russian): a fur-clad drunk wielding a Vodka bottle, who immediately lies down on the Jobcenter employee's desk and falls asleep. Finally, *der Syrer* (the Syrian): Meslmani walks in to the room with slicked back gelled hair, a grey

business suit and large designer watch. He twirls his prayer beads in one hand holding a smart phone in the other. Saiid describes the interaction between the Syrian character and the character of the Jobcenter employee. "He brings in a halabi", Saiid continues, explaining that the character of 'the Syrian' is based on stereotypes of young men from Aleppo (Halab). Saiid later explained to me that the stereotype of the Halabi is that of a loud, nouveau riche business man with a "funny accent" (field notes 09.12.17). During the interview, after a brief back and forth, the Jobcenter employee remarks on the Syrian man's German language skills:[91] [92]

19	E:	Sie haben offensichtlich Deutsch gelernt	19	E:	Clearly you have learned German
20	A:	Klar habe ich Deutsch gelernt	20	A:	of course I learned German
21		rede ich mit dir französisch?	21		am I speaking to you in French?
22		Ich habe A2 in dem Deutschkurs gelernt	22		I learned A2 in the German course
23		in DEM Deutschkurs (.) DATIV	23		in THE German Course (.) DATIVE

The employee's tone is patronising and marked by an air of surprise, but Meslmani's character is undeterred and snaps back, "of course I learned German. Am I speaking to you in French?" (Lines 20 and 21), mocking the employee's apparent amazement over the level of his German. As I have been told by many of my Syrian interlocutors (in particular), such remarks over their German language proficiency were common place in meetings with Jobcenter employees. This also echoes Zahra's story (Chapter 4), where she explained that it was in meetings like these that she received the most scrutiny over the pace of her language learning progress.

This is perhaps also why, of the many characters that meet with the Jobcenter employee in this short Youtube skit, it is only the Syrian newcomer who receives commentary on his German. Meslmani's character becomes more defensive in lines 22 and 23 where he boasts that not only did he learn A2 level German, but he also knows the rules of German grammatical cases, which he promptly demonstrates in line 23–*in DEM Deutschkurs.* Learning German grammatical cases is an ongoing source

[91] Transcript from the original video. My recording was not clear enough for this section to use Saiid's retelling.

[92] E: Jobcenter Employee, M: Omar Meslmani

of confusion–particularly during the early stages of the B1 course. Distinguishing between the accusative and dative case is seen as particularly tricky for LIC participants and is a frequent subject of classroom exercises. Meslmani's boisterous demonstration of his ability to make this distinction is relayed by Saiid with a great sense of glee and laughter, which makes Onur and Ahmad laugh as well, while Rashid claps in amusement. Grinning and lifting his hand up to his face, Saiid continues the retelling:

24	S:	Shu bi illo al muwazzaf	24	S:	guess what he tells the employee
25		sma‘ al-jemle yalle tale‘ fiya	25		listen to the sentence he comes up with
26		ich sitze ungerade aber ich rede gerade!	26		I sit crooked, but I talk straight
27		(hhhh) Nicht so (.) nicht so (.) so	27		(hhhh) Not like this (.) not like that (.) like this
28	***	(hhhh)	28	***	(hhhh)

Saiid waves his hand forward, then to the left, to the right and forward again as he reenacts the scene between Meslmani and the Jobcenter employee. In this scene, Meslmani's character introduces what Raskin (1984) and Oring (2016) describe as a logical mechanism: establishing a primary meaning for the word *gerade* (meaning straight) that can be switched to reveal a secondary or less salient meaning: *gerade* (at the moment). The initial sense of the pun might be read as: "I may not be sitting straight, but I talk straight", meaning the character may be appear to have bad manners, but is direct and honest. The second meaning reads slightly differently: "I may not be sitting straight, but I am talking now", which might be a commentary on a Halabi businessman's stereotypical directness or rudeness.[93] It is unclear whether Saiid is familiar with the phrase "sit crooked, talk straight", or if it's Meslmani's animated performance in the skit that he finds particularly amusing, but it seems it was the notion that a Syrian refugee would demonstrate such a sense of authority and assertiveness at a Jobcenter meeting that impressed Saiid the most. He seems to imply this in lines 24-25 when he says, "guess what he tells the employee. Listen to the sentence he comes up with", as if to point out how unusual and audacious Meslmani's behaviour is. Saiid's account of the Meslmani video sends the group into uproarious

[93] The phrase may be related to, or have its origins in an Armenian proverb: *Tzur nstink, shitak khosink* (let's sit crooked, but talk straight), meaning to talk honestly. In other languages it also seems to refer to gossiping.

laughter. Ahmad placed his arm around Saiid's shoulders and, giving them a squeeze, shook Saiid back and forth playfully.

Having just been reprimanded by the teacher, it is interesting that Saiid chooses this moment to engage with his classmates over a humorous narrative, but it seemed to elevate Ahmad's mood, who had become more subdued after talking about his meeting at the Jobcenter. In so doing, Saiid is drawing on experiences he and his classmates share: constant meetings at the German employment office, encounters with stereotypes, and repeated situations in which their linguistic (dis)abilities are examined and questioned. At the same time, Saiid is introducing ways to laugh over those shared experiences.

I open this chapter with this extended example in order to illustrate the myriad ways in which forms of interactional humour, comedic devices and laughter function in everyday classroom life. As this chapter explores in detail, various forms of humour were not only commonplace in the integration classroom, but they served a range of interpersonal functions and became a tool for coping with their–often confusing, stressful and frustrating–experiences in Germany, and of building networks of solidarity. Humour and laughter, furthermore render visible the ways in which power relationships and forms of discursive authority are enforced and reinforced, as well as how these dynamics are disrupted and negotiated.

Hirst (2003) makes the point that "the casual conversations in the counterscripts that occur between students in the […] classroom may appear to be idle chatter of little significance, a way of killing time"; however, humorous devices, such as joke-telling, parody, mimicry and language play are far more than a means of 'messing about', but are tools in "constructing both solidarity and marginality" (2003: 178). Conversational humour becomes a way for newcomers in the LIC to comment on their everyday challenges, which intersect with attending the integration course (such as scheduling and commuting to appointments at the Jobcenter). Through joking and laughter, the group is able to interpret and comment on the social, legal and economic dynamics that affect them. For my interlocutors, joking about the integration programme was a mechanism through which to strengthen

their communal solidarity and to imagine their future opportunities. By laughing about the hurdles they faced resulting from their migration to Germany and paired with the complexity of Berlin's bureaucratic system, they can momentarily alleviate existential anxiety and navigate common experiences. In this way, joking becomes an important form of community building through shared experiences in a diverse group of newcomers. In fact, Coates (2007) argues that humorous talk is a form of play, in that it can only be achieved through "close collaboration between speakers" (2007: 29). When Onur, Saiid and Rashid poke fun at Ahmad's failure to follow the rules of the exercise and for mispronouncing the main verb in the example sentence (schenken/Schinken), the mockery among his classmates is not meant to serve as humiliation or exclusion, but rather, the inter-group laughter signifies in-group playfulness. Playful repair is thus possible, because it is initiated by Ahmad's classmates and friends, meaning it is part of in-group interaction, all the while including him in the playful mockery and communal laughter.

Past anthropological research on humour, joking and laughter has focussed on aspects of ritual and social solidarity (see e.g. Radcliffe-Brown 1940; Apte 1985; Parkin 1993), such as Radcliffe-Brown's notion of *joking relationships*, or "playful behaviour between two individuals who recognise special kinship or other types of social bonds between them" (Apte 1985: 181). A distinction is made here between kin and non-kin joking relationships in numerous social settings: "a relation between two persons in which one is by custom permitted, and in some instances required, to tease or make fun of the other, who in turn is required to take no offence" (Radcliffe-Brown 1940: 195). Indeed, as sociolinguistic research shows, laughter and humour are shown to enhance and maintain group solidarity and intimacy between speakers (see e.g. Tannen 2005; Coates 2007).

In contexts of migration and displacement, jokes, joke-telling and laughter can ease anxiety or anger: making light of traumatic, oppressive and dangerous situations, in addition to expressing "a certain shared reality and making it easier to manage" (Van Ramshorst 2017: 69). Writing of internally displaced Timbuktians in Mali, Hernann explains that joking is also a means of negotiating social or political barriers, as well as conflict and crisis: "joking can alleviate social tensions and assist in conflict

resolution", while strengthening solidarity and nurturing cohesion (2016: 59). Saiid's anecdote about Meslmani's sketch, for example, brings everyday encounters with German bureaucrats into their playful and joking interaction. Meslmani's video addresses themes familiar to the group: constant meetings at the Jobcenter, and encounters with institutions and bureaucratic officials more broadly, as well as repeated experiences of social attitudes towards refugees and language learning. The sketch in itself critically unpacks and plays with cultural stereotypes and notions of authority, and Saiid's reenactment of this sketch–precisely in the moment where Ahmad is discussing his own recent encounters at the Jobcenter–elevates and disrupts his classmates' tension and anxiety around these themes.

Playful and joking positions were also frequently used by teachers to manage group work, reprimand unruly students or engage in teacher-led repair. In so doing, teachers often drew on humorous devices to discipline students who were breaking with classroom convention. We see this when Juliane interrupts the group's chatter to remind them to return to work. Joking, humour and laughter can bring much needed levity to spaces like the integration classroom, where long hours of grammar lessons can be gruelling and tiresome. Because course participants spend such large portions of their days in these spaces, teachers often try to facilitate a communal atmosphere. Through educational games and storytelling, pot-luck lunches and language play, teachers employ humour and laughter as a way to ease tension, make language learning more dynamic and bolster a sense of community. This is often very effective. By contrast, however, Carty and Musharbash (2008) demonstrate the role of laughter or humour in mediating (and creating) social rupture as they argue, "laughter is dangerous. Laughter is a boundary thrown up around those laughing, those sharing the joke. Its role in demarcating difference, of collectively identifying against an Other, is as bound to processes of social exclusion as it is to inclusion" (2008: 214). Similarly, Billig (2005) argues that humour can be used as a disciplinary tool and laughter as a mechanism of degradation. In this way, as I show in this chapter, teacher-led humour and laughter often had the effect of bolstering convention, on the one hand, and mocking or punishing those who break with it. Laughter and humour are thus powerful tools for both creating and disrupting social relationships, as "the power of humour and laughter in facilitating

understanding, creating meaning or creating the very contexts through which shared meaning becomes possible" (Carty and Musharbash 2008: 215).

In this chapter, I analyse humour within classroom conversation in order to demonstrate the complex ways in which humour serves as a vehicle through which to (re)enforce and disrupt power relationships, on the one hand, and to process, question and negotiate migration and integration experiences among peers, on the other. In my previous ethnographic chapters, I demonstrated the ways in which newcomer experiences with Germany's highly bureaucratised language and integration system confronts them with various forms of temporal disruption and uncertainty. Operating with a strict, linear notion of progress and markers of success, Germany's integration system is not only inflexible to other modes of managing time, but it, crucially, often deviates from the everyday experiences of migrants and displaced people subject to its requirements. Continued experiences of rupture between expectation and the complex reality of Germany's bureaucratic system contribute to acute experiences of waiting, stalling and boredom, making the rules of belonging and integration feel opaque, complicated and difficult to navigate. Such experiences, furthermore, bring notions of inclusion and exclusion to the forefront, as newcomers negotiate ideas of arrival and settlement, participation and future possibility.

I argue that an analysis of conversational humour in the context of Germany's newcomer integration efforts enables us to gain a dynamic understanding of migrant encounters with linguistic belonging in Germany: it allows us to unpack the ways in which social attitudes and ideologies are transmitted through language teaching as well as the ways in which they are challenged and disrupted by a transnational group of migrants and refugees. At the same time, humour allows us to study the various intricacies of community formation and the ways in which laughing about shared hardships allows newcomers to comment on and negotiate experiences of marginalisation, precarity and temporal uncertainty.

