

Language Planning in Oman:
Evaluating Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Fallacies



By

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Declaration

I declare that all the material which is not my own, has, to the best of my ability, been acknowledged. The material in this thesis has not been submitted previously by the author for a degree at this or any other university.

Signed: _____

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Abstract

English is increasingly being chosen as the medium of education at the tertiary level in education in the Arabian Gulf. In Oman a decision was taken to switch the medium of education in all colleges of applied sciences from Arabic to English. To assist students with the switch the Ministry of Higher Education requested all colleges to establish foundation years with the focus on teaching English. This study is an analysis of that decision from both macro language planning and a micro sociolinguistic perspectives.

Three contentions were used to measure the efficacy of the practices in the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah, Oman. These were the native speaker fallacy, the L2 fallacy and the English medium fallacy. The study adopted a case study framework and analysed each of the preceding fallacies with a view to establishing their individual and collective veracity. Data collected included 370 student questionnaires, 15 questionnaires distributed to native speaker teachers and 10 to non-native speaker teachers. There were also interviews with leading stakeholders involved at the College level.

The results of the study suggest that of the three fallacies, the native speaker fallacy was not seen to be in evidence at the college whilst the other two were.

Amalgamating the findings leads to the conclusion that there are a complex array of factors involved in a decision to switch the medium of instruction from Arabic to English and the establishment of an English foundation programme to facilitate this decision. The results do not corroborate a view of reality that posits that external forces are responsible for enforcing an imperialistic agenda. What the findings of the

study do support is the need for research based decision making, to avoid situations where perspectives devoid of academic merit become the norm.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview

This study investigates the learning of English by tertiary level students at the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah, Oman (henceforth referred to as the CASS). The study locates itself within the genre of language planning and uses the concept of linguistic imperialism (henceforth LI) as elucidated by Phillipson (1992) in his seminal work bearing the title *Linguistic Imperialism* as the theoretical basis. It uses a case study framework to analyse events at the CASS and to seek answers to the research questions. Before elucidating the main research question and the sub-questions, a brief contextual and theoretical background will be provided to aid the reader in understanding the sub-questions, the relevance they hold to the study and the necessity in answering them to answer the main question.

1.1.1 Definitions

Linguistic Imperialism as a collocated lexical item was first used by Ansre (1979). It is worth noting here that he gets little credit for being the inventor of this neologism. He defined it as follows:

The phenomenon in which the minds and lives of the speakers of a language are dominated by another language to the point where they believe that they can and should use only that foreign language when it comes to transactions dealing with the more advanced aspects of life such as education, philosophy,

literature, governments, the administration of justice, minds, attitudes and aspirations of even the most noble in a society and of preventing him from appreciating and realising his full potentialities of the indigenous language (1979, pp. 12-13).

This definition is comprehensive, and essentially speaks of what Phillipson refers to as a *colonised consciousness* (1992, p. 187); defined as the intellectual domination of the intelligentsia of developing world nations. Ansre's concept of LI was made famous through the publication of Phillipson's book (1992). In it Phillipson offers the following in relation to a definition of LI:

A working definition of English linguistic imperialism is that the dominance of English is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. Here structural refers broadly to material properties (for example, institutions, financial allocations) and cultural to immaterial or ideological properties (for example, attitudes, pedagogic principles) (1992, p. 47).

Both Ansre's definition and that of Phillipson share the idea of intellectual or political domination, but Phillipson's definition is perhaps broader in that he includes structural inequalities in his definition, which relates to the practical effects of LI. Based on the two previous definitions the following definition will be employed for the term LI:

LI is said to exist when the following two conditions are met -

1. A colonised consciousness is observed such that people believe that a foreign language is both a necessary and sufficient condition for material progress and economic efficiency

2. The belief articulated in (1) is evidenced in reality by educational policies that clearly demonstrate this.

Having defined the term LI it is now possible to state the main research question of the study. The question is as follows: Is the decision to switch to an English medium Education in the CASS, and the subsequent and resulting decision to implement a foundation year programme to prepare students to study in English, an example of LI at work? Although the question is asked specifically about the CASS, the study does seek to establish the CASS as a test case for LI in action to establish if the results can be generalised to similar contexts elsewhere.

In order to answer this question a number of sub-questions need to be answered. Before articulating these it is necessary to first explain how LI can be measured.

1.2 Measuring LI

If the study seeks to examine whether a specific context is an example of LI at work there must be some form of measurement, some criteria used such that the observer can identify LI. A set of three *fallacies* will be used as a measurement of LI. Two of these fallacies were articulated by Phillipson and one is the author's own. The word 'fallacy' is used in the conventional sense, i.e. a belief in something which is false. The two fallacies that Phillipson articulated are: the native speaker fallacy, (NSF), and the monolingual fallacy, renamed the L2 fallacy for the sake of clarity in this study. Added to these two is the English medium fallacy, the EMF, articulated in this way for the first time here. Phillipson did articulate three other fallacies: the early start fallacy, the maximum exposure fallacy and the subtractive fallacy. These three were not held to be directly relevant to this present research and so they have not been included as criteria for measuring if LI is at work at the CASS.

Having outlined the three fallacies that will be used as the measure for LI, it is necessary to explain the relationship between the fallacies and LI. This is best represented diagrammatically. In Fig 1 below the larger circle represents LI. It is said to exist when any of the three fallacies exists. It is important to note that it is not being stipulated that all three fallacies must be present, only one since each of the three carry elements of the original definition of LI in them. In other words, the native speaker fallacy is an example by itself of LI, and the same is true of the English medium fallacy and the L2 fallacy.

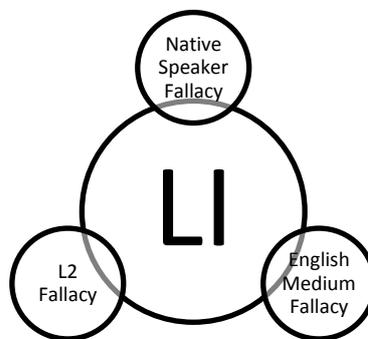


Figure 1 Measuring L1

1.2.1 Further definitions

This section will offer definitions for the native speaker, L2 and English medium fallacies.

1.2.1.1 The native speaker fallacy

The native speaker fallacy is defined by Phillipson as being the idea that

...the ideal teacher is a *native speaker*, somebody with *native speaker* proficiency in English who can serve as a model for the pupils (1992, p. 192).

The native speaker fallacy will be explored in detail in chapter three where issues related to Standard English, the ability of non-native speakers to act as a model for

Standard English and the capacity of non-native speakers to reach native speaker competency will be explored. The chapter will also comment on current academic discourse related to different varieties of English and students preferences in this respect. The actual definition of the native speaker fallacy used in this study differs slightly from that offered by Phillipson and is defined as being the idea that

the ideal teacher is a *native speaker* who can serve as a model for the pupils

The difference between the two definitions is that the term *native speaker proficiency* is included in Phillipson's definition but not included in the author's since the fallacy, as is practiced on the ground, is based around the notion that native speakers alone are capable of delivering the Standard English model. Including the term 'native speaker proficiency' may suggest that non-native speakers, who are considered by some to have native speaker proficiency, would be considered for this purpose a native speaker. This is not the case, and non native speakers are discriminated against not because of any issue related to their English language proficiency, which oftentimes may be close to native speaker status, but because of their status as being not native speakers. In fact the term 'non-native speaker' really should be 'not native speaker' because it is used in the context of language teaching in a pejorative manner.

1.2.1.2 The L2 fallacy

The L2 fallacy is defined by Phillipson as being the idea that 'the teaching of English as a foreign or second language should be entirely through the medium of English' (1992, p. 185). He refers to it as the monolingual fallacy but it is renamed here as the L2 fallacy, which helps brings the focus onto the L2. What the L2 fallacy effectively does is marginalize a competitive advantage that L1 speaking teachers have whilst at the same time nullifying the pedagogical advantages that use of the L1 can have.

Chapter four on the L2 fallacy examines the origins of the L2 fallacy and seeks to establish the origins of the belief. The chapter seeks to examine the source of the belief that language teaching should be exclusively in the L2. It also seeks to examine the role of the L1 in language teaching methodology, both contemporaneous and classical. The chapter also evaluates the evidence in favour of the exclusion of the L1 from the L2 classroom and the evidence in favour of its use.

1.2.1.3 The English medium fallacy

The English Medium Fallacy (EMF) is an original term coined here to describe the belief that *efficacious education can only take place when English is the medium of instruction (MOI)*. The EMF is seen in practice through the adoption of an L2 as the medium of instruction in education. This study is concerned specifically with the EMF in tertiary level education and chapter five examines the EMF in light of the academic literature. There is particular emphasis on contemporary examples where the MOI has been an issue of debate such as in Hong Kong, Singapore and India. The effect of the EMF on academic performance is analysed and commented upon.

1.2.2 Sub-questions

Returning to the theme of a measurement for LI what is proposed here is to take the 3 fallacies defined above as the measure. Hence if the main question that this study seeks to answer is: Is the decision to switch to an English medium Education in the CASS, and the subsequent and resulting decision to implement a foundation year programme to prepare students to study in English, an example of LI at work? Then the sub-questions are as follows:

1. Is the Native speaker fallacy a fallacy in reality supported by the academic literature and is there evidence of the NSF being present in the CASS?
2. Is the L2 fallacy a fallacy in reality supported by the academic literature and is evidence of the L2 fallacy being present in the CASS?
3. Is the EMF a fallacy in reality supported by the academic literature and is there evidence of the EMF being present in the CASS?

Answering these three questions will aid in the answer of the main question.

1.3 Structure

There are three main parts to this study. The first part of the study will examine the reality of the practices at the CASS in Oman. This will include a description of the English programmes and a full analysis of the decision to transfer the medium of instruction on the degree programmes from Arabic to English. The teaching of English is divided into two years. The first of these is a foundation year, successful completion of which is a precondition for enrolment onto the degree programme proper. In the first year of the degree programme, students continue to study English intensively whilst beginning their studies in their chosen academic discipline. These programmes are designed, overseen and administered by faculty from the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, under the aegis of the ministry of education, Oman.

The second part of the study is a literature review consisting of three chapters examining the three fallacies that have been chosen as a measure of the existence or otherwise of LI. The first of these is chapter three on the native speaker fallacy (NSF). The chapter tackles the NSF by examining first definitions and then the term

native speaker in detail. Most justifications for favouring the native speaker teacher (NST) over the non-native speaker teacher (NNST) are based on the idea that native speakers (NSs) are, in the view of Chomsky, the final arbiters of language (Chomsky 1965). This is predicated on the notion that what is being taught is Standard English, that students wish to learn Standard English and that NNS are incapable, for linguistic reasons, of attaining native speaker competency such that they could act as a model of Standard English. The last of these points is related to the critical period hypothesis (CPH) which holds that native speaker competency can only be attained before a specific or critical period, usually mentioned as around the age of 7. Chapter three contains a discussion of the CPH within the context of the NSF.

Chapter four is a literature review of the L2 fallacy. The chapter is composed of four parts. The first examines the history of the fallacy, which is an attempt to understand where the belief that the first language, the L1, should be excluded from the second language, the L2, classroom came from. The second part of the chapter examines the contemporary history of the role the L1 plays in various popular second language teaching methods. The third part of the chapter evaluates the evidence in favour of the exclusion of the L1 from the L2 classroom. The final part examines evidences in favour of the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom.

The final part of the second section of the thesis is a literature review of the English medium fallacy (EMF). This is a micro and macro analysis of both linguistic issues and language policy related to the adoption of an L2 as the MOI. The chapter begins by examining why states select an L2 as their MOI. These are grouped into four main categories: economic, linguistic, nationalistic and demand reasons. The relevant literature for each of these is analysed in detail.

The third section of the study deals with the data and the methodology adopted in the study. Chapter six outlined the research methodology and describes in detail the different qualitative research instruments adopted. Chapter seven provides an objective presentation of the data from the one source, namely the questionnaires. Chapter eight provides a full analysis of all the data and links the findings from section two of this study with the data to attempt to answer the original research questions. In the final part of this section a conclusion presents the main findings of the study and offers a series of recommendations.

Chapter Two

Defining the Context: Education in Oman and the Colleges of Applied Science

2.1 Introduction

This study is located in Salalah, South Oman in the College of Applied Sciences. The purpose of this chapter is to provide background information on education in Oman and the tertiary sector generally and the Colleges of Applied Science in particular.

Part of this chapter will outline briefly the history of Oman since Oman rarely features in Western media (Peterson 2004, Poole 2006, and Katz 2004) and academic literature (Owtram 2004) and so some background information is necessary to inform the reader of the context in which this study takes place.

2.2 Brief history of Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is located in the Eastern part of the Gulf region, bordering Yemen, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to the West. Unlike some of its neighbours Oman has not suffered from colonialism in the past century. Since the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1650 by Sultan Bin Saif Al Yarubi the country has been independent. The recent history of the past four decades is dominated by the current ruler Sultan Qaboos bin Said who became leader of the country after a palace coup to replace his father Sultan Said in 1970. Sultan Said was a recluse who led the

country into political and economic isolation. When Qaboos bin Said took power there was little infrastructure such as roads, telecommunications or schools.