Drawing on recent scholarship on the anthropology of humour as well as sociolinguistic research on laughter, conversational humour, teasing and language play, I unpack the intricate relationship between notions of linguistic belonging, migration and displacement and integration, and the ways in which these are embedded in various contexts of humorous interaction. I investigate the ways in which humour becomes a vehicle for teachers' language ideological positioning within contexts of teacher-led repair. I argue that in such cases, humour serves a disciplinary function that enforces social hierarchies. Such social hierarchies are frequently disrupted through acts of transgressive or rebellious humour by the students, thus demonstrating the import of humorous devices in the subversion of teacher authority. Finally, through an analysis of digital communication in a WhatsApp group thread, I explore the ways in which humour becomes a vehicle for group formation and the establishment of solidarity. In so doing, I draw from both critical discourse and conversation analysis. Though considered incompatible or unconventional by some scholars (e.g. Schegloff 1997; Billig 1999), I take a combined approach to consider the larger context, relationships of power and personal experiences of those interacting, while often also taking a detailed approach to turn-by-turn interaction. I, thus, adopt the position taken by van Dijk (1999) and demonstrated by scholars in language and gender research (e.g. Bucholtz 2001, Wetherell, Sunderland and Baxter 2010) that CA and CDA complement and enhance each other, rather than presenting two, incompatible perspectives. Throughout this chapter, I draw on Billig's (2005) distinction between disciplinary and rebellious humour as a means of structuring the chapter's analysis. In doing so, I do not, however, adopt the strict binary that Billig proposes (neatly distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' humour). Instead, following Wise (2016), I engage in a more nuanced approach to various forms of humorous interaction, acknowledging its ambiguous and situated nature in order to explore the ways in which it functions within negotiations of power and in the formation of group solidarity. This nuanced approach is a particularly useful method of unpacking the ways in which humorous or playful frames are collaboratively achieved (or how how they fail), as well as how speakers draw from their shared experiences to perform intimacy and find ways of laughing through uncertainty.

5.1. *Scheiße, Straßensprache* and Silence

We sit in the B2 course on a hot summer day in July 2018. Tensions are high as they often are since the classroom is on the top floor of a large office building where the heat seems to get trapped. The recent building renovations have left a thick film of dust on the surfaces, which in turn is whisked into the air by the few free-standing fans the teachers were able to find for their rooms.

The LICs I participated in before joining the B2 course were very diverse: from students' national and linguistic backgrounds, to age ranges, learning (dis)abilities and socioeconomic backgrounds. This group, however, was comparatively homogenous in terms of students' linguistic and national backgrounds and age ranges: 12 of the 18 students were from Syria, three were Russian, two were South American (one from Peru and one from Ecuador), and one student was Romanian. Most students were in their mid to late twenties or early thirties, with the exception of Nour, who was 18 at the time–taking the B2 course in preparation for her secondary school equivalency exams–and Akil who was in his late 50's and often referred to as the "baba" or father of the group.

Though the course has only recently begun, we have already started with exam preparation. The exam will take place in late September and consists of a written and oral section. As in the B1 courses, a central component of the written exam is letter writing, and the B2 class practices this regularly throughout the course as part of ongoing exam preparation. Letters are written at home and then brought to class to be shared and discussed with the group, and later edited by the teacher. The instructor, Andreas, likes to read letters aloud and go over mistakes and questions with the class. He selects letters to read randomly, by slowly pacing through the classroom, holding out his index finger until he zeroes in on one unlucky candidate. Today Andreas walks to the back of the class, pauses by Tarek's desk and waits for him to hand him his letter. Tarek is one of the few students in class who has already begun working alongside his language classes. He has taken a part-time service job at a chain of Italian restaurants, where he speaks German with his colleagues and customers. He has a broad repertoire of non-standard forms and speech styles, and this often features in his speech during class,

such as the affixation of personal pronouns in words like *musstu* instead of *must du*? or *du must* (do you have to? you have to). *Guckstu* instead of *du guckst/ guckst du?* (you look/are you looking) and *hastu* instead of *du hast/hast du*? (you have/do you have). He also omits determiners and prepositions, e.g. *hastu Fahrrad?* instead of *hast du ein Fahrrad?* (do you have bike/do you have a bike) and *Ich bin Schule* instead of *Ich bin in der Schule* (I am school/I am in the school/at the school). Tarek's speech indicates that he has a wide social network through which he is acquiring a variety of standard and non-standard features. His speech further reflects styles of urban dialects that are common in multilingual cities like Berlin (Androutsopoulos 2001; Auer 2003; Keim 2008; Wiese 2009). However, non-standard speech styles are heavily criticised and mocked in the LIC and Andreas makes a point of correcting Tarek's speech often. Today, however, it is not a non-standard form, but a common curse word in Tarek's letter that catches Andreas's attention. He stops reading the letter out loud, pausing before the word and turns to Tarek to address his use of a curse word. In the following excerpt, Andreas engages the class in a discussion of the curse word *Scheiße* (shit) and its alternatives.[94]

(A)

		Original German			English Translation
1	A:	Lieber Tarek (.)	1	A:	Dear Tarek (.)
2		also erstmal (.) hier kommt ein schlechtes Wort	2		so first of all (.) here comes a bad word
3		ne? Bitte mal Tür zu Machen (.)	3		yeah? Please close the door (.)
4		die Chefin ist im Haus	4		the boss$_f$ is in the building
5		°bitte mal Tür zu machen°	5		°please close the door°
6		°die Chefin ist im Haus°	6		°the boss$_f$ is in the building°
7		((hissing sounds))	7		((hissing sounds))
8		also (.) wir lernen ja bitte #naja gut#	8		so we please learn #well good#
9		wir lernen bitte <u>korrektes</u> Deutsch für B2 (.) ja?	9		we learn <u>correct</u> German for B2 (.) yes?
10		Gut (.) aber wenn wir schon lernen dann	10		Ok (.) but if we are already learning then
11		((clears throat loudly))	11		((clears throat loudly))
12		die Schüler lernen das ja ((hissing sounds))	12		students often learn this ((hissing sounds))
13		vor dem Deutschkurs meistens (.) ja?	13		before the German course (.) yeah?

[94] In the following excerpts (A-C) A stands for Andreas, No stands for Nour, Na stands for Nasir, O stands for Omar and L stands for Leonie.

14		Gut (.) das Nomen heißt natürlich	14		Ok (.) the noun is of course
15		[writes s-c-h-e-i-ß-e on board]	15		[writes s-c-h-e-i-ß-e on board]
16		((whispers)) Scheiße	16		((whispers)) shit
17	Na:	Ah (.) Scheiße!	17	Na:	Ah (.) shit!
18	No:	((clicks tongue)) Das sagt man nicht	18	No:	((clicks tongue)) One doesn't say that
19	A:	[writing on board] Ach Gott (.)	19	A:	[writing on board] Oh God (.)
20		das schreibe ich nicht hier (.) das lass ich mal so	20		I won't write this here (.) I'll leave it like this
21		[erases ß. Replaces with b]	21		[erases ß. Replaces with b]
22		[shakes head] ((sighs loudly))	22		[shakes head] ((sighs loudly))
23	No:	Ok (hhhh) das ist besser (hhhh)	23	No:	Ok (hhhh) that is better (hhhh)
24	A:	((sighs))	24	A:	((sighs))
25	No:	Scheibe	25	No:	Screen
26	A:	Ne? Scheibe (.) Scheibenkleister	26	A:	Right? Screen (.) screenpaste
27	O:	SCHEIBENKLEIS [TER (hhhh)]	27	O:	SCREENP[ASTE (hhhh)]
28	No:	[(hhhh)]	28	No:	[(hhhh)]
29	Na:	Scheibenkleister (hhhh)	29	Na:	Screenpaste (hhhh)

Tarek had written a fictionalised letter to his neighbour, in which he complained of the smell of their cooking. In the letter, he wrote "es riecht scheiße" (it smells shitty/like shit). This is a very common expression in non-standard or informal interaction, e.g. "Das riecht aber scheiße!" (that smells like shit!). In reaction to this (lines 3– 4) Andreas asks a fellow student to close the door, because the school's director is an earshot away from the classroom. This is pre-empted in lines 1-2 where Andreas, addressing Tarek directly explains that he has used a "bad word" (line 2). In this way he is also setting the scene for what is about to come, implying that this may not be overheard by the course director.

At first this move felt conspiratorial: as if, together, we were about to dive in to the various taboo words in the German language, for a moment suspending our focus on course book exercises and exam etiquette. Andreas was known for veering off into long and dramatic tangents, sometimes taking us through the etymology of vocabulary words the class was learning, other times sharing personal stories, tying them in to whatever the subject of that day's class happened to be. He was energetic and

theatrical: employing a range of comedic devices from pantomime to slapstick to engage his students with the–often dry–material. His approach was, on the whole, very effective: forms of humour and communal laughter eased the slow pace of daily lessons and often brought much needed dynamism and levity to the at times very boring and repetitive grammatical exercises. Moreover, because course participants spent such large portions of their days and weeks in the language classroom, humour and shared laughter helped teachers facilitate a communal atmosphere. However, as I demonstrate in this section, humour also takes on different often harmful effects: it can serve as a disciplinary tool, humiliating and silencing those who break with conventions and norms, and to bolster teacher authority (Billig 2005). It can have exclusionary consequences for those who are 'not in on the joke', and it can reveal underlying ideological positions which maintain societal attitudes. Crucially, while it might be argued that even in this scenario Andreas is employing humour in order to simply 'mess about' with his students; perhaps attempting to make the language learning process more playful, it is difficult to disentangle the interactions between white, state-employed German language instructors and their predominantly Middle Eastern students–most of whom are in vulnerable and socially and economically precarious positions–from the broader (and well documented) social attitudes toward diaspora and minority languages. The linguistic capital afforded to Standard German and appropriate registers in the German linguistic marketplace and the wider integrationist discourse and societal assumptions about the importance of German language competency for the incorporation of newcomers is part-in-parcel with the content and curriculums of the state-funded language course. In the above excerpt, as well as in those to follow in this section, focus is placed both on the disciplinary aspects of humour and comedic devices, as well as the implications of what is unsaid, or rather, what is omitted and silent.

Notice, Andreas never utters the word out loud, but whispers it softly (line 16), sighs, hisses, clears his throat and shakes his head in disapproval (lines 7, 11, 12, 16 and 22). He also refers to it indirectly by adopting a dichotomy between "bad" and "correct" language (as in lines 2 and 9). This dichotomy is extended when Andreas introduces two further categories: "correct German in the B2 classroom" (line 9) and words students learn "before the German course" (lines 12-13). This is framed by Andreas as a

'teachable moment' in line 10, as he says, "if we are already learning then", whereby it is implied that the language students learn or use before they enrol in the integration course is in need of repair, as we see in the juxtaposition between lines 9 and 12-13.

Moreover, Andreas also spells out the word on the board in a thick red marker, further illustrating its inappropriateness. Nasir, who along with Nour and Omar, is one of the most animated and vociferous members of the classroom, had been watching Andreas intently as he began writing out the word on the chalk board and quickly yelled out, "oh, shit!" (line 17). This prompts tongue clicking from Nour, followed by a disapproving "one doesn't use that word" (line 18). Nour is the only course participant who is also enrolled in secondary school, so it is likely that she has encountered teacher-led explanations of appropriate language and classroom etiquette at her other school. Therefore, she seems to be adopting an authoritative stance, mirroring Andreas's voice, in calling out her classmate.

In lines 19-26, Andreas introduces a replacement term, after exclaiming, "oh God I won't write this here. I will leave it like this" (line 20), again enforcing the idea that the word–though very common in everyday conversational German–is so unutterable and inappropriate for classroom use it cannot be left written on the whiteboard. He erases the /ß/ (comparable to 'ss' in English) in *Scheiße,* quickly substituting it for /b/ as in *Scheibe* (screen, slice, piece) in line 21. This prompts relief from Nour, who, laughing nervously, agrees that "that is better" (line 23).

Scheibenkleister can be understood as colloquial euphemism or minced oath,[95] much like *shucks* or *shoot* might be used in English. However, *Scheibenkleister* is also a compound noun containing the words *Scheibe* (screen, slice, piece) and *Kleister* (paste, glue), which are nonsensical when joined as a compound. This

[95] The Oxford Companion to the English Language defines minced oath as a "semi-technical term for a swearword modified so as to be used without giving offence: *God* modified to *Gosh*, *shit* to *shoot*. Two forms of modification are common: (1) Creating a nonsense equivalent […] (2) Substituting an everyday expression of similar sound and length, sometimes with an associated meaning, sometimes with no association whatever: *bloody* becoming *ruddy"* (McArthur, Lam-McArthur and Fontaine 2018).

apparent incongruity sends Omar, Nour and Nasir into uproarious laughter (lines 27-29) while Tarek looks on, silently.[96]

It can be argued that Andreas may be making use of humorous devices in order to soften the effects of teacher-led repair, make the lesson more playful, and ease the tension that comes with taking German grammar lessons on a hot July afternoon. I cannot speak to his intentions, and will not try to infer them from his speech. However, I can address the effects and implications his speech has within his position as a state-employed language instructor. There is a flip-side to the laughing and joking in the integration classroom, particularly when the addressee or subject of the joke (in this case, Tarek) is not laughing along. In examples like the one above, we find instances of what Billig (2005) refers to as *disciplinary humour* and *disciplinary laughter,* meaning humour and laughter that can be used to "bolster convention" (186). In this way, humour is a means of mocking those who break social conventions. Furthermore, as Razfar (2005) argues, "because the practice of repair is always predicated on situated notions of 'correctness', and speakers presume a minimal degree of linguistic right and authority to perform it", the practice of repair serves as an index of (assumed) cultural authority and power, thus making it an ideological practice (Razfar 2005: 405). Therefore, teacher-led repair needs to be understood within the setting in which it is practiced, particularly in a course context where the explicit aims of language instruction are the linguistic integration of transnational migrants and displaced people.

As we saw in excerpt (A), direct indexical links are drawn between language spoken 'on the street' and 'correct' language used in the classroom, meaning Andreas establishes an association between taboo language and notions of 'bad' or inappropriate language with outside speech (or ways of speaking pre integration course), on the one hand, and 'correct' or appropriate speech with classroom (or inside) language, on the other. As Flores and Rosa (2015) argue, the language of "appropriateness" is embedded in wider ideological constructions that value standardised language practices over other

[96] It is unclear if Omar, Nour and Nasim are laughing because they understand the wordplay. In my observation, it seemed to be more the case that they found the combination of words in *Scheibenkleister* funny.

varieties and registers.[97] Through what they refer to as *raciolinguistic ideologies*, Flores and Rosa illustrate the pernicious ways in which "certain racialized bodies" are conflated with "linguistic deficiency unrelated to any objective linguistic practices" (Flores and Rosa 2015: 150, see also Seltzer and de los Ríos 2018). Flores and Rosa demonstrate how appropriateness-based approaches to language teaching and learning are not only rooted in raciolinguistic ideologies, but that they "produce racialized speaking subjects who are constructed as linguistically deviant even when engaging in linguistic practices positioned as normative or innovative when produced by privileged white subjects" (2015: 150). Following Leeman (2005), such appropriateness-based teaching practices often entail the notion of *appropriate context*, meaning that instead of explicitly stating that some language varieties, words or ways of speaking are considered more legitimate than others, it is suggested instead that "some are more appropriate in specific contexts" (2005: 38 qtd in Flores and Rosa 2015).[98] This often has the consequence of white teachers telling their students their ways of speaking "are fine for communication within their own communities but inappropriate in academi[c] or professional environments", which in turn, "naturalizes the unequal treatment of language varieties and their speakers by disguising linguistic prescription as 'innocent' description" (Leeman 2005: 38 qtd in Flores and Rosa 2015). Taken in this sense, humour and other comedic or theatrical devices, may only thinly veil what lies at the core of such teacher-led discourse, and further enforce notions of appropriateness in a way that excludes those who deviate from expected conventions.

What is more, making fun of or joking about different ways of speaking can reify the notion that the speech of a certain group or individual is a sub-standard form of a dominant language. Thus, following Billig, "these sorts of jokes take 'our' accent, dress, customs as the implicit 'correct', unfunny standard against which the differences of others are to be found simultaneously wanting and

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[97] Hymes's (1972) work on communicative competence has contributed greatly to current research on appropriateness in foreign language learning. Hymes argued that language learners require knowledge about broader cultural norms in order to judge the social situation and produce 'appropriate' speech: it is thus necessary to know "what to say to whom in what circumstances" (1972:277). Dewaele (2005) has argued that for language learners it is necessary to also be taught about various slang and taboo/curse words in order to better understand the sociocultural context in which they are typically used by first language speakers (and therefore in which contexts they are appropriate). To Dewaele, this is part of the process of gaining a broader sociocultural competence.

[98] See also Agha and Frog on *Registers of Communication* (2015).

humorous" (2005: 186). Similarly, Wolf (2002) argues that laughter can "protect the norms of correctness by discouraging deviance" (2002: 334) and implicitly evokes a sense of commonality and enhancement of solidarity between the laughing parties (ibid). Thus, humour is an effective veil for underlying social positions and attitudes; the jokester can make subversive or offensive statements while averting backlash: "jokers are protected, because rather than making actual claims, supposedly they are 'just joking'" (Hernann 2016: 58). Joking positions are furthermore bolstered through the achievement of communal laughter, as we see in excerpt A through the laughing of Nour, Omar and Nasim. This often occurs at the expense of those who are thought to have broken with convention.

Once the laughter over *Scheibenkleister* subsides, Andreas doubles down. This time amplifying his use of non-verbal expressions, which serve to exaggerate his comedic performance.

(B)

30		ich sch- ((clears throat loudly))	30		I sh– ((clears throat loudly))
31		du ((clears throat)) –st	31		you ((clears throat)) –t
32		er (.) also ich	32		he (.) I mean I
29	A:	SO (…)	29	A:	SO (…)
33		ich °sch-° heiße Andreas ja	33		I °sh-° say Andreas yeah
34		((clears throat)) ok	34		((clears throat)) ok
35		Präteritum? [turns to write on board]	35		past tense? [turns to write on board]
36	Na:	(hhhh) Scheißen=	36	Na:	(hhhh) Shit=
37	O:	=Schießen	37	O:	=shooting
38	No:	Schießen?	38	No:	Shooting?
39	A:	Moment mal	39	A:	Wait a minute
40		falsche Idee (.) kurzes /i/ oder langes /i/?	40		wrong idea (.) short /i/ or long /i/?
41	Na:	Schei::ße	41	Na:	Shi::t
42	O:	Schei::::::::::ße	42	O:	Shi::::::::::t
43	A:	Von einem Präteritum machen wir gerne Nomen	43	A:	We like to create nouns from the past tense
44		[writes s-c-h-i-s-s on the board]	44		[writes s-c-h-i-s-s on the board]
45		was macht Peter wenn er Angst hat?	45		what does Peter do when he is scared?

46		[mimes someone defecating]		46		[mimes someone defecating]	
47	***	(hhhh)		47	***	(hhhh)	
48	A:	Gut (.) also ne?		48	A:	Ok right?	
49		Das Wort hier hat die Idee ((clears throat)) Angst		49		The idea of this word is ((clears throat)) fear	
50		[writes d-ü-n-n-s-c-h-i-s-s on the board]		50		[writes d-ü-n-n-s-c-h-i-s-s on the board]	
51	L:	Ma:::n Andreas		51	L:	Ma::n Andreas	
52	O:	Dünn?		52	O:	Thin?	
53	Na:	Dünnschiss?		53	Na:	The runs?	
54	A:	Sie trinken eine Schokolade		54	A:	You drink a chocolate milk	
55		Sie Machen viel Schokolade in die Milch		55		you put a lot of chocolate in the milk	
56		oder Sie machen nur ein bisschen (.)		56		or you only put a little bit (.)	
57		dann ist die Schokolade ganz dünn		57		then the chocolate is very thin	
58	Na:	[inaudible]		58	Na:	[inaudible]	
59	O:	JA (hhhh) ((snaps fingers)) wie Wasser		59	O:	YES (hhhh) ((snaps fingers)) like water	

In the interaction that ensues, Andreas interlaces his explanation of classroom etiquette with playful and often obscene imagery. We find the use of bodily and other forms of non-verbal humour, akin in many ways to elements of *slapstick*. This is not because of its reference to pain or violence (as it is commonly used), but because of its reliance on the physical and the ridiculous to elicit laughter. Key attributes of slapstick, identified by Bergson (2005), are found in Andreas's performance above, such as repetition and inversion. In this sense, Andreas's repeated stumbling and stuttering over the conjugation of the verb *to shit*, as he does in lines 30-34, are inherently comic due to their repetition. Following Bergson, the humour derives, at least initially, from the improbability of the event recurring; while a single occurrence of Andreas stumbling over the 'sch' in *scheißen* may not have elicited much attention, the repetition of this action makes it both ridiculous and humorous. Inversion, on the other hand, means that humour is derived when "characters act in ways that are not expected of them" (Peacock 2014: 7), such as a teacher or authority figure engaging with taboo language, using vulgar comedic devices, or even 'messing about' during a lesson. Following Peacock (2014), the laughter achieved through slapstick may function to "discourage others from behaving in a similar way", while for the performer, laughter is experienced as a reward (2014: 8). The class erupts in laughter after

Andreas mimes the act of defecating (lines 46-47). Immediately following the laughter, Andreas continues his performance, this time writing the colloquial expression for diarrhoea, *Dünnschiss*, on the white board (50), which prompts an annoyed reaction from me (line 51).[99]

Moreover, we find instances of what Bakhtin refers to as *grotesque realism.* The third aspect of Bakhtin's conception of the carnivalesque in *Rabelais and His World* (1984 [1965]) relays the language of the carnival to the language of "degradation" (1984: 28). To Bakhtin, the language of the grotesque is the "lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer of the material level, to the sphere of the earth and body in their indissoluble unity" (ibid: 19). The language of the bowels and the genitals, the language of curses and oaths meant the defeat of authority by the people, as "this laughing truth, expressed in curses and abusive words, degraded power" (1984: 19). This was language that "in its debasement debased power, and was the centre of all unofficial" (Blackledge and Creese 2009: 239). In this sense, the use of grotesque, vulgar or obscene language might mean a subversion of power and the disruption of orderly conduct. The use of the grotesque by those in authoritative positions, however, has the effect of reifying notions of linguistic purity, overlapping significantly with the effects of teasing. In what Talmy (2004) refers to as the *hierarchy of linguicism,* the "public teasing and humbling" of lower proficient German language learners, becomes a primary way through which linguistic hierarchies are produced and reproduced in social interaction (2004:164). Blackledge and Creese (2009) find instances of such linguicism in their work on language learning and classroom interaction in British complementary schools, whereby through the use of highly stylised "mock ethnic" accents, white, Mancunian students invoke stereotypes of Chinese second language learners of English, allowing them to distance themselves from lower English proficient students within the hierarchy of linguicism (2009: 162).

Andreas constructs such linguistic hierarchies in three core, interrelated ways. Firstly, through the explicit dichotomy between *correct* and *bad* German language use, as we saw in lines 2 and 9 in excerpt

[99] I had been sitting next to Tarek and noticed that the more Andreas went on, the more uncomfortable Tarek seemed to become. He had been sitting silently staring at Andreas until this point, but now began to shift around in his chair, casting his eyes back down at his letter. I normally avoid intervening or expressing my opinion on classroom dynamics, but in this moment, Andreas's performance was becoming so theatrical and lengthy, I too was becoming uncomfortable.

(A), paired with the implicit suggestion that a, students learn bad language before they take the integration course, and therefore, b, it is his task, as an integration course instructor, to repair this language. Secondly, through non-verbal humour–which elicits classroom laughter–the use of curse words and related colloquial terms are relegated to the realm of the vulgar, grotesque and ridiculous. Grotesque bodily humour furthermore serves to strengthen the dichotomy between appropriate and inappropriate speech, wherein, through Andreas's explicit ridiculing of such language use, he discursively positions himself, or rather, the language of the classroom, as apart and perhaps superior to the apparent vulgarity of his student's speech.