Upon assuming authority Qaboos bin Said declared the country to be a Sultaniyya, effectively an unconstitutional monarchy in line with the ruling systems in the other Gulf states. Sultan Qaboos has initiated some political reform by establishing a bicameral non-executive legislature (Gonzalez et al 2008). This consists of a consultative council (Majlis Al-Shura in Arabic) composed of 83 members elected from around the country and a state council of 57 member appointed by the Sultan. The judiciary is semi-independent although the Sultan retains the right to reverse any decision upon appeal to him.

Geographically the country is divided into 8 administrative regions; three governorates (Dhofar, Muscat and Musandam) and five regions (Al Batinah, Ash Sharqiyah, Ad Dakhliyah, Adh Dhahirah, Al Wusta). The College of Applied Sciences where this research took place is located in Salalah in the Dhofar governorate. The peoples of Oman in these regions and governorates are heterogeneous, which is a reflection of Oman's historical past which included periods of empire and extensive trading with local and distant countries. Omanis, unlike their Gulf neighbours, have a rich mix of ethnicities. Significant proportions of the population are from countries such as Zanzibar, Pakistan (primarily the Baloch province), India and Africa.

Whilst contemporary Oman shares with its neighbours in being a member of OPEC, the discovery of oil in Oman was a relatively late affair, with oil production not beginning until 1967 (Gonzalez et al 2008). Oman's relatively low oil reserves and low production levels, 769,000 barrels per day compared to 2.378 million for the

United Arab Emirates for example, has led the government to seek to diversify their economy (ibid). As a result there has been investment in the fishing and agricultural industries as well as financial support for tourism and the development of the skilled workforce by heavy investment in education.

2.3 Education in Oman

Education is a relatively new phenomenon in Oman with formal education beginning only in the early 1970's (Al Ghafri, 2002). Prior to 1970 there were only 909 male students being educated in three schools, with one technical/vocational school (Gonzalez et al 2008, Carroll et al 2009). Since then Sultan Qaboos, the hereditary ruler, has initiated large scale investment in the education sector through a series of five years plans such that at the time of writing there are now over 60 colleges and private institutions (Al Ghafri). By the academic year 2005/2006 there were 568,074 students, with 292,477 male students and 275,597 female students, in state sponsored primary and secondary education with a further 28,183 students in private primary and secondary education (Ministry of Education 2006). Responsibility for education is split between the Ministry of Education (MOE) which oversees schools and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) which is responsible for universities, colleges, various different tertiary level institutes and private universities and colleges (Al-Nabhani 2007).

The national language of Oman is Standard Arabic, however a diglossic situation exists whereby the Omanis speak a local vernacular of the language (Brown 2006). In the mountainous northern regions and in the south a number of different regional languages, such as Shihhi in the northern mountainous area and Jibbali in the southern mountainous areas, are used which bear little resemblance to Arabic. Omanis who

trace their ancestry back to Zanzibar speak Swahili, and those that trace their roots to Baluchistan speak Baluchi (Asher 1994). As a result many Omanis are bilingual, speaking Arabic and a regional language. Despite the existence of regional languages, Arabic dominates the country linguistically. It is the official language of the state and the language in which all government and business transactions are conducted (Brown 2006). Oman is, however, not immune to the influence of globalization and English is becoming more influential; this is recognized by the MOE which states that

The government recognises that facility in English is important in the new global economy. English is the most common language for international business and commerce and is the exclusive language in important sectors such as banking and aviation. The global language of Science and Technology is also English as are the rapidly expanding international computerised databases and telecommunications networks which are becoming an increasingly important part of academic and business life (Ministry of Education 1995, p. 1).

As part of this recognition of the importance of the English language the MOE invited a team of specialists into Oman in 1987 to prepare a report on the establishment of an English language curriculum in schools. The report by Nunan et al (1987) entitled *Philosophy and Guidelines for the Omani English Language School Curriculum* stressed the importance of English ‘...as the means for wider communications within the international community’ (p. 1). Although Arabic is the language of the civil service, English is used widely in Oman in business, ‘particularly in banks, chemist shops, medical clinics, showrooms, general trade stores, restaurants, factories, hotels, insurance agencies and companies (Al-Issa 2006, p. 199). The Omani government

has also established English as the only official second language (ibid). Al-Busaidi (1995) found that English was used extensively both at home and within the workplace in the capital Muscat and to a lesser extent the other seven regions.

English is officially the language of all tertiary education, including that of the CASS. It has also been introduced as a subject in grade 1 (age six) of all primary schools in the Sultanate (Al-Issa 2006, Borg 2006). Thus there has been a drive to increase the focus on English language instruction in Oman. There are several English language newspapers and Radio Oman operates in English.

2.4 English language teaching in Oman

With the heavy emphasis on English both in education and industry, there has been strong investment in English language teaching both at the level of curriculum and textbook design and human resources. The various different textbooks used in the public schools are all designed at the English Language Curriculum Department (ELCD), a department within the Ministry of Education. The members of the ELCD are all native speakers of English. Al-Issa describes the textbooks the ELCD produces as lacking challenge and being ‘teacher proof’, i.e. difficult or impossible to teach from (2006, p. 200). English is the medium of education in all tertiary colleges and a large number of native English speaker teachers are employed to deliver the curriculum, both as teachers, academic managers, middle-managers and other related administrators (ibid). In an effort to increase the quality of English language teaching and in-line with the report from Nunan et al (1987) to invest in Omani English language teachers, (ELTs), the MOHE signed an agreement with the University of Leeds to offer the opportunity to diploma holding Omani ELTs to upgrade to a an

undergraduate degree. Diplomas are two year post-secondary school certificates that were necessary qualifications for anyone wishing to enter the teaching field.

There is only one publicly funded university, Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in the capital Muscat, that offers an undergraduate degree programme for ELTs. This programme regularly graduates 120 students annually, way below the market demand. The resulting shortfall between ELTs produced in the Omani public and private higher education sectors and the market demand for them is mainly filled by native speaker teachers from the UK, US, Australia and other English speaking countries. Oftentimes the teachers are poorly qualified and lack cultural sensitivities and awareness (Al-Issa 2006). There has been a call among some Omani academics for a greater emphasis on training Omanis in the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition such that more colleges and universities can offer undergraduate programmes in English language teaching. This would help reduce the dependency on native speakers and at the same time would result in more Omanis teaching their fellow citizens

...more attention needs to be given to local manpower training and development. In other words, the Sultanate needs to train more Omanis in the field of second language education at the graduate and post-graduate levels. Such training has to meet international and high standards so as to help produce competent professionals who can take over from the NABA [North American, British and Australasian] working force. This competent manpower can in turn have its direct and powerful impact upon producing linguistically competent language users. Well-prepared Omani English teachers, inspectors, syllabus writers and others in the field understand the needs and problems of the Omani learners best and can work towards meeting these needs and

overcoming these problems. This can have a long lasting and powerful effect on the Omani students' second language learning and acquisition, as these students embark on various courses in the future where English is the medium of instruction and hence will not need any actual prior language improvement courses (Al-Issa 2006, p. 214).

2.5 Colleges of Applied Science

The CASS was formerly one of six colleges of education in Oman that began as secondary level institutes before becoming intermediate Training Colleges and then University Teacher Education Colleges (ibid). These education colleges were then converted into Colleges of Applied Sciences, although the College of Education in Rustaq remained as it was. As such, the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah, where this study is based, was until 2005 called the College of Education. The old Colleges of Education were essentially teacher training colleges. In order to facilitate a drive by the Omani government to diversify their graduate population it was deemed necessary to establish degree level programmes in a number of key areas: IT, international business administration, design and finally communication studies. Degree programmes last for four years with an additional year for the foundation year, making five in total. Grades from the foundation year would appear on the students' final degree transcript and would affect their overall degree GPA.

The degree programmes, including the development of curriculums and assessment in the Colleges of Applied Sciences were all outsourced to third party educational providers; a consortium of universities from New Zealand. The English language component (ELC) was composed of two parts: the foundation year and first year courses which were included as part of the degree programme and which will be

referred to hereinafter as in-sessional courses. The development and overseeing of the ELC was outsourced to Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) in New Zealand. Degree programme directors were appointed for each of the degree programmes, so one for each of IT, international business administration, design and communication studies. A fifth degree programme director, Ms AD, was appointed for the ELC. Background as to how VUW became involved with the MOHE in Oman was provided by Ms AD in an interview with the author

The ministry of higher education or the minister Dr Rawiya, Her Excellency, decided to transform these five colleges of education, or five of the six. [To assist them] they looked for an overseas partner to supply the degree programmes and decided on a New Zealand consortium. Initially they were looking at working with individual universities but in the end for strategic reasons and, I think, convenience, decided to work with a consortium which consists of Victoria University, Otago University, Auckland University of Technology and Waikato University supplying different strands of the degree programmes. So Victoria [University of Wellington] was selected by the consortium as the English language provider, [since] they have a long and creditable history of English language programmes and a good reputation as one of the top English language universities in New Zealand (personal interview 14th April 2007).

During the summer of 2005 VUW set about creating a curriculum and methods of assessment. They did this without visiting any of the colleges¹ and so it is assumed

¹ Information provided by the Programme Director for English for all Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman in an interview with the author.

that it was on the basis of information provided by the MOHE that decisions regarding textbook selection, curriculum development and assessment were made.

The academic year 2005/2006 was the first year of operation as the College of Applied Science. This study took place during the academic year 2006-2007, the second year of operation as the College of Applied Science and the second year that the foundation year had been running. The foundation year had been introduced as a result of the decision to move all teaching in the college from Arabic to English.

2.6 Foundation year programme

The ELC of the degree programmes is what this study is concerned with. With respect to the ELC, UVW in a document prepared for the Colleges to outline their vision for the new programmes say the following

English courses: Total proposed student workload is 1000 hours. The aim would be to achieve IELTS 6.0 at the end of year 2. Thus a considerable emphasis would be given to English language skills in year 1 and 2. Remedial summer courses might be offered to students who are not able to achieve this level of English at the end of year 2. English would still be taught in Year 3 and Year 4, but with reduced contact hours and student workload.

In the foundation year students had a total of 24 contact hours of which 20 were English language lessons. In the first year that the course was run, 2005/6, there were four hours each devoted to reading, speaking and listening, five hours for writing and three hours for grammar. The following year, the year in which this study is based, saw a slight change where writing and reading were given more hours and speaking and listening less. The schedule thus had students studying writing for eight hours,

reading for six hours, speaking for three hours and listening for four hours. This suggests a focus on writing and reading as these were seen to be the key skills for academic study at undergraduate level. There were no entry criteria to the foundation programme: anybody who applied was given a place. The result of this was that there was an extremely wide range of students entering the programme, from those proficient in English to those who, in all reality, required English language teaching from the very beginning.

The following information was taken from internal CASS documents and information delivered to the researcher first hand verbally by CASS administrative staff. The structure of the foundation year followed the standard academic year in Oman with two seventeen week semesters and a two week block for final exams. With students studying 22 hours of English weekly the total number of teaching hours was approximately 680 hours per annum: an approximate figure due to the fact that with the programme being new there were ongoing changes, mostly of a minor nature, that would slightly alter the number of instructional hours per week or the number of teaching weeks per semester. The number of hours of instruction the students receive is relevant when considering the aims of the programme. Students must record an IELTS or IELTS equivalent score of 4.5 or higher to progress to the degree programme in their chosen discipline. The programme does not oblige students to achieve an official IELTS score and indeed the students in the Colleges of Applied Sciences will have their exam marks converted to an IELTS equivalent by the Colleges without having to take the IELTS exam. This allows for a greater degree of ‘flexibility’ which essentially means the ability to curve grades to ensure a large number of students did not fail to score the necessary score of 4.5 or higher.

The English language courses were built around a set of textbooks called *Skills in English* published by Garnet Education, a British publishing company, and written by Terry and Anna Phillips and authored, it appears, with the Middle East market in mind. The text is designed to be used in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses and has been written to be culture friendly for the Middle East region. By culture friendly what is meant is that there are no references to what could be considered taboo subjects such as the drinking of alcohol, dating, pubs and nightclubs etc some of which are found in similar textbooks by other authors or publishers. Teachers were free to supplement their teaching with any extra resources but only on condition that the necessary chapters in the textbook were covered since all exams were based on the *Skills for English* textbooks.

Since students are not IELTS tested on admission to the foundation programme it is difficult to say with precision whether 680 hours of instruction is sufficient for them to graduate with an IELTS score of 6, but certainly it is an issue of paramount importance. This will be discussed later in the study when evaluating the efficacy of the foundation programme in meeting its objectives.