Finally, throughout the interaction in excerpt (A) and (B), Andreas employs a number of verbal and non-verbal mechanisms which allow him to allude to the curse word without explicitly saying it aloud. Such mechanisms include whispering as in line 16, throat clearing, grunting and loud sighing in place of the word, as in lines 30 - 34, spelling out the word on the whiteboard as in lines 15, 19, 21, 44 and 50, word cut-offs in lines as in 30, 31 and 33, as well as the use of bodily humour in which he mimes defecation (line 46). In so doing, Andreas actively omits the word from his own speech, while still referencing and parodying the vulgarity of such ostensibly profane lexical items. Gaps in speech created by sighs, hissing, long pauses and truncated speech create silent pauses in his performance, which have the effect of both introducing silence as a discursive tool, as well as silencing Tarek.

There is vast scholarship in sociolinguistics and related fields on the non-verbal messages speakers transmit in interaction including non-verbal vocalisations such as laughter, inhalation, crying, teeth sucking/clicking, pauses/silence. This is because, though often shorter in duration, non-verbal vocalisations offer rich insight into the para- and extralinguistic dimensions of linguistic exchange, such as a speaker's affective stance or aspects of speaker identity (see e.g. Hay 2000; Coates 2007; Goodwin and Alim 2010. See also Trouvain's 2014 work on speech prosody). Such research has demonstrated that silence is not merely the absence of sound, but a part of communication as important as speech (Nakane 2014: 158). Following Jaworski (1997), silence is multifaceted and can act as the realisation of a taboo, as a tool for manipulation and as the avoidance of a topic in conversation. As he writes, "a

pause in discourse, a question left unanswered, a refusal to greet someone, a whisper which is not to reach a third party, avoidance of a topic in conversation, deafening noise, irrelevant talk, or a frozen gesture of an artist on stage are all instances of 'silence'" (1997: 3). Instances of silence in Andreas's speech lend themselves to the establishment of the category of 'bad' or taboo language, which, through the imposition of silence, qualifies such language as unsayable or unutterable. In this way, silence serves a disciplinary and, in fact, *silencing* function, which can have "an elevating or denigrating effect on the speaker and the listeners with respect to their respective positions of power, domination and control" (Watts 1997 qtd in Jaworski 1997: 5). These effects are simultaneously masked and amplified through ostensibly humorous and comedic devices, including teasing, the parodying of vulgar language and gesture as well as language play, which achieve communal laughter amongst Tarek's classmates.

Andreas's performance leads us from *Scheiße* to *Schiss* to *Dünnschiss*, (shit, fear, the shits/runs), but it doesn't stop there: Andreas continues with an exploration of verb forms containing derivations of the noun *Scheiße*:

(C)

60	A:	Jetzt vielleicht bitte noch ein Wort (.)	60	A:	Now perhaps another word (.)
61		dass Sie auf der Straße auch sehr oft hören	61		which you also hear a lot on the street
62		[writes b-e-s-c-h-e-i-ß-e-n on the board]	62		[writes b-e-s-c-h-e-i-ß-e-n on the board]
63		[points to Tarek] ich verkaufe ihn ne Uhr (.)	63		[points to Tarek]I sell him a watch (.)
64		er denkt es ist Silber	64		he thinks it's silver
65		aber est ist kein Silber	65		but it is not silver
66		ich habe ihn [points at white board]	66		I have [points at white board]
67	O:	Bescheißen=	67	O:	Rip off=
68	Na:	= Beschissen	68	Na:	= ripped off
69		Ja? Ich habe ihn etwas falsch verkauft (.)	69		Yeah? I sold him something wrong (.)
70	A:	oder sowas	70	A:	or something like that
71		ja? ich hab sein Auto gekauft (.)	71		yeah? I bought his car (.)
72		klappt alles wunderbar (.) fährt super gut (.)	72		everything works wonderfully (.) drives great (.)

73		ich fahre fünfhundert Meter und–	73		I drive 500 meters and–
74		((makes breaking noises))	74		((makes breaking noises))
75		ja? Er hat mich (…)	75		yeah? He (…) me
76		es ist immer noch rot (.) das ist Straßensprache	76		it is still red (.) that is street language
77		bitte nicht im Test benutzen	77		please don't use that in the exam
78		nicht im Test benutzen ne? Gut	78		don't use it in the exam ok? Good
79		das letzte Wort (.) wie geht es dir heute?	79		the last word (.) how are you today?
80		Mir gehts be- ((sharp hissing noises))	80		I am feeling sh–((sharp hissing noises))
81		mir geht es heute nicht so gut (.)	81		I'm not doing well today (.)
82		mir geht es heute– [points at white board]	82		I am feeling – [points to white board]
83		wir machen viele Wörter mit diesem sch-hh	83		we create a lot of words with this sh-hh
84		sch- diese sch- Probleme (.) dieses sch- Wetter	84		sh– those sh– problems (.) that sh– weather
85	No:	Schlimmes	85	No:	Bad

Again, we find a juxtaposition between classroom language, i.e. the language of the exam and the language of correctness, with notions of outside language and street language (such as in the juxtaposition of lines 61 and 76 and 77 and 78) which, through Andreas's narrative become indexically linked to non-standard and vulgar speech. He is also implicitly linking such language use to the kinds of interactions his students might hear "on the street"(line 61), in this case, in contexts of criminality and deception (such as the purchase of a fake silver watch or a car that has not been properly repaired). Andreas's emphasis on the importance of using 'correct' German, paired with the overt avoidance of the ostensibly inappropriate item in his explanation to the class, not only reinforces a dichotomy between correct and incorrect language use, but his direct referral to "street language" (line 76) reifies what Wiese (2015) describes as in-group and out-group language use. Again in excerpt (C), Andreas does not use the terms he describes outright, but again employs similar methods of aversion, including sentence and word cut-offs and truncated speech (lines 75, 80, 82, 84), hissing (line 80), writing the terms on the white board (lines 62) and gesturing to the white board (line 82). His repeated stumbling and stuttering over the terms in his descriptions reinforce the main message of this exercise, which he repeats twice "don't use this in the exam" (lines 77-78), which in turn leads Nour to agree that it is indeed "bad" (line 85).

Andreas's use of various forms of humour, comedic devices, omission and silence (excerpts A-C) enable him to teach his students about the inappropriateness of curse words in classroom contexts. While he never says the word out loud himself, his word omissions lead his students to fill in the blank– saying the word out loud (lines 17, 36, 41, 42, 53, 67 and 68), which, each time, prompts a further, often more exaggerated response from Andreas. For a moment, this playful interaction allows Andreas and his students to suspend the rules of classroom etiquette and laugh together about various forms of taboo language. However, it is important to remember how this communal laughter and play originated: in Tarek's letter. Tarek does not participate in the laughter of his classmates, nor does he respond to Andreas's performance. This is when humour becomes disciplinary: when it is at the expense of those who break convention and who remain silent during communal laughter.

Instead of merely reprimanding Tarek or even reminding him of classroom etiquette, Andreas creates categories of incorrect language use, which include non-standard and commonly used terms such as "bescheißen" (to rip off) (line 62), expanding the categorisation of taboo language from curse words to non-standard words more broadly. In so doing, Andreas is doing quite a lot of language ideological work. As language ideologies research has shown (Razfar 2005; Heller 2010; Creese et al. 2014), classrooms often become spaces where standard language ideologies are reinforced and where social and cultural assumptions about language and belonging are reified. Razfar (2005) notes that classroom discourse patterns, such as repairing student talk, "index particular ideologies held by social actors about language and the relationship between language and identity" (Razfar 2005, 2010). Furthermore, Rumenapp (2016) demonstrated that language ideologies played a mediating role in the social organisation of the classroom" (2016: 27). Andreas's use of parody and other comedic or theatrical devices such as whispering, mouthing, word omission and pantomime, allows him to correct Tarek's speech without having to reprimand him outright, he is further able to transmit social and linguistic attitudes without having to state them directly.

It is important that we understand the interaction between Andreas and Tarek in the context of multilingual Germany, where linguistic hybridity is widespread, particularly among young speakers.

This also means that there is a lot of variation within German varieties, with multilingual urban speech communities and new speech styles forming a central (rather than peripheral) part of the linguistic reality of contemporary Germany. Nevertheless, as Wiese (2015) points out, public debate has long been characterised by "marginalisation and, initially exoticsation" (2015: 342). This is particularly acute in the case of multiethnolects (Quist 2008), such as *Kiezdeutsch*–or neighbourhood German–which has emerged as a linguistically complex and grammatically innovative urban dialect. Kiezdeutsch is the result of generations of language contact between varieties of German and Turkish as well as Arabic, Kurdish and Persian, as well as features of other non-standard German varieties. It is an indicative speech style of young people in cities like Hamburg, Frankfurt, Mannheim and Berlin. Though Kiezdeutsch is arguably expressive of dynamic sociocultural and linguistic developments, public discourses around multiethnolects are mostly negative, racialised and often targeted at minority communities (Androutsopoulos 2001; Wiese 2009, 2015; Kern 2015).

While I am not suggesting that Tarek speaks Kiezdeutsch–though many aspects of his speech reflect characteristic features of the dialect–I reference it here because Andreas is drawing clear links between what he calls "street language" (excerpt C, line 76) and the speech of his Syrian student.[100] Though the above example details the ways in which language learners are ridiculed for breaking taboos, it is, in my view, difficult to separate Andreas's treatment of Tarek's speech from broader public debates around urban dialects and multiethnolects in Germany, as both cases foreground the fraught relationship between linguistic diversity, belonging, migration and notions of linguistic ownership (see also Wiese 2015).

As Hirst (2003) has argued, parody "both disguises and enables interactants to do serious identity work by providing a resource for exercising discursive power" (2003: 178). In this context, humour functions to "render invisible to interactants that what is being constantly negotiated and contested in their talk is power" (Hirst 2003: 178). Through his theatrical and carnivalesque devices Andreas–consciously or unconsciously–both enforces and masks the power dynamics between ways of speaking and forms of

[100] Non-Standard or colloquial speech is by no means unique to the speech of language learners or migrant and minority speakers of German, but Andreas seems to be making this link quite explicitly.

belonging. Instances of silence in Andreas's speech have three core effects: firstly, they lend themselves to the establishment of the category of 'bad' or taboo language, which, through the imposition of silence, qualifies such language as unutterable. This taboo language is extended beyond the mere occurrence of *Scheiße* but comes to characterise notions of *street language* more broadly. Secondly, instances of silence lead to the construction of a dichotomy between correct and incorrect language use, which reifies the hegemony of some language forms over others. Finally, silence serves a disciplinary function, which can have "an elevating or denigrating effect on the speaker and the listeners with respect to their respective positions of power, domination and control" (Watts 1997 qtd in Jaworski 1997: 5). These effects are at once masked and amplified through ostensibly humorous and comedic devices, including teasing, the parodying of vulgar language and gesture as well as language play, which achieve communal laughter amongst Tarek's classmates, but which serve to exclude and discipline him for breaking with ostensible conventions of appropriateness.

As Radcliffe-Brown (1940) noted early on, the joking relationship functions only between individuals who share a social bond. Moreover, following Bateson (1953), Jefferson et al. (1798), Holmes and Hay (1997), Coates (2007) and others, humorous talk is only successfully achieved when it is collaborative: when all interactants can signal that they understand the talk to be playful and when they participate in the non-serious frame. While Andreas's comedic performance may have been intended to foster a sense of communal joking, and while it was effective in animating many of the students in the classroom, what breaks the sense of playfulness and inclusion is Tarek's silence: Tarek was not in on the joke.

5.2. Rebellious Humour: Disrupting Norms

As Heller (2010) discusses, classrooms are key spaces where specific kinds of language are legitimised and where the legitimising of those practices leads to the advancement or marginalisation of the interests of a particular group (2010: 249). As has been demonstrated through the analysis of disciplinary humour, in section 5.1, this can lead to the unequal development of relationships of power, meaning that some linguistic practices are considered legitimate, appropriate and correct in educational settings, while others are not. At the same time, however, ethnographic research demonstrates that such language ideological and disciplinary mechanisms do not necessarily go uncontested. Instead, it is in these spaces where teachers and students "negotiate legitimacy and authenticity through the deployment of nuanced linguistic signs and through evaluation of distinctions between them" (Creese et al. 2014: 940-41). This means that, in the classroom, individuals are positioned–and position themselves–in terms of a range of notions of (in)appropriate speech and behaviour, which can be reproduced, negotiated and challenged. These kinds of *counterscripts* frequently take place in the form of rebellious humour, calling into question notions of legitimacy, ownership and authority in the teacher-student dynamic.

5.2.1. *Ascho!* Subverting Linguistic Authority

It is an unseasonably humid afternoon in May, and the windows lining the walls of the classroom have been opened wide, letting the bustling sounds of Berlin's *Hauptstrasse* in with the breeze. It is 2:10 pm, and though class usually begins punctually at 2pm, the teacher, Stefan, has not yet arrived. Most students sit at their desks chatting quietly, except for Sami who leans out of the window, watching the foot traffic below. He spots Nasim who is running toward our building and yells out:

Nasim! Nasim! Erja'ah 'ala el-beit yalla!	Nasim! Nasim! Go home go!

Nasim stops short in his tracks and looks up, puzzled. Sami continues to yell out to him:

Ustaz leis hon!	The teacher is not here!

Sami yells, once again encouraging Nasim to return home. Nasim shakes his head and continues walking toward the building. In the same moment, Stefan rushes into the room holding a stack of papers. Sami is leaning halfway out of the window, singing and whistling as Nasim runs to the main entrance: "el-leila el-kebira!".[101] Stefan throws his papers down on the desk and points and snaps his fingers toward Sami, calling out for him to sit down:

St:	Hallo! Sami! Kommen Sie (.) kommen Sie zu uns	St:	Hello! Sami! Come (.) come to us
Sa:	Ich habe Nasim gesagt geh Nachhause (.)	Sa:	I told Nasim to go home (.)
	Lehrer nicht da (hhhh)		teacher is not here (hhhh)
St:	Achso::: (.) ja ja ja (.) natü::rlich	St:	Oh ri:::ght (.) yes yes yes (.) of cou::rse

Stefan pleads with Sami as he reluctantly returns to his desk without sitting down and, laughing, explains that he was telling Nasim to return home since the teacher was not there. Stefan reacts sarcastically,[102] stretching out the vowels as he, in a sing-song voice says, "oh right, of course", raising and lowering his hand, gesturing towards Sami to sit down. Sami is known to goof around, disrupting class with singing, whistling and teasing, for which he is often reprimanded. Today, Stefan employs a new strategy: teasing him back.

St:	Lass uns jetzt die Hausaufgaben prüfen	St:	Let us go over the homework now
	Sami (.) haben Sie die Hausaufgaben gemacht?		Sami (.) have you done the homework?
	Nein? Dachte ich auch nicht (…)		No? I didn't think so (…)
	was haben Sie den für Nummer eins geschrieben?		what did you write for number one?
	Nichts? Achso (.) ok (.) natürlich		Nothing? Oh right (.) ok (.) of course
Sa:	Ascho! Ascho!	Sa:	Ascho! Ascho!
	Mein eigenes Deutsch		My own German

[101] Sami begins singing the refrain to "El-Leila El-Kebira", (The Grand Night), an Egyptian operetta from the 1960s.

[102] Following Dynel (2009), sarcasm is a general term used to reference "an aggressive remark that carries humour, also sometimes coinciding with a putdown […] as long as it is directly targeted at a *butt*, i.e. the disparaged party" (2009: 1289; see also Culpeper 2005).

Seemingly undeterred by the teacher's provocation, Sami begins to whistle and in a sing-song voice repeats "a-s-cho! a-s-cho!", flipping the position of the ch and s in *Achso,* which roughly translates to "oh, I see" in English."Mein eigenes Deutsch"–my own German–he said, turning to me and winking.

Aspects of disciplinary and rebellious humour come into play as Stefan attempts to goad Sami for his failure to complete the homework and for his disruptive yelling at the window. Stefan pokes fun at Sami for his disruptive behaviour by alluding to his frequent failure to complete assignments, a fact which is well known by the class and often the butt of inside jokes among course participants and teachers. Though Stefan's tone is stern, he is also playfully engaging with Sami by teasing him instead of reprimanding him outright. In so doing, Stefan attempts to humble him into complying with the task at hand. His repeated expression of *Achso* becomes taunting, patronising, as he uses it only in the context of a sarcastic utterance.

Sami, however, responds by mimicking Stefan's voice. Within the framework of conversation analysis (CA) Sami's use of the responsive discourse marker, *Achso*–or "Ascho"–can be considered a form of parodic revoicing (Hirst 2003); however, instead of the mere repetition of the utterance, Sami inverts the sequence of letters, changing the meaning and pronunciation of the word. Following Hirst (2003), a speech turn becomes internally dialogical when it is oppositional: whereas uni-directional utterances imply that the speaker is aligned with the intentions of the utterance, revoicing is vari-directional, meaning "the speaker's intentions range from outright questioning to more subtle forms of resistance" (Hirst 2003: 180). Returning to Bakhtin's dialogic principle, we might refer to Sami's playful alteration of *Achso* as an instance of *double voicing*, whereby discourse is "directed both towards the referential object of speech as in ordinary discourse, and toward another's discourse, towards someone else's speech" (Bakhtin 1984: 105). Whereas a speaker may utilise single-voicing to express one unmediated utterance, they make use of double-voicing to bring together two (or more) independent utterances to serve their own purposes, thus, making meaning through representing other voices within their own voices (Blackledge and Creese 2009: 236). Through double voicing, Sami is both mocking Stefan's voice, while making the word his own. It seems that Sami is quite aware that he is coining a new

lexeme, as he remarks at the end, "mein eigenes Deutsch" (my own German). In this sense, we might consider that Sami is naming a new neologism, a core reason of which is the novelty of expression and humorous effect. As Dynel (2009) notes, "speakers will incorporate new words into their idiolects […] humorous neologisms capitalize on various word-formation processes" (2009: 1286), which seem to form the basis of their humorous effects. This is supported by the fact that, following this interaction, Sami continued to use *Ascho* in Stefan's presence; yelling it when Stefan entered the room or repeating it mockingly whenever Stefan said *Achso*.

Achso is a very common German discourse marker. In fact, it is often treated as stereotypically German by non-German speakers and language learners. Its core function in discourse, however, is to overtly mark both a speaker's receipt and understanding of prior talk (Golato and Betz 2008; Golato 2010). Sami disrupts, or rather, inverts this function by intentionally changing the pronunciation of the word, thus rejecting Stefan's attempts to humble him. Similarly–following Pennycook (2007)–Blackledge and Creese (2009) demonstrate that repetition of discourse is often an act of "sameness that creates difference, making new meanings in new contexts from apparently identical language"(2009: 242). Thus, the repetition of *Ascho* has a new and different sense when repeated in this way.

Such instances of parodic revoicing, double voicing and other related forms of student-led language-play exemplify the ways in which humour is employed as tool for contestation and the disruption of conventions. These are comparable to what Billig (2005) has termed *rebellious humour* or *contestive humour,* following Holmes (2010). While disciplinary or repressive humour (Holmes 2010) may be used by those in superior or authoritative positions to maintain power and enforce social rules, rebellious/contestive humour is used by subordinates or those upon whom authority is being enacted, to challenge that authority and rebel against the rules. As Billig notes, "rebellious humour conveys an image of momentary freedom from the restraints of social convention", and "constitutes a brief escape […] a moment of transcendence" (2005: 208). In the example above, humour as rebellion, escape and transcendence enabled Sami to–at least momentarily–challenge the validity of Stefan's discursive

authority. Sami mimics Stefan's voice, while purposefully jumbling the letters in *Achso* and thereby takes ownership over what the word ought to convey.

5.3. *Scheibenkleister*! Insider Jokes, Intimacy and Solidarity

It was late November, three months after the B2 class had taken their exam, and the results had finally arrived. Our WhatsApp group *Deutschkurs 378* (German Course 378) had been full of anxious chatter, as we waited for the results to be sent to the Berlin office from the Telc[103] headquarters in Frankfurt. Our WhatsApp group was a central site for social interaction: the group was both a platform through which important information about homework, exams, and course administration was shared, as well as space for gossip and friendly chat. The day following the receipt of the exam results, course members gathered on the WhatsApp group to compare scores, celebrate and commiserate. Only three of the 18 participants passed the exam. One of them was Nour; the youngest member of the class at 18, who was taking the B2 courses alongside secondary school. She and her mother and two siblings fled the civil war in Syria two years earlier and settled in a small flat in Brandenburg, just outside of Berlin. Nour was enrolled in a Brandenburg secondary school, where she was preparing for the *Abitur*– the final examinations in German secondary school–and would need C1-level German in order to do so.[104] Nour commuted over two hours each way from Brandenburg to the language course–usually following a full school day. Akil and Omar, also displaced Syrians, as well as Maria and Jonathan, both South American, failed the exam and would have to either resit or resubmit portions of the exam by the year's end. Akil is a retired mathematics professor who previously taught in Syria and Abu Dhabi and is now aiming to find work in IT. Though he is technically retired, he wants to find steady work for a few years so that he can apply for permanent residency. Omar is 25 and had previously begun studying engineering in Damascus and is planning to enrol in University in Berlin to resume his studies. For this, he will need C1 level German. Maria moved to Berlin from Ecuador along with her husband, Peter, a German citizen. She worked in fashion in Ecuador, but is now unsure of what to do

[103] Telc is the official language test provider for language and integration courses in Germany.

[104] A C1 language certificate is not a requirement to sit the Abitur exams per se, but rather, the exams are designed for first language German speakers, so a minimum of C1 language proficiency would enable Nour to take the exams. According to BAMF (2005), the German Abitur is considered the equivalent to the language certificate C1, which is the required level of entry for Universities.

next. Either way, she told me, she wants to have all of the language certificates together to keep her options open. Jonathan has lived in Berlin for four years. He moved here with his wife Alicia who is half German (and has German citizenship), from Hong Kong where they met during university. Since moving to Berlin, Alicia and Jonathan had two children and Jonathan has stayed home to take care of them while Alicia began working as a consultant. Now that both of their children are in kindergarten, Jonathan is planning to return to work in real-estate for which he will need to complete a three-year *Ausbildung* (vocational training programme).

In the extract below,[105] Akil, Nour, Maria, Jonathan and Omar discuss the results of the exam. In the interaction that ensues, the group engages over shared frustrations, offering each other words of support. Their exchange is interlaced with banter, playful talk and laughter, which, in turn, reinforces a sense of solidarity. Various forms of playful or humorous talk ensue over a back and forth on the usage of curse words. Humorous talk becomes a tool of mutual affiliation and agreement, akin to Coate's (2007) notion of the play frame and Wise's (2016) conception of convivial labour. The implicit parodying of linguistic authority and politeness, meanwhile, acts as a means of reframing linguistic norms as an in-group joke. I analyse the following WhatsApp conversation by means of critical discourse analysis. In so doing, I examine the ways in which humour becomes a vehicle of group formation and the disruption of power relationships, while also considering the larger context in which the interaction takes place. In the discussion below, I also draw on methods in conversation analysis. I understand these instances of teasing, laughter and parodic mockery to be forms of disruptive humour in Billig's (2005) sense, while laughter and playful banter reinforce convivial joking relationships and intimacy within the group. In the following, I include transcripts of the WhatsApp conversation first in the original language(s) it took place in, followed by the translated version as a separate transcript below the original.[106]

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[105] In the following excerpt, I use direct transcriptions from the original interactions, and do not correct or comment on their grammar, spelling or punctuation. I translate each line loosely–not directly–from German/Spanish. I use the names/ descriptions of emojis as they are given in Microsoft Word (for Mac).

[106] While this approach deviates slightly from my stated conventions, I chose not to present the original transcripts directly next to the translation. This was mainly a formatting decision, as the emojis became less visible in the side-by-side presentation.