2.7 In-sessional courses

The in-sessional English courses run throughout the course of the degree programme with decreasing number of hours per year, so that there are a greater number of instructional hours in the first year of the degree programme and less in the second year and so on. Students entering the in-sessional programme have, or are supposed to have, an IELTS score of 4.5 or higher. As mentioned previously, since the majority of students enter the first year with an IELTS *equivalent* exam the actual English language proficiency of the students is highly debateable.

During the in-session programme students study ten hours of EAP for the duration of the two semesters, usually of 16 or 17 weeks length each. The courses are designed to support students with academic English as they will study their degree programmes in English, although there was limited if any formal coordination between the degree programme faculty and the English language teachers. What is meant by formal coordination is that the courses were not divided according to the degree the students were taking, so students majoring in IT and design for example would be in the same English class thus removing the possibility of teaching being degree specific such that those studying for a degree in IT would receive English language tuition tailored specifically for that.

As with the foundation programme the curriculum for the in-session courses was designed around the *Skills in English* series by Phillips and Phillips. The Skills in English series at the intermediate and advanced level contained a large degree of academic English and work directly related to academic study such as note taking in a lecture, proposal writing, essay structure etc. Teachers were allowed to supplement the textbook with their own material on the condition that all the relevant chapters in the textbook were covered since all exams were based on the textbook.

2.8 Course design

The course was designed in its entirety by VUW as mentioned above. Here a few details of that design of particular interest will be noted. Whilst the course itself was primarily textbook based, using the Skills in English series, there were a number of additional, what will be called addendums, to the curriculum. One of these was *issue logs*, which were transplanted directly from the VUW English language curriculum.

Issue logs are defined by Nation (2005), a faculty member of VUW as being an aid to develop speed reading

At the beginning of a language course the learners each decide on a topic that they will research each week. Each learner should have a different topic. The topics can include pollution, global warming, oil, traffic accidents, the stock market etc. Each week the learners find newspaper reports, magazine articles, academic texts, information from the Internet, television reports etc. on their topic and write a brief summary. Because they are reading lots of material on the same topic, they will soon be in control of the relevant vocabulary and will bring a lot of background knowledge to what they read (p. 11).

From meetings with teachers the researcher discovered that the majority found great difficulty in implementing the issue logs due to their academic nature. What occurred was widespread plagiarism, as students struggled to compile a piece of original research having never before in their education been asked to do anything resembling this. Perhaps the main difficulty for students was that they did not have the language skills necessary to articulate themselves in an academic paper.

The second addendum to the curriculum was a number of assignments students were expected to complete. These resembled the *issue logs* but were not as structured and required students to produce two 800 word assignments over the course of one semester. Again, like the *issue logs*, the Colleges found great difficulty with the assignments and what was observed was the lack of any original work and in its place large scale plagiarism. The problem with the assignments was that the majority of students simply did not have the language skills necessary to write an 800 word assignment on a subject with which they had little or no familiarity.

The English Language Institute at VUW run English language proficiency programmes similar in nature to those they were consulted to provide at the CASS. VUW did modify the curriculum for the Omani context, though the modifications were slight. VUW did accept that using a medium of instruction that was not the L1 did require a different approach. They said the following in a document produced for the MOHE in Oman to outline their approach to the curriculum design process

One of the main challenges of introducing degree programmes in Oman with English as the medium of instruction is to achieve a balance between

- educating graduates with adequate English language skills,
- educating graduates with the required attributes and skills in the corresponding programme, and,
- managing student workload, i.e. limiting the length of a degree to 4 years with a reasonable weekly workload to students.

VUW suggested that the weekly student workload should not exceed 45 hours. This is approximately 10% higher than what is expected from students at VUW in New Zealand, but reflects the fact that students in Oman needed to develop additional English language skills. These 45 hours per week also included compulsory Omani courses, such as Business Arabic or Report Writing in Arabic.

2.9 Teaching staff

For the first year of the foundation programme the MOHE in Oman contracted teaching staff independently but for the second and subsequent years they contracted out the supply of teachers to two different companies: Hawthorn Language Centre and the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT). The two companies were given exclusive

recruitment rights in different colleges such that the two companies did not recruit for the same college. CfBT were the contracted company for the CASS. The country manager for CfBT during the academic year 2006-2007 when the field research for this study was undertaken will be identified as Mr CF. In an interview with this researcher he confirmed that the MOHE had contracted CfBT to provide native speaker English language teachers whose mother tongue was English. It may appear to be somewhat unnecessary to append the title native speaker teacher with the words whose mother tongue is English but, as shall be commented on later, this was to make it clear to CfBT that the MOHE wanted people whose first language was English. What this meant was open to debate and CfBT attempted to widen the meaning of the term native speaker and mother tongue such that several of the teachers employed by them were of Indian descent and may not have been what that the Ministry regarded as native speakers. Further discussion of this point follows in chapter three.

2.10 Organisational structure

There were 19 English language teachers (ELTs) at the CASS in the department of English. They reported to two co-ordinators, one for the foundation year and one for the in-sessional programmes. The coordinators were ELTs who had additional responsibilities with no extra remuneration but with less teaching hours. The two coordinators reported to the head of department (HOD) for English, a Syrian who had a doctorate from a UK university. The HOD reported to the Dean of the College who in turn reported to the Programme Directors for the different degree programmes and also to the programme director for the English programmes for curriculum related issues. The programme directors reported to coordinators in New Zealand. The programme director for English, Ms AD, reported to a member of faculty from VUW.

The different roles played by the aforementioned people are mentioned here in order to provide a reference for the reader. It is necessary to know who these people are and what role they played with respect to the CASS as they will be mentioned and quoted later in the study.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to outline the context in which this present study is located. The key points for this study are that the study is based during the academic year 2006-2007, the second year in which the foundation programme ran. The new foundation programmes were implemented in a number of Colleges of Applied Sciences. This study is based in the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah (CASS) in Oman.

Chapter Three

The Native speaker Fallacy

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to academically evaluate the ‘native speaker fallacy’, NSF. This fallacy has been defined by Phillipson as being the concept that ‘the ideal [language] teacher is a *native speaker*’ (1992, p. 193). The concept of the *native speaker* has been the focus of intense debate in recent academic commentary. The nature of the debate is varied and revolves around several axes. Aspects of the debate can be found in linguistics (Chomsky 1965, Cook 1999), lexicography (Paikeday 1985), sociolinguistics (Braine 1999, Llorca 2006) and applied linguistics (Davies 2003). Of these, this study is concerned with the sociolinguistic aspects of the debate.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first deals with definitions of the native speaker and Standard English. The following section then evaluates the arguments put forward by proponents of the native speaker fallacy, those who are essentially in favour of discriminating in favour of native speakers on various grounds. The section begins by looking at the concept of Standard English and the idea that it is the only standard of English that should be taught in English language classrooms. To support this idea the concept of the critical period hypothesis (CPH) is introduced which suggests that non-native speakers cannot attain native speaker competence after a certain age and hence are incapable of delivering Standard English (SE) as a model in the language classroom. This claim that non-native speakers are incapable of delivering SE as a model is made by Quirk (2003) in his taxonomy of Varieties of

English and is discussed further below. The final part of this section then evaluates student preferences with respect to the variety of language they wish to study in the language classroom.

The third section of the chapter outlines counter arguments to the native speaker fallacy. It begins by examining findings of the CPH and looks at the concept of near-native speakers. This is followed by an examination of the entire role and place of Standard English in the discourse of language teaching and applied linguistics. This starts by referring to Labov's acclaimed perceptions approximately forty years ago and then moves to evaluate what has become a movement in favour of World or International Englishes. The chapter ends with a conclusion highlighting the findings and relating them back to the original discussion of the native speaker fallacy and its contextual link with the College of Applied Sciences.

3.2 The *native speaker*: reality or construct?

The arguments against the existence of the *native speaker* come from a number of different angles. There are those who argue that it is merely a construct and those that view it as meaningless in the present age, having been reduced to redundancy after the emergence of World or International English (Kachru 1985). There are those who make a distinction between *native speakers* of a first and second language, and claim the latter cannot, by definition, exist. Finally there are those who seek to establish neologisms to replace the term *native speaker*, as an egalitarian means of ensuring a level playing field in ELT employment applications and/or as a means of updating academically what is seen to be an antiquated concept (Brutt-Griffler 2002). Each of these will be explored below in brief.

Perhaps the most well known of those who view the term *native speaker* as a construct, is the lexicographer Paikeday. His book entitled '*The Native Speaker is Dead*' (1985) leaves one under no illusion as to his conclusion on the existence of the *native speaker*. Paikeday proposes that similar to the word unicorn, the *native speaker* is little more than a shibboleth. Paikeday's thesis is that whilst the term *native speaker* does indeed exist as a lexical item, the difficulty in pinning down the exact meaning makes it difficult to reference in reality. When he says the *native speaker* is dead what he is saying is that any attempt at a precise definition is futile, comparing it to other lexical items such as 'The Abominable Snowman' or a unicorn which he refers to as 'arbitrary and elusive' concepts (p. 3). Paikeday is certainly not alone in taking the view that the *native speaker* is more construct than reality. John Myhill, professor of sociolinguistics at the University of Haifa in Israel, supports his assertion and says that '...the concept of '*native speaker*' is not a brute empirical fact but rather a social construct (2003, p. 78). He goes on to talk of the 'exaggerated significance' of the term in linguistics and sociolinguistics (ibid). The difficulty in what Paikeday and Myhill are saying is that whilst it is undoubtedly true that the *native speaker* is a difficult concept to articulate, its use is so ubiquitous in applied linguistics and linguistics and is such a central feature of ELT recruitment practice that any argument to suggest that it does not exist in reality is difficult to substantiate. Paikeday accepts the notion that being a *native speaker* is a key plank of ELT recruitment policy when he talks of people using a 'biased notion of *native speakership*' to discriminate in the ELT job market (ibid, p. 88).

Another difficulty with the removal of the term *native speaker* is the concept of norm. When a language is taught it necessarily must be based on some norm, which is a derivative of the language that has been used by *native speakers*, whether at the

present time or at some time in the past. This has been succinctly mentioned by Kerr when she rhetorically asks ‘If the *native speaker* norm is a fiction, where do we get the linguistic code we teach?’ (2003, p. 268). Her answer to that question would be the linguistic code, or a close derivative of it, which is used by *native speakers* of the language. This however does not always hold true, and certainly not for example with Arabic. The Arabic language, or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), holds only a tentative link with the language that is in use, in spoken discourse, in the Arab world. In this case though, the written language is based on MSA, although increasingly more vernacular is being used in written material in contemporary times. Even in this example, the grammatical structure of MSA is a derivative of classical Arabic, with the Quran especially being the standard by which grammar is measured. The Quran then would be seen to be a text written in the Arabic of the *native speaker*, although the discussion would very quickly move from the realm of linguistics to that of theology when discussing authorship of the Quran.

The possibility of abandoning the term *native speaker* as advocated by Paikeday is a problematic conclusion to the problem of definition and raises a philosophical question of how lexical items are defined in a language. Neologisms enter the English language on an almost daily basis. To google is an infinitive very few people would have envisioned finding in the OED, but it is now entrenched in modern discourse. Bearing this in mind, and taking into consideration the fact that the *native speaker* is an item of vocabulary that is ubiquitous in modern applied linguistics and linguistic discourse, any attempt to remove it altogether from the lexis of English would be futile. A more nuanced approach may involve the alteration of the definition, although how the definition of any given lexical item can be altered when it is in widespread use is difficult to understand. What could be proposed is the

emergence of a neologism to replace the concept of the *native speaker*, such that the term *native speaker* remains intact but over time is phased out in favour of more relevant lexical items. Below the history of the term *native speaker* is examined, and an attempt to establish a working definition is proposed.

3.2.1 Initial definitions

Establishing a definition of a *native speaker* is no easy matter, it is one of those cases where everybody knows what is meant without being able to articulate a definition. As Valdés suggests, the concept of the *native speaker* is extremely complex (1993). A very early definition of the concept of the *native speaker* was given by Bloomfield (1933) thus:

The first language a human being learns to speak is his native language, he is a *native speaker* of this language (p. 43).

According to the encyclopaedic dictionary of applied linguistics a *native speaker*

...is traditionally considered to be a person who, having acquired a language in infancy, has expertise and intuitions about its grammaticality, uses it automatically, accurately, and creatively, and identifies with a community in which it is spoken (Johnson and Johnson 1999, p. 227).

The Longman Dictionary of Language and Teaching and Applied Linguistics defines the *native speaker* as

a person who learns a language as a child and continues to use it fluently as a dominant language (Richards and Schmidt 2002, p. 351).

According to UNESCO, the native language is:

the language which a person has acquired in early years and which normally has become his natural instrument of thought and communication”

(Kamwangamalu 2005, p. 735).