Original

1	A:	Wie lange können wir nur die schriftlich Prüfung zurückgeben? Ist es bis zum 31. Dezember?
2	N:	Weiß jmd was Andreea für ne Note hat!!
3	M:	Andreea hat sehr gut gemacht, sie hat sie bestanden und mit sehr gute Note
4		Ich habe 0 im Brief gekriegt, deswegen für 9 Punkte habe ich die Prüfung nicht bestanden 😡😡😡😡
5	N:	Ouuhh Scheibenkleister 🤦
6		(audio message) Ich bin sicher du schreibst gute Briefe (.) ich hab nicht verstanden warum du null Punkte hast
7		naja (…) keine Ahnung
8	M:	Weil Telc eine sehr große Scheiße ist!...deswegen!
9		😂😂
10	N:	(audio message) Naja (.) Scheiße sagt man nicht (.) man sagt halt Scheibenkleister (.) oder?
11	M:	🤣🤣🤣🤣
12	N:	(audio message): Also dein Mann ist so sü::::ß (hhhh) und so nett (.) wirklich (.) schöne Grüße an ihn und (.)
13		er ist wirklich sehr sehr nett (hhhh)
14	M:	Dankeschön meine Liebe, nur er kann mir ertragen hahahaha
15	N:	😂😂😂❤️💪
16	J:	Si tu no pasaste, ya me cague
17	O:	Herzlichen Glückwunsch für die, die bestanden haben 😎
18		und an die, die nicht bestanden haben: gibt nicht auf, versucht es noch einmal💪
19		(response to Noor's audio message) 😂Scheiße sagt man nicht, scheiße macht man. Du Pfeife 🤫
20	N:	(response to Omar's message) 😂😂😂

English Translation

1	A:	Until when can we resubmit the written exam? Is it until December 31st?
2	N:	Does abd. know which mark Andreea got!!
3	M:	Andreea did very well, she passed with a very good mark
4		I got 0 in the letter because of that I failed the exam by 9 points (4x red angry face emoji)
5	N:	Oh shoot (woman face palming emoji)
6		(audio message) I am sure you write very good letters (.) I don't understand why you received zero points
7		oh well (…) no idea
8	M:	Because Telc is a very big shit!...that's why!
9		(2x face with tears of joy)
10	N:	Well (.) you don't say shit (.) you say shoot (.) right?
11	M:	(4x rolling on the floor laughing emoji)
12	N:	Well your husband is so cu:::te (hhhh) and so nice(.) really (.) best wishes to him and (.)
13		he is really so so nice (hhhh)
14	M:	Thank you my dear, only he can stand me hahahaha
15		(3x face with tears of joy, red heart, flexed bicep emojis)
16	J:	If you failed, then I already screwed up
17	O:	Congratulations to those who passed (smiling face with sunglasses emoji)
18		and to those who did not pass: don't give up, try it again (flexed bicep emoji)
19		(face with tears of joy emoji) you don't say shit, you make shit. You dummy (blushing face, hand over mouth)
20	N:	(3x face with tears of joy emoji)

In the interaction above, Akil, Nour, Maria, Jonathan and Omar compare notes on the B2 exam. The interaction begins with a sense of urgency as Akil asks the group about the deadline for resubmitting the written portion of the B2 exam (line 1). According to Telc examine regulations, if a candidate fails one of the two core sections of the final exam (oral and written), they can retake that section by the end of the calendar year. The trouble in this case is that the group received their results in late November, leaving them little time to make arrangements to resit or resubmit the exam (without having to enrol in a new course, or waiting to sit the the entire exam again the following year). Akil's question is left unanswered, but further urgency is built by Nour's question in line 2, inquiring about

their classmate Andreea's[107] mark in the exam. Andreea, who moved to Berlin for work a year prior from Bucharest,[108] was one of three course participants to pass the exam, along with Nour and Anna, who recently moved to Berlin from Moscow, and due to her German ancestry, is entitled to German citizenship under the Federal Expellees Act.[109]

After Maria informs Nour that Andreea did very well in the exam (line 3), she follows up, lamenting the fact that due to receiving no points in the letter-writing section of the written exam, she failed the entire exam by only nine points; anger over which is expressed by four 'red angry face' emojis (line 4). In line (5), Nour uses *Scheibenkleister* (comparable to "shoot" in many English varieties), paired with the 'woman face palming' emoji in response to Maria's bad news. Nour is adopting codes of politeness and appropriateness here, as she has learned them in Andreas's class. However, her intent remains ambiguous in this sequence, so I cannot at this point infer whether or not this is meant to be more than playful. Nour consoles Maria, telling her that she is sure that Maria is good at writing letters (line 6), and agreeing that it is surprising that she received zero points in the exam and that she cannot think of a reason why (line 7).

Nour's use of *Scheibenkleister* (line 5) goes without comment by the others, until, in line 8, Maria introduces a curse word that prompts further discussion. Maria's use of *Scheiße* to describe the test provider's apparent incompetence, "because Telc is a very big shit" is paired with 'face with tears of joy' emojis, which imply that her message, though a serious complaint, is intended to be received as jocular. However, she is expressing her frustration over the seemingly ambiguous test-scoring procedures, and in so doing sharing her anger over her failed exam with her course mates. Nour responds by asking the group whether or not they should be using *Scheiße* or if in fact, *Scheibenkleister* is

[107] Romanian spelling.

[108] EU citizens are not required by the German state to learn German or take integration courses (EU Free Movement: Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union), however they may be required to learn German by employers and universities. Of the handful of EU participants in the course, most explained that they enrolled in the integration courses/state-funded courses because they were more affordable than courses run by private institutions.

[109] Under the Federal Expellees Act, Ethnic German Repatriates/Resettlers from Eastern European states are entitled to German citizenship under the condition that they learn German either before migrating or upon entering Germany (BMI 2020; see also, DW 2003).

the appropriate substitute (line 10). Nour may be adopting an authoritative stance here: stating (ostensibly) shared knowledge in the form of a question as a means of 'gently' reminding everyone of the codes of appropriate conduct. Maria's response of four 'rolling on the floor laughing' emojis (line 11), however, imply that Nour's comment was received as non-serious. In fact, it seems that Nour's question was a serious inquiry into the rules of polite conduct, and Maria's response can be understood as poking fun at Nour's serious tone.

It isn't until line 18 that the group's engagement in jocular mocking becomes clearer: Omar mocks Nour's question, "you don't say shit, you say Scheibenkleister, right?" (line 10) through playful correction using references to bodily humour, "you don't say shit, you make shit", which may be referencing Andreas's grotesque performance in class a few months prior (see section 5.2). He also teases her, "du Pfeife" (you dummy) in line 19. On its face, calling someone a dummy seems like a form of insult or denigration. As Lytra and others have pointed out, teasing and mockery among peers has been explored as a means "to convey social concerns and norms" by highlighting violations of normative conduct (Lytra 2007: 185), but forms of teasing, such as jocular mockery can be means to"figuratively cut down or diminish the target in some way", but in a way that is playful or non-serious (ibid). In order for these instances of mockery to be construed as jocular, interaction relies on cues to non-seriousness as well as laughing responses on the part of the recipients. In other words, "the general pattern involved jocular cues that were immanent to the design of the tease, followed by contiguous laughter by recipient(s) in [the] next turn" (Haugh 2017: 123). Omar signals a non-serious frame by including playful emojis both before and after the utterance (line 19). Nour responds with 'face with tears of joy' emoji (line 20) indicating that she is taking part in the non-serious frame. In this way, teasing and mockery is jointly accomplished as non-serious through emojis that symbolise forms of laughter and playfulness, meaning a non-serious frame is collaboratively achieved by the interactants. Nour partakes in the humorous interaction as displayed by her concurrent laughter in audio messages and laughing emojis in typed messages. In this way, as Haugh explains, "teasing may foster interpersonal solidarity, and thereby create or maintain relational alliances or in-groups" (Haugh 2017:

2010). In the same vein the collaborative and playful character of the interaction bolsters speaker-to-speaker intimacy (Coates 2007).

Participants in the WhatsApp group engage in various forms of teasing and playful talk as they gather to compare notes following the receipt of the exam scores. They are interacting across a digital platform[110] and employ both written cues, such as the spelling out of laughter: *hahaha*, audio recorded messages containing laughter at turn-initial and turn-final position, as well as visual cues such as the use of emoji's–ideograms and smileys representing a range of moods, ordinary objects and types of action–which infer playful or non-serious intent. Following Nishimura (2016) and Herring, Stein and Virtanen (2013), the use of emoticons and similar features of digital communication "represent the inherently ludic character of language use on the internet" (Herring, Stein and Virtanen 2013: 8), meaning it is understood to be inherently playful and creative.

In the discussion above, students of the B2 course parody accepted classroom discourses, by teasing Maria for cursing in the WhatsApp thread; they echo Andreas's voice, by playfully repairing each other's speech and mimicking discursive authority. Following Pennycook (2007), such exaggerations and reiterations of classroom discourse, become "acts of difference, recontextualization [and] renewal" (Pennycook 2007: 580). In parodying authoritative discourse, the word is recontextualised as an in-group joke: poking fun at the ways in which their speech is policed in everyday classroom interaction. As Blackledge and Creese (2009) argue, the students' playful parodic discourse "constitutes and recontextualises the pejorative subject positioning of the lower proficiency language learner, and in so doing reproduces the hierarchy of linguicism that is often evident in multilingual school systems" (Blackledge and Creese 2009: 250). Parodic mocking shared over the use of 'taboo' language, becomes part of a wider process of community formation and relational alliance as the mocking and teasing is interlaced within a longer, supportive and friendly exchange; the sharing of supportive and

[110] I am aware of the scholarship on language and digital communication (e.g. Tannen 2013; Androutsopoulos and Juffermans 2014; Heyd 2014; Georgakopoulou 2014, 2017; Varis 2017) but will not be drawing on it in this chapter as it lies outside of the scope of this project at present.

encouraging words about test-taking and linguistic ability, as well as inter-personal compliments and the sharing of personal information.

As Hernann (2016) points out, humour and joking serve as truth-telling mechanisms: jokes allow individuals to make light of difficult and challenging situation, often expressing a shared reality and making it more manageable. This is particularly crucial in contexts of migration, where communal laughter and humorous talk facilitate forms of intimacy and solidarity over shared experiences. As I show, solidarity and intimacy are collaboratively achieved through playful talk which on the one hand allows the group to ease the tension and frustration around their exam results and to play with notions of linguistic appropriateness on the other. Their playful talk is interlaced with friendly and supportive utterances through which group members signal intimacy (such as Nour's comment about how friendly she finds Maria's husband) and solidarity (such as Omar's message of encouragement to those who failed the exam). Different cues maintain a non-serious frame, including laughter (spelled out in text messages as well as audible in Nour's recorded messages) and the use of emojis (such as 'face with tears of joy' and 'rolling on the floor laughing'). Repeated references to the curse word, *Scheiße* contribute to an increasingly playful mode of talk among the group (Coates 2007). While the lexical item is initially introduced by Maria (line 8) as an expression of frustration over her test scores, it is picked up by Nour (line 10) as a prompt to discuss the appropriateness and usage of the curse word in conversation. Later in the conversation, the subject is picked up again by Omar who, playfully mocks Nour's question, suggesting instead that "you don't say shit. You make shit" (line 19).

In contrast to the interactions analysed in sections 5.1 and 5.2, humour, laughter and parody take place in an in-group context, whereby negotiations of social hierarchies are produced in relation to outside groups (e.g. by mimicking teacher voice). But humour here is not used to explicitly question group hierarchies, but to mock linguistic authority and thus to enforce solidarity among a peer group. What is more, as Woods (2012) points out, "social cohesion is produced through the pleasant experience of laughing together at a joke, wisecrack, or antic", and explaining further that while "[a]udience (pupil) sympathy for one of their own who has been singled out as the butt of a joke would likely generate

hostility and scorn for the teacher […] the latter, however, could be the subject of clandestine consensual humour initiated by one of the pupils" (2012: 91). In this way, the humorous and playful frame is collaboratively achieved and maintained by group members. In her conception of "convivial labour", Wise (2016) argues that a key facet of making joking relationships successful–and, indeed, convivial–is its roundedness in the "social achievement of living together" (2016: 496), meaning that what it means to live, work and learn together is an ongoing, cumulative negotiation. It is through this work of achieving togetherness that a joking consensus–or what counts as humorous or not humorous–is established. In this way, Andreas's comedic performance in class (section 5.1) fails because the content of his joking is situated within unequal distributions of power and grounded in exclusionary language-ideological notions of appropriateness. What is more, Andreas's humour relied on achieving laughter at the expense of one student who has broken with convention. Therefore its effect is disciplinary and exclusionary, rather than communal. The humorous interaction on the WhatsApp group, meanwhile, is effective in bolstering in-group solidarity. This is because it is referential to shared knowledge and experiences (Wise 2016: 495). Through joking and laughter, the group is able to interpret and comment on the social, legal and economic dynamics that affect them. For my interlocutors, joking, laughter and playful talk was a mechanism through which to strengthen their communal solidarity and intimacy. By laughing about the hurdles they faced, resulting from their migration to Germany, and paired with the complexity of Berlin's bureaucratic system, they can momentarily alleviate existential anxiety and navigate common experiences. In this way, humour becomes an important form of community building through shared experiences in a diverse group of newcomers.