The concept of the *native speaker* being one who learnt a language at a young age has also been mentioned in several other works (Tay 1982, Hamers & Blanc 1989 both cited in Davies 2003, Kachru and Nelson 1996, Llamas et al 2007). There appears to be two strongly supported parts of the *native speaker* definition. The first of these is that the native language is something the *native speaker* gains at a young age, before the process of maturity, as Cook says ‘Someone who did not learn a language in childhood cannot be a *native speaker* of that language (1999, p. 187). The second is the fact that ‘a person is a *native speaker* of the language learnt first’ (ibid). Based on the aforementioned definitions the *native speaker of English* is defined in similar terms and the following definition was used in the questionnaires that form part of this study: ‘someone whose first language is English and who learnt English as a young child and continues to use it’. It is important to clarify the term ‘first’ in the above definition. This does not refer to chronological order, such that, for example, if a child learnt Spanish whilst residing in Spain and then moved at the age of three to China and learnt Mandarin, only the former is considered their native language. On the contrary, in this example both Mandarin and English will be considered that child’s native languages. The term *first* in the definition above is used to refer to cases where a language, or several languages, is learnt in childhood and then another language is learnt later in adulthood. The case of a Spanish professor who moves to Germany to lecture at university and learns German is an example of this. Here the professor is a native speaker of Spanish which would be considered to be her first

language. Wherever the term *native speaker* is used in this study, it is to the aforementioned definition that it is referring.

The relevance of the aforementioned discussion to this present thesis is the issue of ownership; who has the right, if anybody, to call themselves a *native speaker*?

Ordinarily this would appear to be a somewhat pedantic and abstract discussion.

Does it really matter, for instance, if a politician like Arnold Schwarzenegger is a *native speaker* of English? Clearly the issue has not prevented him becoming one of the most powerful politicians in America. There are however some professions where being counted amongst *native speakers* of a language is the key to employment and language teaching is one of them. Accounts of discrimination against non *native speakers* in the language teaching profession have been well documented (e.g. Canagarajah 1999, Braine 1999, Train 2003, Liu 2006) and in language teaching being a *native speaker* is a key concern of teachers and employers. It is this concern, this evident discrimination, this fascination by the second language teaching fraternity with the concept of what Holliday calls ‘native-speakerism’ (2005, p. 6), which he defines as being the idea that *native speakers* of a language, in this case English, represent ‘the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology (ibid), that informs the discussion here. Holliday goes on to say that ‘native-speakerism is specific to TESOL’ (ibid, p. 17) though his claim is highly debateable with other second languages appearing to suffer from the same form of native-speakerism. Koike and Liskin-Gasparro (1999) provide an example of how the same form of native speakerism exists with Spanish teaching in the US. Valdes (1998) also provides examples of how the phenomenon exists in French departments. When we speak, therefore, of the *native speaker* fallacy in ELT we are speaking of the idea that those people for whom English is their first language and who learnt

English as a child are intrinsically better at teaching English than their non-*native speaker* counterparts. It is to testing this concept that we now turn.

3.3 The native speaker fallacy deconstructed

Phillipson elaborates the *native speaker* fallacy as being the idea that

...the ideal teacher is a *native speaker*, somebody with *native speaker* proficiency in English who can serve as a model for the pupils (1992, p. 192).

Phillipson's definition of the fallacy is misleading in one sense, in that it suggests that employers value *native speakers* equally with those who have 'native speaker proficiency'. It will be argued here that this is not the case and that when many educational institutions are advertising for *native speakers* they do not include within that near *native speakers*, or those with *native speaker* proficiency who are not strictly speaking *native speakers*. Hence, the fallacy should read '...the ideal teacher is a *native speaker* who can serve as a model for the pupils'.

The NSF appears in various forms, for example Long (1981) says that '...participation in conversation with NSs [*native speakers*]..., is the necessary and sufficient condition for SLA' (p. 275). Elsewhere in Firth and Wagner we find the following '... the NS [*native speaker*] is a seemingly omniscient figure' (1997, p. 291). Phillipson argues that the fallacy posits that *native speaker* teachers are favoured because they possess

...a greater facility in demonstrating fluent, idiomatically appropriate language, in appreciating the cultural connotations of the language, and...in being the final arbiter of the acceptability of any given sample of language (1992, p. 194).

The *native speaker* is 'brought into the picture as the definitive object of comparison' (Firth and Wagner 1997, p. 292). Although it has been almost twenty years since Phillipson's seminal work, the concept continues to hold relevance, with the native speaker continuing to hold 'a privileged position...representing both the model speaker and the ideal teacher' (Clark and Paran 2007, p. 407). Brutt-Griffler and Samimy confirm the pervasiveness of the fallacy saying 'the notion that the *native speaker* of English is the best teacher remains a fundamental tenet of the field [of ELT]' (2001, p. 99). A result of this 'privilege' is that *native speakers* without teaching qualifications or with short weekend or month long TEFL certificates are more likely to be hired than qualified and experienced non *native speakers* (Amin 1999, Benke and Medgyes 2006, Braine 1999, Canagarajah 1999, Mahboob 2005, Phillipson 1992a, 1992b, Rampton 1996, Rosie 2002). Exact statistics highlighting the nature of the discrimination outside of the 'centre' countries are difficult to come by and certainly this represents one area of future study that is required. Two recent studies have shown the nature of the discrimination in both the United States and the United Kingdom. Mahboob et al (2004) showed the negative correlation between the importance administrators attached to the quality of being a *native speaker* and the percentage of non-*native speaker* teachers employed. A similar situation has been shown to exist in the UK, where being a *native speaker* was viewed as an important employment consideration at over 70% of the institutions that took part in one study (Clark and Paran 2007).

The question that needs asking here, to test whether the *native speaker* fallacy is indeed a fallacy, is why *native speakers* are preferred over their non-native speaking colleagues. The main argument here, essentially Chomskyan in nature, is that *native speakers* are the final arbiters of language; it is they alone who can decide the

acceptability of any given sample of language (Chomsky 1965). Alongside this, is the concept that the standard form of a language, in this case English, is the only viable model of the English language. Analysis of the aforementioned two concepts forms the basis of the next section of this chapter.

3.3.1 The standard language

Is there such a thing as Standard English and is it something that applied linguistics should concern itself with? Bearing in mind Spolsky's comment that one of the principle gaps in linguistics is 'the failure to deal with variation' (2005) this is a question worth asking. Certainly the question is of much contemporary debate, not only of the existence of Standard English, or not, but also the place of any such standard in the language classroom (Zimmerman 2007). An analogy provided by Widdowson likens Standard English to different brands of cola, 'There are all kinds of cola, but only one is the real thing' (1994, p. 378). Widdowson said this tongue firmly in cheek but is Standard English the same as any other variety or quintessentially different? In this section the concept of Standard English and its role in applied linguistics discourse will be explored. Before embarking on that journey an interesting comparison of Standard English with Arabic will be mentioned.

English has evolved since it first began to establish itself as a serious alternative to French and Latin during the reign of King Henry V (Howatt 2004). In the intervening years English has moved from being a language of the commoner, unsuited to the discourses of the powerful and élite, to the lingua franca of the world business, economic and scholarly community. Part of this evolution has been the process of standardisation, particularly with respect to orthography and lexis such that whilst regional variations, particularly with respect to phonetics, exist the majority of the

lexicon is the same (Baugh and Cable 1951/2005, Crystal 2006, Howatt 2004). This differs from the diglossia present in Arabic where Arabs speak a low version of Arabic, whilst reading and writing a more standard version (Ryding 1991, Saiegh-Haddad 2003, Ferguson 1959). This is very different to the situation in English for a number of reasons and adds an interesting dimension to the debate. Pick up any English contemporary novel and the majority of the vocabulary, particularly with respect to everyday nouns, will match with everyday spoken English. However this is not the case with Arabic, where the written and spoken forms are ‘linguistically distant’ (Saiegh-Haddad 2007, p. 609). The difference can be explained in very simple terms. Educated Arabs from differing regions in the same country use completely different nouns to describe everyday objects and different verbs to describe different actions such that two educated speakers from different regions may find it difficult to communicate. In English, Standard English is related to the discourse of the educated. For anyone studying Arabic to access written material then the emphasis must be on Modern Standard Arabic, or MSA (referred to also as Classical Arabic or Literary Arabic). Colloquial Arabic, of the type used in everyday conversation and spoken by all *native speakers* of Arabic, is useless in this regard. The main reason for this is that MSA is markedly different at both the lexical, syntactic and morphosyntactic level from colloquial Arabic, which is essentially a spoken dialect. Classical Arabic, on the other hand, has not been a spoken language since the end of the Umayyad Caliphate in 750 AD (Rabin 1955). The Arabic lexis differs markedly between the high and low versions, between MSA and colloquial Arabic. As an example the word for a concrete noun like ‘bed’ differs in the two versions. In MSA the word is سرير (pronounced /sarīr/). In colloquial Arabic such a noun has several names; one example is the Levantine word تخت (pronounced /takht/).

Even when lexical items match between the high and low versions, they are phonologically altered (Saiegh-Haddad 2003). In MSA the word for roof or ceiling is سقف pronounced /saqf/. The same word is used in colloquial Arabic; however the phoneme ق, pronounced /qaf/, is replaced by a glottal stop, so the new word becomes /sa'f/. Again the variations are multifarious, each region having their own idiosyncratic phoneme alterations from classical Arabic.

For someone seeking to learn Arabic for academic reasons this vernacular lexis is useless since the variations are almost endless, differing from city to city at times within the same country and never being used in any academic, historical or even literary text. A similar situation holds true in other languages such as French. As Valdman says 'they [middle class *native speakers* of French in Valdman's study] expect educated foreigners to speak "better" than they do' (2003, p. 63). The French case, where foreigners speak what Valdman calls prestigious SF [standard or Parisian French] (ibid p. 71), resonates with the situation in Arabic where non-natives speak the classical or standard form far more fluently than most native Arabic speakers. The key difference between the two contexts is that SF is a live language that is used in society whereas classical Arabic has become more of a reference language, dominated in contemporary usage by local vernaculars and Modern Standard Arabic.

In English this is definitely not the case since the lexis amongst the vast majority of *native speakers* is identical, although as eminent an authority as Widdowson would differ, defining Standard English as being 'essentially a written variety' (1994, p. 380). Although it is accepted that differences in educated spoken discourse do exist between say, American English and British English, the lexis generally remains the same (Trudgill and Hannah 2002). A bed is a bed in American, British, Australian, New Zealand, South African and Canadian English. So whereas in the case of Arabic

a preference for non *native speakers* may exist for fear of the second language learner being taught and learning low, vernacular Arabic, if the teacher happened to be a *native speaker*, the opposite often holds true in English. The preference is for *native speakers* since they are perceived as being more accurate in their language use and hence can provide a more imitable model that can be used in everyday situations. And again unlike in Arabic where speaking standard Arabic is rarely the goal of any Arabic language learner in English Standard English is definitely seen as a desired outcome for the majority of English language learners. In the later data analysis it will be shown how the vast majority of students at the CASS aspired to *native speaker* proficiency. There are those however who argue that retention of any form of Standard English is an antiquated concept, what should be accepted is that multifarious forms of English exist, each being a standard in its own right, and each carrying the authenticity that was once reserved for Standard English. These Englishes, or World Englishes, as they are commonly referred to, have staunch supporters to the extent that they now even have their very own refereed academic journal called World Englishes. The question that arises at this stage of this discourse is, does such a thing as Standard English exist, such that *native speakers* of English carry an innate advantage over their non-native colleagues, as Medgyes (1999) believes?

3.3.2 Standard English- myth or reality?

3.3.2.1 Definitions

Merriam-Webster defines Standard English as

...the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional

differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood (Online dictionary, accessed 04/07/2010).

The OED online (accessed 04/07/2010) does not contain an entry for Standard English but interestingly when Standard English is inputted into the search box a result for Received Pronunciation is given. This is defined as:

the standard form of British English pronunciation, based on educated speech in southern England (OED online, accessed 04/07/2010)

Stevens defines Standard English as being

A particular dialect of English, being the only non-localized dialect, of global currency without significant variation, universally accepted as the appropriate educational target in teaching English; which may be spoken with an unrestricted choice of accent (Stevens 1983, p. 88).

The term standard was first used in reference to language in the 'early 18th century' (Crystal 2006, p. 35). Greenbaum traces the first use of the term Standard English to 1836, where it was understood to mean 'the consensus...of what educated speakers accept as correct' (Greenbaum 1990, p. 18 cited Davies 1999, p. 172). Although Trudgill (1999) claims that the definition of Standard English is a matter of dispute, the term itself appears to be self explanatory; Standard English is that English that has been Standardised in grammars and dictionaries. Of course it is necessary to add the caveat here that, as shall be shown, the standardisation was a totally informal affair, free of governmental authority, unlike the situation in France where an official

ministry was founded to protect French. When English replaced French and Latin as the lingua franca in the UK there was considerable disagreement over most aspects of the language and in particular orthography and phonetics. Both of these became standardised, with movements in spelling reform and phonetics throughout the 18th and 19th centuries.

English itself came to have a standardised form associated more or less with the educated classes (Howatt 2004, Crystal 2006). It is fair to say that when people today refer to Standard English it is to a formal language, phonetically, orthographically and lexically consistent with most common day grammars and dictionaries (Trudgill 1999). This is emphasized by UNESCO who say that ‘The standard form of a language is used by the educated classes of the community in formal speech and is taught in schools by means of grammars, reading books and dictionaries (UNESCO 1953, p. 10). The grammars in question were mainly prescriptive, and this remains the case today. However, dictionaries such as the Collins Cobuild are part of a recent trend to make dictionaries, at least, more descriptive so that they mirror everyday usage more closely.

3.3.2.2 In defence of Standard English

Lecturers, professors and teachers of language are generally expected to adhere to established standards in language classrooms and as a result Standard English, for the EFL or ESL classroom, is viewed as being the norm to which all classroom discourse must adhere (Zimmerman 2007). Quirk (1990²) puts forward a strong case in support of the teaching and learning of Standard English. He quotes from a UK

² Both this paper and Kachru’s response of 1991 were republished by OUP in book form entitled *Controversies in Applied Linguistics* with many other related journal articles. The book was published in 2006, hence the discrepancy between the original date of publication and the date used to reference quotes from both writers. The page numbers given here are those of the book and not the original articles.

governmental report which posits the learning of Standard English as the ‘right’ (2006, p. 10) of every child in the UK. He extrapolates the argument for the case of teaching English as a foreign language and English as a second language (EFL and ESL respectively). Returning to the theme outlined above of educated people managing and controlling the language, he says that regional differences, dialects and accents ‘disappear the higher up the socioeconomic scale he or she happens to be (ibid, p. 13). He claims that non-Standard varieties of English are ‘inherently unstable’ (ibid, p. 12). He quotes the Kingman report as saying that English language learners ‘command of Standard English is likely to increase their freedom and their career prospects’ (ibid, p. 15). His general thesis is that it is impossible to know whether different versions of English are legitimate varieties or simply failings in the educational process. It could be argued that the position in English is no different to any other subject, say maths or physics. An inability to grasp the concepts, or to master the formulae, does not give one the right or prerogative to alter these same formulae. Focusing on the EFL/ESL issue he states that

...the buoyant demand for native-speaking English teachers means that one occasionally finds, in Tokyo or Madrid, young men and women teaching English with only a (sic) minimal teacher training, indeed with little specialized education: they’re employed because, through accident of birth in Leeds or Los Angeles, they are *native speakers* of English. Not merely may their own English be far from Standard but they may have little respect for it and may well have absorbed (at second or third hand) the linguistic ethos that is simplified into the tenet that any English is as good as any other (2003, p. 17)

Quirk's thesis is centred around a taxonomy he produces to assist in the analysis of the Standard English debate. Reproduced below as figure 2 it purports to show a systematic breakdown of the various 'types' of English. His first classification is between use and user related. Use related is basically ESP; medical English is spoken by doctors all over the world and does not differ significantly from region to region. This is subdivided into content marked, where stress is on the content and subject matter as opposed to tone where stress lies on intonation such as in poetry (Quirk and Stein 1990).

The second classification is that of user related, and is concerned with variation marked by differences in language form (ibid, p. 49). This is subdivided into Ethnopolitical and linguistic. Ethnopolitical relates to instances when a language is used for political purposes, to further a political or social agenda as when, for example, a prize is awarded for an Indian English novel. Indian English is used here to denote any form of English used by an Indian to write a novel and is a political label as opposed to a linguistic one. Contrary to this is the linguistic node where distinctions are made exclusively on the basis of language. As shall be shown below, Kachru's definition of Asian English is a linguistic definition based on the thesis that people from the Asian subcontinent have similar grammatical and lexical structures when using English.³

³ Asian here refers to the Indian subcontinent

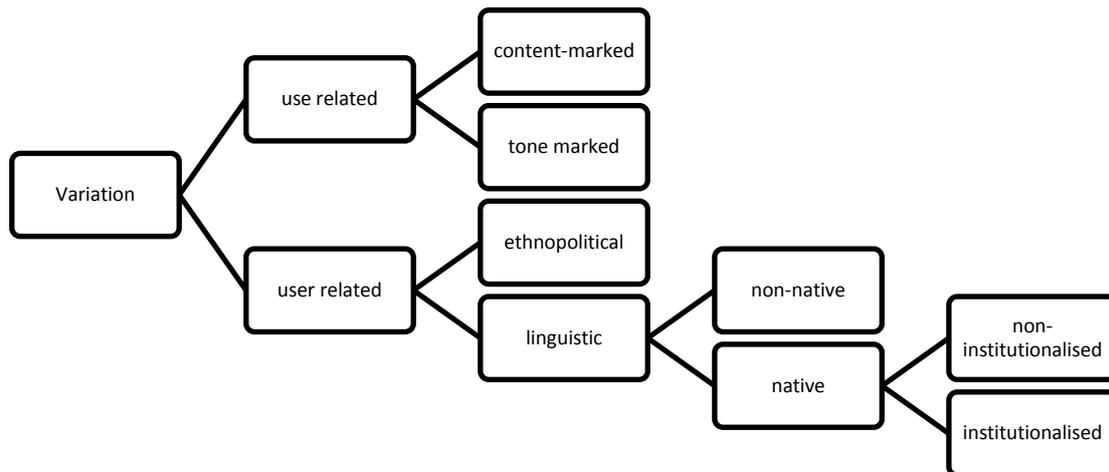


Figure 2

The linguistic node is then further subdivided into native and non-native varieties of the language. The final subdivision occurs at this point, at the pivotal section of the taxonomy as far as this present study is concerned. Native languages can be classified as being institutionalised varieties, such as American and British English, or non-institutionalised varieties such as Geordie English, Singlish (Singaporean English) or Hinglish (Hindi English). The criteria that differentiate between institutionalised and non-institutionalised varieties is not outlined by Quirk but he does suggest that factors such as having an established literary tradition, lexicography and institutionalised systems of spelling and pronunciation are key (ibid). However, Englishes that have all these characteristics such as Australian English may not pass Quirk's test of institutionalisation. The use of Australian English by Quirk as an example is interesting. As of the time of writing none of the major dictionaries (OED, Merriam-Webster, Collins English Dictionary, Cambridge English Dictionary) carried an entry for Australian English, though Webster's College Dictionary did have an entry for Australianism, defining it as 'a language feature characteristic of or peculiar to

Australian English' (2001, p. 90). The Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language (COCEL) defines Australian English as 'The English language as used in Australia' (McArthur 1998)⁴ A perusal of the history of English in Australia and the concept of Australian English reveals that it was not until the latter part of the last century that Australians themselves started believing in the concept of Australian English. The COCEL states that only in the past fifty years or so has the concept of Australian English 'been regarded as distinctly and respectably Australian, instead of as evidence of colonial decline from the norms of the STANDARD ENGLISH of England (capitals in original) (ibid). Delbridge suggests that 'the use of this term [Australian English] would surprise most Australians even now (1999, p. 259). The reason why Australians have been so hesitant to identify their own language as being a distinct, independent form of English, Quirk maintains, is that in officialdom and the media, British English is still very much the dominant form. Quirk wrote this in the nineties but according to Delbridge this is not the case and has not been the case for at least the last twenty years. An example of this move towards Australian English in official discourse is the decision by the Australian Broadcasting Commission's decision to adopt the Macquarie Dictionary as their English reference in 1981 (ibid, p. 263).

The purpose of highlighting the case of Australian English here is to demonstrate that declaring a form of English as being, in Quirk's taxonomy, institutionalised is no simple matter. If a country such as Australia, a native English speaking country which is essentially monolingual, excepting the 1% of speakers of Indigenous Australian languages (Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal People) then what about

⁴ "AUSTRALIAN ENGLISH" Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language. Ed. Tom McArthur. Oxford University Press, 1998. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Newcastle University. 5 March 2008
<<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t29.e131>>

a country such as India where English is the second or third language of some people, and certainly not all of the people? When deciding to move away from British English the Australians needed some form of standard to replace it. What they had was an entire nation speaking a language with specific similarities. This was brought together in the form of Australian English. There would need to be solid evidence from those that advocated the standardisation of other Englishes, that such a process would be possible and is indeed desirable. This latter point is important. In the initial debate about the legitimacy of Australian English as a replacement for British English, public opinion appeared against such a move. Australian English was identified with the English of 'uneducated people' (Delbridge 1999, p. 260). This resonates with Quirk's argument above, that non-standard Englishes are essentially the languages of the uneducated. This initial view was soon discarded, though Quirk clings to it even today. Again the difference and similarities with Indian English are worthy of note. Firstly, there is a distinct lack of evidence to suggest that any significant member of the non English speaking world have a greater preference for these new Englishes over British or American English. If the British Council in New Delhi were to begin offering courses in Indian English parallel to British English, it would be a surprise if the Indian English course received a single registrant. What remains in doubt here, is the link between what academics are saying and the ground realities. Talking about World Englishes and the institutionalisation of non-standard forms of language is fine, but ground realities are such that someone speaking a form of this language will necessarily be perceived as lacking in language education, rather than simply being a speaker of a newly institutionalised form of the language. This will be discussed further below, when the arguments of Kachru and those supporting the World Englishes project are dissected.

From the taxonomy above the linkage between the role of the *native speaker* and the standard language is clear. This is the most controversial aspect of what Quirk is saying. What can be seen above in fig.1 is that only the *native speaker* can speak the institutionalised variety of the language. In short, the *native speaker* is the only person that can serve as a model of the standard language. Quirk's belief in the superiority of the *native speaker* is predicated on Coppieters' (1987) study examining the difference between *native speakers* and what he calls the *near native speaker*. Near *native speakers* are those that have had extensive contact with the second language, in this case French, for a prolonged period such that it is often difficult to distinguish them in speech from *native speakers*. Coppieters found that there was a significant difference between *native speakers* and near *native speakers* in their understanding of French grammar, an example of which is his finding that near *native speakers* 'mentioned that they often felt uncertain as to which proposition to use [in a given context]' (p. 561). He concludes that 'the NS's [*native speakers*] and NNS's [*near native speakers*] studied here have developed significantly different grammars for French. In other words, a given language—French in this case—does NOT impose a specific underlying grammar on its speakers (p. 565). To put it simply, no matter how strenuously one applied oneself to the learning of a second language the grammar of that language will never become intuitive.

Coppieters results have not remained unchallenged. Birdsong (1992) produced results that cast doubts on the former's conclusion that second language learners could not aspire to the standard of a *native speaker*. Birdsong also calls into question Coppieters' research methodology in coming to his conclusions and claims that such methodological irregularities 'compromise its [Coppieters study] conclusions' (1992, p. 711). Birdsong raises a number of questions about Coppieters' methodology. An

example of this is Coppieters understanding that the 'scope of UG is formal areas of grammar' (ibid). Birdsong questions Coppieters implementation of this principle and his rendering of certain structures as being functional and not grammatical. How exactly is the difference between a functional form and a syntactical one articulated? Another criticism of Coppieters' methodology relates to his elicitation techniques which Birdsong claims lack consistency. Coppieters uses two different elicitation procedures which Birdsong claims invoke into the system a variable which could easily be seen to affect the results. Birdsong raises further objections regarding the standard used by Coppieters. Coppieters judged an utterance to be *native speaker* standard if a majority of the *native speakers* judged them as such. This ranged from 80% or more to anything over 50%. Clearly some benchmark figure would have been better here, a point Birdsong makes when he says 'Clearly, it would have been desirable to establish norms at a high level of NS agreement for all items' (ibid, p. 714). Birdsong's fourth criticism relates to the criteria that are used to select participation in the study for the *non-native speakers*. To qualify they had to be attested by friends to be of a near native standard. Such a criterion is derided by Birdsong as being 'imprecise and non-deterministic' (ibid, p. 715). The last of Birdsong's criticisms relates to the backgrounds of the participants in the study. There is a clear qualitative difference in the two groups, native and non-native, with the natives having some education whilst in contrast the non-natives were described as 'highly educated' (Coppieters 1987, p. 551).

The discussion between Birdsong and Coppieters is part of a more general discussion on the possibility of later learners of a second language reaching a *native speaker* standard. That possibility is discussed below with reference to the critical period hypothesis.

3.3.2.2.1 Critical period hypothesis

The critical period hypothesis (CPH) is the name given to the general concept that language learning takes place with greater efficacy when learners are young (Birdsong 2005, Van Boxtel et al 2005, Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson 2001). It relates to SLA, and to the discussion here, in that the theory posits that native like acquisition rarely takes place after a given ‘critical period’. What the CPH tries to do is to give a scientific reason why comments such as the following by Medgyes may be considered accurate for the majority of late second language learners

The main reason why non-natives cannot turn into natives lies in the fact that they are, by their very nature, norm-dependent. Their use of English is but an imitation of some form of native use. Just as epigons never become genuine artists, non-native speakers can never be as creative and original as those whom they have learnt to copy. Non-native speakers are ill at ease with using English accurately and appropriately, and their fluency does not come up to native levels, either. Their handicap is even more conspicuous when their English-language performance is compared to their mother-tongue performance (1992, p. 343).