5.4. Conclusion

As I have demonstrated in this chapter, humour, though often regarded as a trivial product of interaction, plays a crucial role in the enforcement and disruption of power relationships and the negotiations of painful and confusing experiences brought on by migration and displacement. Instances of conversational humour and laughter were not only common place within classroom interaction, but they were central mechanisms through which to cope with vulnerability, to generate

spaces of collective solidarity, and to diffuse tense, overwhelming or confusing interactions and encounters. As Van Ramshorst (2017) argues, humour reveals "the complexity of migrants' experiences along their journeys, experiences that transcend overly simplistic accounts of brutality and violence to better understand migrants' everyday lives in transit" (2017: 897). Everyday experiences of migrants in transit are punctuated not only by brutality and violence but also by play and laughter (ibid). As Hernann (2016) points out, humour and joking allow individuals to make light of difficult and challenging situations, often expressing a shared reality and making it more manageable. In the same way, communal laughter, as a form of truth telling, "cannot be transformed into seriousness without destroying and distorting the very contents of the truth which it unveils" (Bakhtin 1984 [1965]: 94). Like the carnivalesque, joking operates as a local speech genre whose ambiguous nature allows socially and politically marginalised individuals to exchange information that critiques and undermines the dominant narrative (Hernann 2016: 68).

In contexts of migration and displacement, humour and laughter can ease anxiety or anger: making light of traumatic, oppressive and dangerous situations, in addition to expressing a sense of shared reality. My interlocutors employed humorous devices in several different ways. For teachers, joking, play and laughter added levity to the language learning process and helped create a sense of community. Often, however, these devices had the effect of enforcing linguistic and sociocultural norms; it was a means of disciplining students who broke from expected convention. For students, parody, mimicry and other humorous talk were means of disrupting and challenging classroom discourse. It became a method through which to comment on and navigate their shared experiences of migration, displacement and uncertainty. Communal joking and laughter allowed my interlocutors to momentarily make light of difficult and overwhelming situations and to process their shared encounters in Germany. I argue that focusing on humour as a methodological lens in the context of Germany's newcomer integration efforts, enables us to gain a dynamic understanding of migrant encounters with linguistic belonging in Germany: it allows us to unpack the ways in which social attitudes and ideologies are transmitted through language teaching, as well as the ways in which they are challenged and disrupted by a diverse transnational group of newcomers. At the same time,

humour allows us to study the various intricacies of community formation and the ways in which laughing about shared hardships allows newcomers to comment on and negotiate experiences of temporal uncertainty, immobility and stalling.

II. Conclusion

As I prepared for fieldwork in the early months of 2017, I was interested in examining the role of language in societal and political notions of newcomer integration, as well as how these notions played into broader understandings and practices of belonging. Using the language and integration classroom as a core field site, I specifically aimed to investigate how newcomers experienced the notoriously intensive programmes, which they were required to complete. I reflected on the many interviews I conducted with German language instructors in 2015 and 2016 as part of my Master's research in anthropology at the University of Oxford. All were facilitators of language and integration courses of the kind I would soon be visiting. The pictures they painted of the integration classrooms were of sites of high-highs and low-lows. The lows included a range of interpersonal strife and conflict, stress and anxiety; the highs were moments of friendship and achievement, a sense of community and intercultural exchange. Going in to the project, I envisioned the LIC as a space where raw emotion played out as students and teachers struggled together to tackle the strict requirements of the integration programme.

There were indeed conflicts; many in fact. Students often forcefully disagreed with the course content, with the teachers' instructional styles, and with each other. The classroom often became a site of intense rivalry, as students vied over the mastery of Standard German. There were also moments of joy and laughter; friendships were formed, parties were thrown, games were played. We shared personal stories, talked about our families, our interests and the challenges we were facing. However, these moments were underpinned by a pervasive sense of uncertainty.

This uncertainty stemmed largely from the fact that Germany's language and integration programmes are embedded in a vast and complicated bureaucratic landscape, with which newcomers are confronted as they learn German and pursue their future trajectories. What is more, completing language and integration courses (from levels B1 through C1) is intricately tied to their prospects for

securing formal employment, higher education and vocational training, as well as legal security–from renewing visas, to applying for the permanent right to remain and attaining citizenship.

In an increasingly multi-ethnic, multilingual and *superdiverse* society, Germany has placed increased emphasis on the linguistic and civic integration of refugees and migrants. Though language proficiency policies for newcomers exist across Europe, Germany sets some of the toughest requirements and has invested heavily in nation-wide language and integration courses and programmes since 2007. To date there has been little qualitative or ethnographic research conducted on these language courses. We know little of how these programmes may be aiding, hindering or otherwise affecting the lives of refugees and migrants who are required to learn German before they are able to work, study, apply for citizenship and become otherwise financially independent from the German state. These issues are all–the more pressing in light of the over 800,000 refugees who have settled in Germany since 2014. My thesis fills these empirical gaps through an extensive ethnographic investigation of the everyday lives of migrants and refugees enrolled in Germany's language and integration courses. Over a period of 15 months, I participated in and observed three different LICs in Berlin, conducted interviews with teachers and course participants and ran focus group discussions, affording me insight into the intricacies of everyday life among newcomers to Germany.

Introduced under the National Integration Plan (NIP), the language and integration programme is presented by policy makers as a 'forward-looking' and 'sustainable' method of ensuring newcomers' fast and effective incorporation across all arenas of the German *Zivilgesellschaft* (civil society). As the term *integration* suggests, such programmes–like the many similar iterations across Europe–are future-oriented modernising projects. In Germany, migrant integration efforts were part of a broader movement to liberalise its immigration, asylum and citizenship policies, while ensuring economic stability, upholding the key tenets of its constitutional democracy and to ensure the long-term incorporation of newcomers. Such reforms often construct visions of a collective and utopic future of which newcomers will become part, provided they take certain, predefined steps. Within this image of the future, twenty-first century Germany is at once characterised by diversity and cultural pluralism, as well as a stronger emphasis on shared actions, values and goals. The German language, meanwhile, is

reframed as a "pan-ethnic lingua franca" (Gramling 2009: 131), and ties together a diversity of migrants, refugees and diaspora communities through unified linguistic practice.

Thus, the introduction of the NIP set out to create "a new road towards a mobilising and sustainable integration policy" (NIP 2007: 37), one in which newcomers "possess the necessary self-sufficiency to handle all aspects of everyday life without assistance from a third party" (Act to Control and Restrict Immigration 2007: 190-91). "Necessary self-sufficiency" is attained through the acquisition of German civics knowledge–that is, German history, the legal and political system, the constitution, culture and society–and at minimum, basic knowledge of Standard German.

Language and integration policies, such as Germany's, appear to operate with a linear notion of an individual's progress over time. In this context, a newcomer is expected to cross certain temporal thresholds: from non-German speaker to intermediate or advanced German speaker, unintegrated to integrated, and so on. Herein the route to *self-sufficiency* is presented both as straightforward and as the responsibility of newcomers to navigate quickly. As I demonstrate, such assumptions about linguistic integration rely on static temporal models, and prove to be inflexible to other modes of inhabiting and managing time. This often conflicted with and disrupted the goals and expectations my interlocutors had set for themselves in terms of speed, progress and markers of arrival, settledness and belonging. The strict integration requirements along with opaque and complicated bureaucratic procedures confine newcomers to liminal spaces of transition: between physically arriving in Germany and achieving a meaningful sense of agency and participation, the potential outcomes of integration requirements remain uncertain for most, creating a tension between hope in progress on the one hand, and acute experiences of stalling, powerlessness and urgency on the other hand. Crucially, time for my interlocutors was *messier* and less predictable than expected: not only were most of their days spent inside the LIC, but many failed the final exam on their first attempt, forcing them to re-enrol. Many others struggled to find formal employment even after completing advanced-level German language programmes. For most of the over 60 migrants and refugees I worked with during fieldwork, their first few years in Germany were marked by acute experiences of temporal uncertainty.

When I started fieldwork in Berlin, I expected time would play some role, as the courses were gruelling; running for four hours a day, five days a week over an initial period of seven months to a year. I knew from past research that processes of immigration, arrival and settlement take time. But as my findings show, time matters *more* and *differently* than one might expect. I found that altered experiences of time, including long periods of waiting, slowing, boredom, acceleration and stalling, are a crucial aspect of newcomers' integration encounters. Integration, thus, means a complete restructuring of a newcomer's relationship with time and the adaptation to German social and cultural customs around marking and regulating the passage of time.

Across four ethnographic chapters, this thesis explores and critically unpacks the temporal dimensions of migration, displacement and notions of integration and belonging in contemporary Germany, and the role that language policies play within them. In so doing, it examines both how time figures into policy and bureaucratic procedures (such as the issuing of temporary residency permits, time limits for language and integration course attendance, as well as the ways in which institutions make newcomers wait for appointments and crucial resources). I also consider how time is variously experienced by a diverse community of migrants and refugees subject to Germany's language and integration requirements. By ethnographically unpacking newcomer encounters with bureaucratic and educational institutions in Berlin, the thesis uncovers a critical tension between the ways in which notions of arrival, progress and incorporation are conceptualised and temporally organised by state actors, and the ways in which these are navigated and experienced by newcomers. I draw from methods in social anthropology as well as sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology, allowing me to capture and analyse both the larger-scale implications of language and integration policy as well the nuanced, interpersonal and discursive dynamics of classroom interaction, group formation and meaning production.

As I have found, for my interlocutors, ideas of progress are tightly interwoven with imaginations and discourses of *the future,* particularly as it pertains to professional and vocational attainment. Many spoke of the language and integration classroom as a *key* through which to unlock the 'not-yet' future possibilities of Germany's economic landscape (Bloch 1986). Progress over time was measured by the

speed with which future goals were achieved: in class, it was about the speed with which they progressed through the language course, while outside of class, it was the speed with which they secured professional recognition; a procedure which I have explored in detail in this thesis. Obtaining professional recognition of foreign degrees is a messy, opaque process for many. Germany is strict about the kinds of foreign qualifications it recognises and how these map on to German equivalents. Often, newcomers are required to re-train and enrol in apprenticeship programmes to be permitted to formally work. For many, this process is experienced as a form of stalling and re-direction. For others, it is met with a sense of hope and opportunity as they build on their vocational and educational experience, expand their social networks and find some temporal certainty. Underlying this thesis, then, are interconnected temporal modalities of past, present and future, as well as affective positions of hope and insecurity.

Restrictions on mobility, limited access to information and resources, experiences of alienation and marginalisation result in a restless and pervasive tension, which my interlocutors have described as *boredom.* While the concept of waiting has been widely explored in anthropology, particularly in the context of migration and displacement, the related but distinct concept of boredom is still undertheorised. Unlike traditional conceptions of boredom, which are linked to notions of modernity and disengagement, the boredom endured by my interlocutors is produced by confinement and uncertainty, and reveals the restless tension between hope, progress and stuckness. As Baynham (2006) reminds us, the kinds of language classrooms in which my research took place, are "criss-crossed with the traces of other communicative encounters and discourses both institutional and everyday" (2006: 25), including communicative encounters with neighbours and locals, family life, interactions with bureaucratic and legal institutions, and other hurdles such as searching for work and accommodation. These so-called *outside experiences* contribute to the learning environment and affected classroom interaction on a daily basis. In this way, my interlocutors' temporal experiences were not only *shaped* by the integration programme, bureaucratic institutions and other external expectations and attitudes, but they were also *brought into* the classroom, and this is often where they were negotiated. In fact, it was inside the classroom that the relationship between time and notions of integration and belonging were

amplified: it was here that my interlocutors were confronted with a range of socioculturally embedded relationships to time and time-keeping, as well as notions of routine and ideas of everyday *German time.* Teachers often discursively positioned their students in relationship to different temporal contexts and time keeping practices–from notions of free time, class time and religious time to notions of punctuality. Such discursive positioning often had the effect of marking perceived cultural difference and framing students as, on the one hand having now arrived in Germany and ostensibly being part of the larger community, and on the other, as in need of further integration.