There is significant disagreement over what the critical period in language leaning is and when the age of onset is, i.e. at what point learning the second language becomes more difficult (Singleton 2005). Various ages have been defined for the age of onset, e.g. age seven or eight (Diller 1981, Johnson and Newport 1989) or puberty (Van Boxtel et al 2005). Whether this is due to biological, cognitive or social forces is not of direct relevance here. The key point to take from the CPH debate that is relevant to this present study is the general conclusion that ‘nativelike proficiency in a second

language is unattainable' (Hyltenstam and Abrahamsson 2003, p. 578). Because only this result of the CPH discussion is of relevance here, it is not necessary to enter into a prolonged discussion of the merits of the CPH itself although it is worthy of note that some, for example Singleton (2005), instil doubt into the very concept of the CPH, dismissing it as neither a scientific hypothesis nor a falsifiable theory. The literature on the CPH does allow for the possibility that in some cases late second language learners could acquire language to the level of *native speakers*. Birdsong claims that 'two dozen studies' (e.g. White and Genesee 1996, Asher and Garcia 1969, Abu-Rabia and Kehat 2004) have contradicted the established CPH thesis in that they have found 'significant numbers' of second language learners who have attained *native speaker* proficiency (2005, p. 320). Despite the findings of those who claim that some second language learners may attain *native speaker* proficiency in the second language, the preponderance of evidence suggests that these are outliers or rare cases or that their achievements are 'exceptional' (Abu-Rabia and Kehat 2004, p. 77). Although Birdsong provides evidence of research which suggests that late second language learners can achieve a *native speaker* standard, he admits that 'the majority of L2 learners fall short of nativelikeness (2005, p. 320).

Notwithstanding the aforementioned differences and controversies, research on the CPH has generally resulted in two conclusions. Firstly, that the majority of language learners do not reach *native speaker* competence or proficiency. And secondly, that later learners of a language generally fare less well than earlier learners, although whether this is the result of nature or nurture is not as clear (Long 2005). Both of these conclusions would appear to support the general idea underpinning Quirk's argument, that *native speakers*, those that are raised as such, are the only people capable of delivering the language to the institutionalised standard. Clearly there may

be exceptional cases where individuals do manage to gain *native speaker* proficiency or very close to it, but in the vast majority of cases this does not hold true. In the case of English this means *native speakers* are, in the majority of cases, the best placed to provide a model of Standard English.

Since the majority of second language learners do not attain the standard of language associated with *native speakers* they cannot provide a model for the Standard language. Quirk's argument here, linking SE to native speakers is, as he accepts, 'controversial' (2003, p.13). The link he suggests between native speakers, the CPH and SE is based on a logical deduction he makes (see *ibid* p. 14) but remains controversial. The argument against this is that many of the CPH studies show that although the majority of non-*native speakers* cannot gain *native speaker* proficiency they can gain near *native speaker* proficiency.

The following sections examine the preferences of language learners and their preferences for the variety of language they are taught with a view to examining the academic veracity of these preferences.

3.3.2.2 Language students' language preference

Student attitudes towards language, and their preference in terms of the variety of language they wish to study and later acquire, are the subject of intense debate in contemporary applied linguistics discourse. When evaluating the arguments proposed by Kachru for the standardisation of various different varieties of English, including Asian English, it becomes necessary to consult the key protagonists in the debate, namely the students themselves. It is they who are ultimately affected by this discussion and it is their money, paid in fees to language schools and universities, which is driving the demand for English, which ultimately drives the debate forward.

Whilst this may appear to be a very narrow view of the EFL world, it is intentionally so in order to remain true to the context of this study, which is the teaching of English to university level students.

The latest academic commentary appears to support two major trends. The first of these is that students have a definite preference for US or UK English over localised forms such as Asian English (McKenzie 2008, Rubdy et al 2008, Schaub 2000, Kachru 1983, Dalton-Puffer et al 1997, Timmis 2002). The second is that this preference for UK or US English is shared by *native speakers* themselves (Coupland and Bishop 2007). The study by Coupland and Bishop is worthy of further discussion since the number of respondents was large (n=5010) and varied, in terms of geographical representation. The research was commissioned by the BBC and subsequently analysed by Coupland and Bishop and published in the Journal of Sociolinguistics. The survey questioned *native speakers* of English about the social attractiveness and the prestige of 34 different ‘varieties’ of English. Respondents were also asked to what extent it was important for people to ‘speak properly’. Standard English was rated the most socially attractive variety of English and the second most prestigious variety, behind Queen’s English. On the latter question of the necessity of people to speak properly, on a rating of one through seven, where seven was the highest, the mean response was 5.71. Clearly there was a strong positive answer; *native speakers* prefer other *native speakers* and non-*native speakers* to speak a standard form of the language. What properly meant was never defined, but when viewed in the context of the answer to the previous questions, it is possible to posit that Standard or Queen’s English is the model being referred to.

One other interesting finding from the study by Coupland and Bishop was that an accent identical to the respondents’ own was rated very highly, behind only Standard

English and Queen's English in prestige and second only to Standard English in social attractiveness. Similar results were obtained in a much earlier study by Giles (1970) who found that 'all regional accents have significantly less prestige value than R.P. (p. 225). When these results are compared to the results from other studies involving *non-native speakers* (e.g. McKenzie 2008, Kachru 1983) what becomes clear is that whilst *native speakers* think highly of their own accents or varieties of English, the same cannot be said for *non-native speakers* who generally favour more US or UK based varieties. This is not to suggest that no studies exist which propose support for non-standard accents or Englishes. Benson (1991) studied the attitudes of Japanese learners of English towards various accents and found that the second most popular accent was English with a Japanese accent. However, even in this study American or British English came top, thus enforcing the view that even students who value their own accent still place one of the standard varieties above their own.

Even language students who aspire to be English teachers have a preference for Standard English. Empirical studies find that future (non-native) EFL teachers in the Expanding Circle tend to prefer, identify with, and aspire to native English accents while looking down on their own local varieties (Dalton-Puffer, Kaltenboeck and Smit, 1997). Despite the proliferation of a World Englishes discourse, there still remains a 'desire among students to conform to native speaker norms' (Timmis 2002, p. 248).

3.3.2.2.3 Logical preferences?

Having established that a trend continues to exist in favour of English as used in native speaking countries, the next logical step would be to investigate why people have such a preference. There is limited academic literature on this point, but if

students were to favour Standard English over regional Englishes such as Singlish, as used in Singapore, or Hinglish as used in India for career reasons then that would make sense. Research suggests that non-native accents result in lower possibilities of landing a prestigious job (Atkins 1993, Carlson and McHenry 2006). Taken together with the studies mentioned previously whereby *native speakers* attach greater prestige to Standard English accents, the results of studies that support the assertion that accent matters in employment application lends credence to the argument of language students who favour studying Standard English. The studies investigating accent and employability do just that, they investigate *accent*, not language variety. It would be fair to conclude that if non-standard accents are discriminated against, then non-standard varieties would be discriminated against more. An interesting example of the debate between Standard English and a local variety is Singapore and the debate that exists between the use of the local variety of English, Singlish, and Standard English. Although Singapore differs from the context where this research is based, in Oman, it is included here as an example of a county where a debate exists between the local variety, Singlish, and SE and so can inform the reader about the different perspectives on SE and varieties of English.

The debate in Singapore between the use of the local variety of English, known as Singlish, and Standard English has proven contentious and is a good example of the difficulties faced in producing national policy in this area. The position of the government is clear and unambiguous; they favour Standard English strongly over Singlish. The former prime minister whilst still in office made the following comments in his National Day rally speech in 1999

If we want to be an education hub, attracting good students from the region, then we must provide a good English-speaking environment,

i.e. one where people speak Standard English, not Singlish. Our schools must teach Standard English, and our children must learn and speak Standard English...if we carry on using Singlish, the logical final outcome is that we too will develop our own type of Pidgin English, spoken only by 3 million Singaporeans, which the rest of the world will find quaint but incomprehensible (Goh 1999)

He continues later in his speech to commend the extreme measures taken by schools which include the fining of students found to be using Singlish (ibid). Prime Minister Goh then spends some time dissecting the negative effects of a particular TV character that happens to speak Singlish. For a Prime Minister to spend time in a national address to digress into the details of a TV comedy show is quite remarkable but displays the concern the political leadership had towards the burgeoning use of Singlish and their desire to promote the use of Standard English. The usual arguments are used in the promotion of Standard English: the need to communicate with the wider business and academic community and the need to speak a variety of English that is intelligible to the maximum number of people internationally. The latter point is articulated well by De Swaan (2001), a full discussion of which is below.

Language students who profess a preference for Standard English, or for Standard English accents such as RP are honest and when considered in the light of the research detailed above, make sense. Why study a variety of the language that *native speakers*, and *non-native speakers*, view as being less prestigious and socially attractive? It is here that some of the comments of Kachru and others dominating the World Englishes discourse appear at odds with their own practice. A reading of

Kachru's writing reveals that it is written in the most pristine of Standard English. As Quirk says

...the clerks (sic) themselves are careful to couch even their most skeptical remarks about standard language in precisely the standard language about which they are being skeptical. Disdain of élitism is a comfortable exercise for those who are themselves securely among the élite (1985, p. 6).

This view was echoed by Labov when he says

'Radical and revolutionary figures do not use non-standard grammar in public or print: on the contrary, they endorse the rules of grammar as strictly as the conservative journals do' (1969, p. 28).

Edge makes a similar point when he says

It is easy to slip into the imperial, or at least arrogant, mode when arguing that English-using radicals know better than English learners what is good for them (2008, p. 42).

And finally it is necessary to quote De Swaan who says the following

Language experts, of old the champions of language standardization and unification, have changed side en masse, they now defend the rights of the smaller languages and advocate the use of indigenous languages. Many of their arguments are spurious. As a matter of course, they are all phrased in English or one of the other supercentral languages that the experts command. On their part, those who are illiterate and know only their local languages

would dearly love to understand the pleas made so eloquently on their behalf (2001, p. 24).

The perspective on this issue provided by De Swaan (2001) is illuminating. He suggests that when a language student anywhere learns a language the key factor in the decision making process is the communication potential, which he labels as the Q value, provided by that language. He says 'it is assumed that given half a chance people will learn the language that provides them with greater communication advantage' (De Swaan 2001, p. 18). His thesis views languages as hypercollective goods operating in a global marketplace. He suggests that there are a number of global, what he calls, *super central* languages such as French and Arabic, which people may desire to learn because of the Q value they have. He then suggests that whilst there are a number of *super central* languages there is only one major global language that trumps all others, which he refers to as a *hypercentral* language; English. He then comments on the differing varieties of English, and concludes that the Q value of Standard English is invariably greater than that of any other variety and so the logical preference for any language student studying English would be to opt for SE. This raises the question of Q values of other varieties of English and whether these also would be greater than other languages. They may well be but the argument from De Swaan is that the Q value of SE will always be greater than the Q value of other varieties of English since it offers greater communication potential due to its greater intelligibility amongst English speakers. The assumption being that Singlish speakers can understand SE but non-Singlish speakers may not understand Singlish.

One of the most striking features of the debate about SE and differing varieties of English is that the very journal dedicated to World Englishes is published in Standard English. What comes across from the nature of the discourse on World Englishes is

that many of the advocates appear to adopt a double standard, articulating their own perspectives using the very Standard English that they rage against. An argument against this is that there are those who claim it is editors and copy-writers that control the content of books and journals etc, the so-called *gatekeepers* (Cameron 1995) and as such authors cannot be held to account for the final version of the article that appears in any journal for example. The reality however is that in contemporary written discourse editors do not hold the same degree of authority as they once did. A good example of this is provided by Cameron (*ibid*) who charts the change of tone of *The Times*' style guide from a period when stylistic issues were given *ex cathedra* and in a very peremptory fashion to writers to a more democratic situation, as outlined by Simon Jenkins, editor of *The Times* between 1990 and 1992, when he says that *The Times*' style guide 'is not a work of stylistic dictatorship' (Jenkins 1992, p. 251). Despite the work of gatekeepers it is difficult to imagine a situation where the majority of contributors of a journal such as *World Englishes* would want to allow publishing in, say, Indian English and the editors not allowing some flexibility, specifically when the journal itself is about non-standard languages.

This last point, regarding the choices made by academic themselves, returns the discussion back to the point at which this discourse on the *native speaker* fallacy began. What has been suggested above is that Standard English does exist and is unlikely to evanesce in the near future. The question remains as to why this is so. Standard English has its merits, the argument for retaining both exonormative and endonormative models are compelling. Exonormative varieties of English are those that depend on another community, whilst endonormative varieties do not (McArthur 1998). Yet there is one aspect of the debate, lost in the discussion of *World Englishes* and new standards, and that is the very ability of non-native language teachers to

deliver language lessons in Standard English. If the demand for the Standard language is so strong, then surely the debate should be about the ability of non-*native speakers* to deliver this. This returns the discussion back to the CPH but here it is enough to suggest it is not necessary for non-*native speakers* to even contemplate the possibility of attaining *native speaker* proficiency. What they can deliver is Standard English at a level that is acceptable to all parties concerned. This is a more realistic approach than those who call for the Standardisation of new varieties of English whilst at the same time couching their own discourse in Standard English.

As will be discussed later, in the discussion of the questionnaire results at the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah, Oman (CASS) the students have a strong preference for *native speaker* teachers. It is here, having discussed the matter at length, that we return to Phillipson's thesis on imperialism. The fact that Standard English does exist, that it can be viewed as desirable and the fact that a preference for Standard English is an acceptable choice have been suggested above. The charge then of linguistic imperialism would not then follow from there. It would follow from the fact that there is a view that is propagated, a view shared by faculty and students in institutions the world over, that non-*native speakers* are incapable of delivering Standard English in classroom teaching. This view, based on age old prejudices and not on any established research, needs countering. Unfortunately the terms of the debate are coloured by the inconsistency of those who choose not to use the varieties of language they praise, choosing instead to phrase their discourse in the very Standard they seek to marginalize. It is very possible to hark back to a different age, when the superiority of Standard English from a poetic perspective was articulated without any hindrance of an impending charge of elitism. It is possible to agree with Wyld writing back in 1934 that Standard English is superior in sonority and beauty

than other varieties, in the same way a preference for one model of car over another or one artist over another can be expressed. Why is it assumed that non-*native speakers* cannot deliver something of this sonority and beauty? It is found here that the desire by ‘liberals’ pushing ‘liberation linguistics’ is disingenuous not only from the perspective of those from the non-native speaking world, who wish to either teach or study the Standard language, but from the perspective of the choices they themselves have made with respect to their own language endeavours; they all choose to couch their criticisms in Standard English.

3.3.2.3 Rebuttals to the *native speaker* only argument

Standard English has been an issue of concern in several different contexts and it would be a mistake to link them together in a simplistic fashion that would ignore the complexities of the issues at hand. In the US, Standard English has historically been discussed with reference to the African American community and their underachievement at school and college. Work by Labov, perhaps America’s leading dialectologist, (1969, 1972) has highlighted the structured nature of African American English and how it differs from Standard English. His argument, similar to what Kachru is saying, is that difference does not imply deficiency. Proponents of a World or International English refer to the differences as variations and the science of these differences as variation theory (Bhatt 1995). Quirk views it differently and refers to the same phenomena as ‘liberation linguistics’ and suggests that there is nothing liberating about this type of linguistics (Quirk 2003, p. 16).

Essentially the argument can be deconstructed into three areas. The first relates to the issue of near native competency, how close is the near-native to the standard language? Secondly there is the question of validity and recognition; are non-

Standard English forms really non-Standard? Finally, there is the question of preferences, since language students are the end consumer, do they prefer to study standard language and if so, is this a rational choice?

3.3.2.3.1 Near-native competence

There is very little clarity on what constitutes near-native competency (Koike and Liskin-Gasparro 1999, Valdés 1998). Koike and Liskin-Gasparro hypothesise that the term as it used in academic discourse was first used in the 1970's by the Foreign Service Institute, the language training arm of the US Department of State (Liskin-Gasparro 1999).

From the earlier discussion on the CPH it appears to be the case that the difference between native speaking competency and near native competency is small, usually resting on subtle points of grammar or nuances in the selection of particular lexical items. There is also a distinct lack of research as to what difference to a student's ability to learn a second language, if any, it makes to have a near native as opposed to a *native speaker* teacher, specifically in matters related to phonology, syntax, morphology, semantics and pragmatics (Valdés 1998).

3.3.2.3.2 The standardisation argument

The issue of adopting a model for English based on some standard has been around for at least the last five hundred years or so, as mentioned previously. What is relatively new however is the phenomenon that language varieties from non-native speaking countries should be institutionalised and regarded as standards in their own right. This debate has two contemporary branches. The first of these is a discussion based around the English in use in the United States within the African American community. This has been highlighted by Labov. Labov attempts to illustrate that, in

their use of non-standard forms, many members of the African American community display language creativity and discourse capabilities that are masked by their use of an alternative form of language (Labov 1972). The argument put forward by Labov is that the use of a non-standard form of language should not lead people to assume that people are uneducated and lacking in intelligence. His argument, which seems to mirror the argument put forward by proponents of World Englishes, is that it is an error to assume that non-standard forms of language used by some African Americans are a reflection of a lack of intelligence or ability. The language itself, Black English is viewed by some as being an inferior language to Standard English: 'If Black English is contrasted with any of the regional forms of English it can only be judged to be a disadvantaged, maddeningly inadequate, variety (Burchfield 1985 and 2003, p. 164). Labov refutes this perspective by using as an example the phrase 'They mine' as found in Black English. Labov skilfully articulates how this does not refer to the full form, '*they are mine*', but instead to the contracted form 'they're mine'. He argues that this 'zero form' is only used, in what he calls Black English Vernacular (BEV), to replace the contracted form and not the full form and that to use such a phrase as *they mine* in this way was part of a codified system of using a *zero form* to replace the *contracted form*

'requires a deep and intimate knowledge of English grammar and phonology... the adult or child who uses these rules must have formed at some level of psychological organization clear concepts of "tense markers," "verb phrase," "rule ordering," "sentence embedding", "pronoun," and many other grammatical categories which are essential parts of any logical system (Labov 1972, p. 17).

Goldstein (1987) takes Labov's ideas one step further by suggesting that some non-African-Americans, such as Hispanics or Latinos, consciously adopt BEV as an alternative to Standard English. Goldstein's pedagogical point was that English language teachers needed to be aware of the context of their teaching. Use of particular aspects of negative concord, for example, may be an error by a student trying to speak Standard English or it may be an intentional utterance by someone trying to speak BEV and as a result educators need to be aware of student choices.

The second and more voluminous of the strands of the standardisation debate relates to English as it is used in non-native English speaking countries such as India, Nigeria and Singapore. The latter of these, the case of English in Singapore, has been the subject of intense academic debate since the government declared English as the official language of government (Rubdy at al 2008). However, even in Singapore, the most Anglicized of all developing countries or areas, with the exception of Hong Kong, Standard British or American English still dominates (ibid). This would appear to cast doubt on Kachru's central thesis of language accommodation whereby new varieties of English gain acceptance in a four stage process as illustrated below in figure 3.

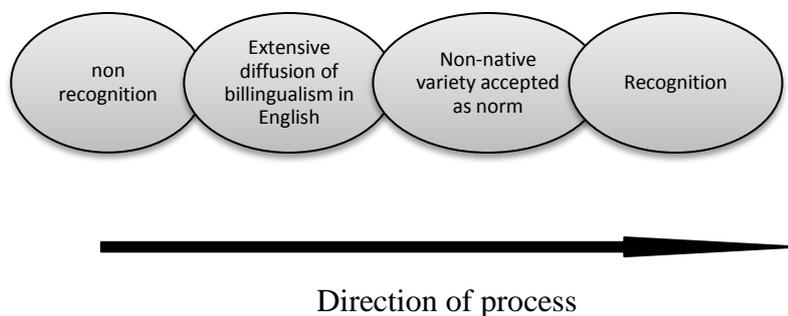


Figure 3

The diagram above, marked as Figure 3, represents Kachru's thesis about how final recognition would occur as a result of several, 'non exclusive' processes (Kachru 1983). According to this view, non-recognition of a variety would be the traditional position of a language in a non-native speaking country, for example English in India. Here Indian English begins the process of standardisation at the point where even use of the term *Indian English* is offensive and if one's English language were to be described as belonging to the Indian English variety it would be viewed as 'an ego cracking linguistic insult' (ibid, p. 40). Recognition would only be achieved after bilingualism became the norm and wider society began accepting the non-native variety as a valid standard alongside other native varieties. An alternative to Kachru's explanation of the different transition stages of varieties of English is offered by Schneider (2003) and depicted below in Fig 4 in diagrammatical form.

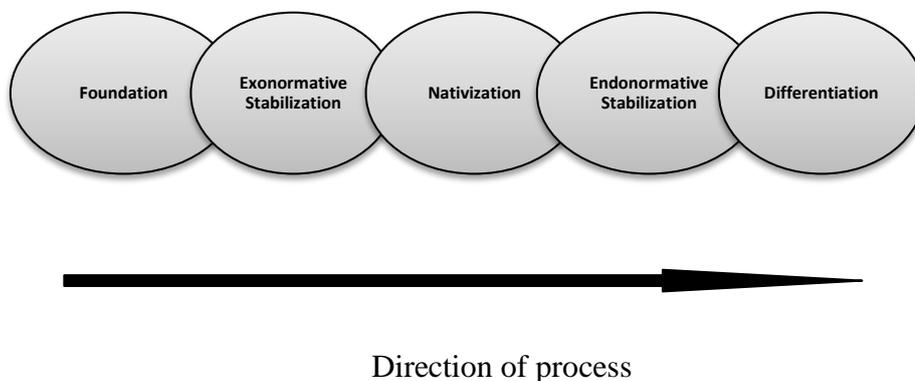


Figure 4

Schneider's thesis is based on the idea that New Englishes generally undergo a uniform process of development. This is a five stage process beginning with the *foundation* stage and ending with the *differentiation* stage. The foundation stage

occurs when a language is first introduced into an area by means of colonisation or military occupation. The languages of the colonised and the coloniser generally remain distinct with only a small proportion of either side interacting and hence the need for a lingua franca minimal. The second stage is that of *exonormative stabilization*, where ‘The external norm, usually written and spoken British English as used by educated speakers, is accepted as a linguistic standard of reference’ (Schneider 2003, p. 245). As the settlers and/or occupiers become more entrenched their ‘spoken form begins to move toward a local language form’ (ibid). This would include the adoption of various lexical items, usually for objects they encountered for the first time, such as flora and fauna. Examples include terms such as *banyan tree* and *mangrove tree* in Fiji English. As the local population begin to learn the language of the coloniser or occupier structural nativisation is said to occur. This is where there begins a process of transfer on the phonological and structure level from the indigenous language to that of the colonizers or occupiers. At this stage neither the colonizers/occupied nor the colonised/occupied consider the developing language as one worthy of special attention or consideration since the process of language development is still in its infancy. This stage is followed by what Schneider calls *nativisation*, where colonised or occupied states move towards a state of independence and hence the dependence on the coloniser or occupier for the model of language becomes less, articulated well by Greenbaum who says ‘Political independence is a precursor of linguistic independence’ (1996, p. 11 cited Schneider 2003, p. 247). The two strands of the language, that of the occupier or coloniser and that of the indigenous people become closely intertwined as a result of the loss of a model. This necessarily results in a language composed of both the local variety and the imposed model of the coloniser or occupier. This stage is followed by

endonormative stabilization, where the new variety of language begins to grow as an independent and unique form as the country begins to develop post-independence. This stage would include the production of dictionaries and other reference works in the new variety. The final stage in Schneider's model is called *differentiation*. This is the period of calm after the storm, when the language has been established and continues to develop as an independent variety. One of the key features of this period is the birth of dialects, which is a reflection of the view of citizens in the new independent state that they are not one homogenous entity, the 'other' defined in opposition to the coloniser or occupier, but are in fact a collection of heterogeneous peoples. The emergence of dialects assists to promote the cultural differences and allows for the expression of different identities.

Schneider's explanation is more comprehensive than Kachru's. The problem with Kachru's thesis, aside from the fact that as mentioned previously he himself does not appear to have accepted his own Indian English as being an acceptable norm to the extent that evidence of this is seen in his writings, is that there is little evidence that today, over twenty years after he proposed this model, it is close to fruition. Even in Singapore, where English is an official language, there remains a strong preference towards Standard US or UK English (Rubdy et al 2008). There appears to be somewhat of an interstice between the perception of some academics and the reality on the ground. Take the view expressed by Bruthiaux, for example, that it is mightily possible that in the year 2020 a new language called Singaporean may exist, with its own grammar and orthography and that this could in all reality replace US or UK English as the model, making it endonormative (Bruthiaux 2006). Bruthiaux's comments would appear to support the model proposed by Schneider more than Kachru's. The major criticism of both models is the idea that they both end at some

point, with Kachru at *recognition* and with Schneider at *differentiation*. This is a questionable claim and the reality would suggest that this is not really the case as far as New Englishes are concerned. It may be applicable to varieties of English, such as Australian English, that detached themselves from Standard English and developed into their own independent varieties but it is questionable whether such an endpoint exists for new varieties of English such as Indian English or Singlish. Schneider provides a number of case studies to demonstrate the different stages countries are in with respect to language development and the only countries at the final stage of differentiation are New Zealand and Australia. He has Singapore at the stage of endonormative stabilization which is highly contentious in the light of policy statements by leading Singaporean politicians advocating the use of Standard English as opposed to local varieties. One such example of this is comments made by the former Prime Minister who used his national day speech of 1999 to say the following

Most of us speak [English] with a Singaporean accent. We are so used to hearing it that we probably don't notice it. But we should speak a form of English that is understood by the British, Americans, Australians, and people around the world.