Such temporal discourses, furthermore, invoke very specific relationships to community and belonging and therefore also implicate notions of space and how this is temporally configured. In this way, as I demonstrate, various socioculturally and institutionally embedded notions of time can serve two simultaneous effects. On the one hand, it can be invoked as a symbol of community cohesion and shared practices. From references to a shared history–and the commemoration thereof–to a shared sense of time and the cultural traditions which surround it, to shared everyday practices of time keeping. At the same time, notions of temporal difference can serve to identify and uphold boundaries between communities. This is particularly acute in contexts of migration, where perceived differences between migrants and 'host' communities may be employed to signify the non-assimilation of newcomers to dominant practices around time (Bastian 2001; Cwerner 2001; Griffiths, Rogers and Anderson 2013). In this way, "the language of temporal difference is used to identify foreign Others, generate points of exclusion and conflict, or vocalise feelings of dissonance" (Griffiths et al. 2013: 23). Importantly, as Gal (2016, 2019) demonstrates, the construction of difference through the comparison of different practices reveals underlying ideological positions which can serve to identify group membership, on the one hand, and point to beliefs about cultural difference, on the other. I thus consider how these various models and practices reveal a tension between often idealised notions of everyday German time and the messy and complex realities newcomers experience daily. I show how time can be used as a marker of perceived difference by integration course instructors, whose modes of comparing different time-based practices have the effect of drawing further boundaries between notions of *being here* and of *not being here*.

There is a tendency in migration research to focus on the ways in which state operations become oppressive–often framing migrants as agency-less victims of broader state interventions outside their control. While my approach to Germany's integration system is certainly critical, my in-depth linguistic and ethnographic analysis of the everyday lived experiences of my interlocutors also allows me to show the multiple creative ways in which they develop strategies to navigate German bureaucracy, pursue their futures and build social networks. Humour was a particularly central vehicle through which to laugh through temporal uncertainty, to make light of their shared experiences of migration and displacement and to joke about the often confusing, frustrating and alienating experiences of learning German and navigating bureaucratic hurdles. During my time in the LICs, humour was employed by my interlocutors in several ways: for teachers, joking, play and laughter was used to enforce restrictive linguistic and sociocultural norms: it was a means of disciplining students who broke from expected convention. For students it became a tool through which to challenge authority and disrupt cultural assumptions and linguistic norms, to signal intimacy and build solidarity and to play with the rules of linguistic belonging.

In this thesis, I argue that instead of offering a feasible, timely and inclusive path to self-sufficiency, the formal processes of linguistic integration instead significantly *delay* newcomers' access to work, higher education and a sense of inclusion. What is more, in part because of the *slowing* effect these programmes have on their sense of progress, newcomers to Germany encounter *temporal disruptions, ruptures and distortions* which contribute to ongoing experiences of uncertainty, stalling and boredom. These findings have significant policy implications relating to the ways in which Germany, and European nations more broadly, approach the linguistic, economic and social incorporation of refugees and migrants. They also, importantly, contribute to enhancing our as yet limited understanding of the ways in which language is enmeshed in the temporal dimensions of migration and displacement, how language-focused policy-making impinges on experiences of temporal disruption, and what we can learn about newcomers' positions of (un)belonging by examining their experiences of time.

II.1. Underexplored Themes and Future Research

After four years of research on Germany's language and integration programmes, I feel that I am left with more questions than I started with. As I continue to pursue this and related research, there are a few underexplored themes which I seek to investigate. I will outline some of these briefly, to conclude.

At the outset of this thesis, I discussed the ways in which key tenets of the integration programme rely on visions of the past: in a culturally and linguistically *superdiverse* Germany, invocations of a shared, common language rest on a belief that there *always was* a clear and tangible German language that should continue to be practiced and shared. While this notion ignores the reality of how linguistic practices vary and change over time–and particularly through human movement–its reinvigoration within contemporary German policy discourse suggests that perhaps this common language is perceived to be at risk. Many scholars argue that Germany's language and integration efforts are a direct reaction to its perceived failure to integrate migrant communities of the past. In particular, the German-Turkish communities become targets for political and popular debates around the potential risk that further *Paralellgesellschaften* (parallel communities) might emerge. In this way the past is an area of inquiry that requires more attention, particularly in how it affects the experiences of newcomers in the present.

A core topic in the LICs, and particularly in the B1 integration course, was the history of WWII Germany. Narratives here focused on the importance of *politische Bildung* (political education), reconciling historical guilt and the need for an ongoing *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (a means of reckoning with the past). As I have found, newcomer encounters with Germany's integration system entailed confrontations with German collective memory (presented as a shared and tangible memory of the past). Germany's history was such a central topic that it was part of every course book. It was present in teachers' instructional narratives and it also became the subject of the end-of-class field trip to the German Historical Museum. In class, the implicit assumption, however, seemed to be that newcomers lacked the cultural knowledge to understand this project of political education; that they somehow may not be able to identify with the shared historical guilt and memory of war, violence and suffering. As

Griffiths et al. (2013) point out, part of the experience of migration entails confrontations with national timescales of real and imagined pasts, which are often used to imagine a collective future. The tension here arises from the ways in which newcomers navigate their positions within these collective memories of national belonging (see also Golden 2002). The questions that arise here are, how do encounters with Germany's history affect newcomers' relationship to the present? How do newcomer encounters with Germany's past shape their own future-making? How far do societal notions of newcomer integration rely on expectations of adaptation to a shared collective memory? Moving forward, I plan to devote some of my research to addressing these questions in two ways. The first is to expand upon my work on scales and chronotopes in order to investigate the ways in which identities are formed by drawing on certain historically configured images. Building on the foundational work I have set out in Chapter Four of this thesis, I also aim to investigate how teachers and students position themselves (and each other) discursively in relationship to historically grounded notions of belonging and collective memory. The second, though leaning on the first, is to consider how newcomers to Germany encounter and navigate material commemorations to Germany's past. Schwarz (2013) has argued that popular and political narrative of Germany's past perform a certain kind of "border work", whereby those with migrant backgrounds are imaginatively located as part of a community living outside of Germany's past (2013:50; see also Hodge and O'Carroll 2006). However, Schwarz also shows how Berlin's historical landscape–including several material sites of commemoration (such as the Holocaust Memorial and the "Stolpersteine" (stumbling stones) project)–can become a site for the articulations of new historiographies (ibid). During fieldwork, I spent a lot of time walking through Berlin with my interlocutors. On several occasions we would stop in front of historical monuments and memorial sites and they would tell me about their relationship to them. In future work, I plan to explore in more detail the conversations I had with my interlocutors at these commemorative sites, and draw on architectural and urban studies research to think about how newcomers to Germany discursively position themselves in relationship to themes of collective memory, belonging and historicity.

Emerging as a central, though yet unexplored figure within this thesis, is the German employment office, the *Jobcenter.* Contributing greatly to the uncertainty and temporal insecurity my interlocutors

described to me were their continued–often confusing and frustrating–experiences with bureaucratic and administrative institutions. Unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity during fieldwork to accompany my interlocutors to their many Jobcenter appointments. However, its centrality in their experiences has made it an urgent point of inquiry for my planned future work.

According to a recent report by the German employment office, around 56% of refugees who have been in Germany since 2015 are unemployed. In political and popular discourse, the fact that 44% have found formal employment has been regarded as a success, owing in large part to the expansion of the language- integration system since 2015/16. However, as my research has demonstrated, (a) these programmes significantly delay newcomers' access to the labour market and (b) there are several, often conflicting notions of success, progress and inclusion at play, which further complicate newcomers' first few years in Germany. In fact, the many migrants and refugees I worked with in the language classroom reported acute feelings of temporal uncertainty, waiting and confinement in the face of what they described as complex and opaque expectations for integration. The question is what happens after the language and integration programme? Or rather, what else is happening alongside the language and integration programme? How exactly do social, political and economic assumptions about linguistic integration feed in to decisions made about employment on a bureaucratic level?

As I have demonstrated in this thesis, gaining employment is strongly tied to the acquisition of language proficiency certificates. Depending on the type of employment a newcomer is pursuing, she may need to acquire advanced levels of German, enrol in vocational (re-)training or seek further university education. This process is overseen by the Jobcenter. Jobcenter employees mediate newcomer employment opportunities from their first enrolment in a language and integration course to the decisions they make about further linguistic or vocational training.

Scholars working on other European contexts have demonstrated that for migrants and refugees in a new environment, access to crucial material and symbolic resources is mediated through repeated face-to-face interactions with institutions, which are embedded in broader social and political processes and aims. At the same time, these act as gatekeepers to a newcomer's access to the labour market,

professional recognition procedures, as well as vocational and skills training, holding substantial decision-making power over who should have access to which resources and how (Roberts 2013; Del Percio 2018).

My doctoral research offers strong reasons to assume that notions of the importance of linguistic proficiency play a central role in the bureaucratic procedures that oversee newcomers' access to employment. Furthermore, this bureaucratisation of language competency may be a decisive factor in the temporal ruptures experienced by refugees and migrants as they pursue employment and education.

Bureaucratic institutions like the Jobcenter often govern through multiple temporal devices which combine different senses of time and temporal modalities, including periods of waiting, and varying lengths of qualification procedures for vocational, citizenship and residency eligibility. In this sense, bureaucratic requirements and institutionalised schedules and routines, alongside notions of progress, speed and success, have the potential of intervening with and disrupting the temporal patterns and expectations of newcomers.

Given these insights, my future research will examine how every day, repeated encounters with employment offices affect the ways in which newcomers to Germany make important decisions about education and employment, as well as how ideas of progress, mobility, and the future are locally negotiated through these encounters: What do newcomers and Jobcenter employees speak about in their meetings, and does the language they use matter? How is language competency talked about and managed on a bureaucratic level, and how does a newcomer's progress in the language courses affect the employment decisions they make? How does continuous interaction with the Jobcenter impact the ways in which refugees and migrants make important decisions about the future? How do bureaucratic procedures obstruct, delay or perhaps even speed up newcomers' access to employment? What can the observation of meetings between newcomers and Jobcenter employees tell us about the ways in which notions of progress, success and inclusion are negotiated, particularly as they pertain to language competency?

The observations raised in this thesis bring practical concerns for the efficacy of the current language and integration model to light, which further underline questions about potential linguistic barriers and restrictions to social, economic and political participation that newcomers in Germany are facing. They also raise concerns about the amount of time newcomers spend waiting during their first few years in Germany. Emerging movements around *engaged anthropology* consider how ethnographic research can inform policy, while also critically unpacking the researcher's role in the local practices and dynamics they observe (see e.g. Beck and Maida 2013: Ortner 2019; Tate 2020). What are the responsibilities of anthropologists in these situations? How can we use insights gained from working with refugees and migrants who are subject to Germany's language and integration programmes to inform future policy? How can ethnography inform policy work?

My extensive fieldwork has uncovered some key issues that I believe are only accessible through ethnographic work, and that these should be made visible to policy makers. As my thesis shows, newcomers spend a great deal of time waiting. Their first years in Germany are marked by experiences of boredom and uncertainty and this seems to be because the state's expectations of them are unclear and the processes they are required to undergo feel meaningless to them. There is a mismatch between the expectations of newcomers, the expectations of the state and the reality of meeting integration requirements in this highly bureaucratised system. What is more, many of my interlocutors were very forthcoming and explicit about their criticisms, concerns and expectations of the ways in which the German government ought to support newcomers. The question thus is, what is my responsibility as an ethnographer having access to this information and having witnessed these experiences? Anthropology is supposed to be objective and descriptive, but as Dell Hymes (1964) reminds us, it also needs to be conscious of values and goals; it must relate description to analysis and objectivity to the overall good. In this way, ethnography is not only a tool through which to investigate the real-world effects of current policy and policy-making, but also as a means through which to provide data to inform future policy-making. In the future, I plan to work toward building a policy-focused method of disseminating my research findings, working closely with my interlocutors to recommend policy changes.

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