I know that many of us do not speak English perfectly. We studied in Chinese, Malay or Tamil schools, or came from non-English speaking homes even though we went to English schools. We cannot help it, and it is nothing to be ashamed of. But we should nurture the next generation to have higher standards of English than ourselves. We can help them by discouraging the use of Singlish, or at least not encouraging it.

(<http://www.moe.gov.sg/media/speeches/1999/sp270899.htm> accessed 06/06/2009).

These comments make it clear that Singapore is moving in the reverse direction to Schneider's model and that establishing local varieties of established colonial languages is as much a political issue as it is a linguistic one. Both Kachru's and Schneider's models are based on the assumption that the local variety will be accepted by the indigenous people. As is seen in the case of Singapore this is not necessarily the case. The major problem of both of the models above is that they presuppose a level of equality between the Standard form of a language and new developing varieties of that language. Applying this specifically to the case of English it is seen in the case of Singapore that the political leadership is of the view that Standard English is superior, from a pragmatic economic and business competitiveness perspective, to Singlish. A similar situation to Singapore exists in India, which has been cited as an example of a variety of language which appears to be moving along Schneider's model in a uniform model. Mukherjee (2007) argues that Indian English has moved along Schneider's continuum and currently resides at the *endonormative stabilization* phase. Yet despite the claim that Indian English is moving along Schneider's continuum, Mukherjee accepts that tensions do exist between those preferring to reverse the process such that Standard English is the model for the language and those that are pushing a new localized variety, '...present day Indian English is characterized both by innovative forces, leading to the emergence of local norms, and by conservative forces, which keep it more or less close to native varieties of English' (2007, p. 158). Mukherjee's contention here is that at the endonormative stage a steady state has developed that could go either way, back towards exonormative stabilization and dependence on Standard English as a model or forward towards differentiation. As has been stated above the arguments, as advanced by students and politicians such as the Singaporean Prime Minister, that Standard

English offers a more compelling case in terms of economic competitiveness, at both the individual and at macro level, are worthy of consideration. If someone studies a language for strictly utilitarian purposes it would be logical for that person to maximise their utility in that regard by studying the form of language that would lead to greatest utility, or the largest Q-value using De-Swaan's (2001) model. If studying Standard English, as has been commented on above, can lead to better career prospects it would be fair to say that the models proposed by both Schneider and Kachru may be inaccurate in describing the reality on the ground.

The preceding discussion intended to show the difficulty in suggesting that local varieties necessarily become institutionalised over time and would then become equal in status to Standard English. If this were true then native speakers of SE would no longer hold any advantage over non-native speakers and any discussion over the native speaker fallacy in countries such as Oman and in contexts such as the CASS would be less relevant and perhaps even redundant.

3.3.3 Linking the discussion to language teaching

The discussion above has been mainly theoretical, looking at aspects of language acquisition and critical periods, accent status and the battle for recognition of different values. The objective was to evaluate the native speaker fallacy. That fallacy posited that native speakers intrinsically make better language teachers. Although this thesis is concerned with the English language it has been shown that the debate is by no means limited to one language or one standard. The same discussion, the battle for recognition by non-native speakers, is taking place across all languages in language departments everywhere (e.g. Koike and Liskin-Gasparro 1999, Valdes 1998).

Linking together the preceding discussion, what has been suggested from the academic literature detailed above is that there is a strong preference amongst students for some form of Standard English as the model for their language learning endeavours. Having a standard accent, as has been shown, can positively affect employment prospects. The NSF posits that, building on these sentiments, the only language teacher capable of delivering language lessons where the model is Standard English is the *native speaker*. The CPH would posit that this is indeed the case. Late learners of a second language, as non-native language teachers are, rarely achieve *native speaker* standards as outlined above. What they can achieve, without any doubt, is near *native speaker* status. Thus in all of the CPH studies outlined above, what was not in doubt was the fact that whilst attaining proficiency equal to that of a *native speaker* may be beyond the vast majority of non-native language learners, they can get close (Montrul and Slabakova 2003). There may be instances of obscure grammatical points whereby they significantly differ from *native speakers*, but on the whole they can model the *native speaker*, or the standard language, competently to a large degree.

This leads back to comments alluded to earlier by Medgyes that the *native speaker* is perennially correct in intuitive language points (1999). What Medgyes is asserting is that the more fluent a non-native teacher is, the greater their understanding and comprehension of the language they are teaching, the more their teaching will benefit. It is here that those advocating a World Englishes paradigm are found wanting, in their desire to move away from standard languages what they fail to appreciate is that in languages, as in any other subject such as maths, physics or chemistry, there are degrees of proficiency. Those who undertake greater effort to acquire a higher standard of the language they aspire to teach should not be bracketed with those who

do not put in the same degree of effort; but this is essentially the conclusion reached by those advocating World Englishes concept. It does not view, nor value, the near native language teacher, the long hours of toil and labour and the commitment to the language this entails. Instead, all varieties are viewed equally, such that there appears little or no distinction between sloppy work and real variety. Once the flood gates of relativity are opened to the subject matter of language varieties, who is to say, and who can possibly carry the authority, to declare a mistake a mistake as opposed to an a different variety of English?

3.4 Conclusion

The *native speaker* fallacy, or NSF, posits that *native speakers* are the best candidates to deliver language lessons for it is they alone who have the propensity to deliver the standard language as a model for second language learners. Beginning with a discussion of the definitions of the *native speaker* and the standard language and then Standard English, this chapter sought to investigate the underpinnings of the NSF.

A detailed review of literature led to several conclusions being postulated. The first of these is that to hold that the standard language is superior to non-standard and non-native varieties is a valid position to hold. Such a view, held by native and non-*native speakers* and by scholars of second language acquisition would suggest that in the standard language there is a model that all second language learners should aspire to. There is one caveat to this, and this was highlighted in a discussion on the CPH, in that it is rare that *native speaker* competence is achieved by second language learners. Despite this, and the fact that the standard language may require many more hours of study, the clear preference for language students is for standard varieties. What the CPH posits, and other studies examining differences between near *native speakers*

and *native speakers*, is that late second language learners can get close to *native speaker* competence.

Combining the various different strands of the discussion above the conclusion drawn here with respect to the NSF are as follows. Firstly, that to wish or to desire to study or learn the standard language is the logical preference of language students everywhere. When studies that show a clear negative correlation between strong, non-standard accents and employment aspects and other studies which show *native speakers'* preference for standard accents and varieties are taken into account, second language instructors and academics in the field would do well to advocate the learning of a standard variety.

If students wish to study the standard language, the final question is one of delivery.

Who is competent to deliver the standard language in the classroom? From the evidence outlined in the section on the CPH, what becomes clear is that non-native language learners can aspire to standards close to those of *native speakers*. As such, non-native language teachers can provide a model of the standard language close to that of *native speakers*. Since many near native language learners and teachers are indistinguishable from *native speakers*, their ability to deliver the standard language should not be questioned if they can acquire the language to near native standards.

Here the wise and insightful comments by Medgyes (1999) are recalled that sought to emphasise the importance of proficiency in the language that a teacher teaches. Not all language teachers are equal, and those whose command of the language is greater have an advantage over other, less proficient teachers. That is not to say that they will be better teachers, but in delivering what students want, and being able to deliver the standard language, proficiency is key.

To conclude, if the students at the CASS have a preference always for *native speaker* teachers above non-native teachers, irrespective of language ability and irrespective of the degree to which non-*native speakers* can model the standard language then this would be a case of the NSF, and hence LI, in action. A quotation from Howatt is an apt to place to end this chapter

‘He [Henry Sweet] was a committed believer in the non-native-speaking teacher of languages: ‘For teaching Germans English, a phonetically trained German is far superior to an untrained Englishman, the latter being quite unable to communicate his knowledge; and this principle applies, of course, with equal force to the teaching of foreign languages in England’ (Sweet 1884, p. 583 cited Howatt 2004, p. 201).

Chapter Four

The L2 Fallacy

4.1 The L2 fallacy defined

Phillipson defines the monolingual fallacy, referred to in this study as the L2 fallacy, as being the belief that ‘the teaching of English as a foreign or second language should be entirely through the medium of English’ (1992, p. 185). Phillipson claims that the origin of the fallacy is an article by Gatenby in which he says ‘What is essential is that the language being studied should be as far as possible the sole medium of communication in any given environment’ (1950, p. 14 cited Phillipson 1992, p. 185). In this chapter the L2 fallacy will be examined in light of the latest academic commentary to determine its veracity. Macaro alludes to the existence of the fallacy when he suggests that ‘The hegemony of this principle [that the L1 must be avoided at all costs] would appear to stifle reflective [teaching] practice’ (Macaro 2001, p. 545). The fallacy is also the subject of an entire chapter in Canagarajah’s acclaimed work entitled *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism* (1999). He comments at the outset of chapter six on the ‘damaging’ and oppressive effects’ of practices that seek to exclude the L1 from the L2 classroom (Canagarajah 1999, p. 125). As in the preceding chapter on the native speaker fallacy, the L2 fallacy will be explored in detail before a conclusion is reached as to its veracity and relevance to this study. Essentially the question being asked here is ‘is the L2 fallacy in reality a fallacy and if so does it hold relevance to this study, and if so how?’ In order to answer these

questions there are a host of other questions that need to be answered relating to the fallacy itself and matters related to it.

4.2 Background and history

The L2 fallacy is rooted in the concept that language acquisition is maximized when instruction occurs exclusively through the L2. It advocated a policy of exclusion of the L1 and suggests that its inclusion in any instructional activity carries, in economic parlance, an opportunity cost which is the use of the L2 and this opportunity cost overrides any supposed or actual derived benefit. Despite Phillipson's claim that the L2 fallacy originates from an article in the 1950's by Gatenby the actual roots of the fallacy go back far further than that. If the basis of the fallacy is the idea that language instruction should be via the L2 alone then this idea is best associated with the Direct Method (Howatt 2004). The Direct Method resulted from industrialisation in the second half of the 19th century in response to a need for a method to teach language to large numbers of people who had not attended grammar schools and hence had little or no grammar competence (ibid). The Direct Method is well known for its reliance on the L2 (Larsen-Freeman 2000). As a method it was commercialised by Berlitz language centres, and placed heavy emphasis on behaviourist theories of language learning. The L1 was never to be used in the language learning process and all communication between teacher and student from the first lesson, even for the absolute beginner, was to be in the L2. The Direct Method was not alone in advocating an English only, or L2 only, policy. Howatt (2004) cites Jacotot in the early 19th century and Marcel in the mid 19th century and Vietor in the late 1880's all advocating a monolingual approach. All of these approaches relied on the basic idea

that maximising the use of L2 in teaching would lead to increased acquisition of the second language (ibid)

It was not only the Direct Method that viewed the L1 as persona non grata. Some of the 19th century reformers in language acquisition theory held the same view. As an example take this comment from Palmer, ‘Many of the [language acquisition theory] reformers and most of their disciples imagined ‘translation’ to be the root of the evil, and so translation in every sense or form was banned’, and as a result they believed that ‘there must be no bilingualism at all, and so the mother tongue must be excluded from the course, the lesson must be conducted entirely in the foreign language (Palmer 1922, p. 125). Palmer’s assertion is at odds with what Howatt (2004) claims. There he claims that the majority of reformers were in favour, of what he calls glossing, i.e. the translation of difficult items in class using the L1. Elsewhere, however, Howatt claims that the Reform Movement held as one of its central principles ‘the adoption of a basically monolingual teaching methodology through the use of the foreign language as the normal means of communication in the language classroom (2004, p. 155) and he quotes Viëtor, one of the four principal phoneticians in the Reform Movement, in his text *Der Sprachunterricht* as saying ‘it goes without saying that the foreign language should always be spoken in class (1886, p. 155 cited in Howatt 2004, p. 191). He does go on to add that ‘This never meant ‘banning’ the use of the mother tongue except in the more extreme versions of the Direct Method’ (ibid). The two apparently divergent views are easily reconciled by understanding that what Howatt is suggesting is that the Reform Movement held glossing to be a necessary part of language instruction but translation of wholesale passages to be totally indefensible;

‘Staying inside one language at a time’ [i.e. not translating large passages] seemed like common sense, but ‘banning’ the native language altogether was also rejected by teachers who saw much less harm in translating the odd word or phrase than in leaving the pupils to flounder around in imprecise guesswork (ibid, p. 192).

The phrase ‘much less harm’ suggests that teachers or theorists in the Reform Movement were not fully comfortable with the use of the L1 but there is no indication that there was any move to ban the L1 completely, as is the norm with the Direct Method. That being the case it becomes necessary to ask how use of the L1 in the L2 classroom became such a taboo subject.

The Reform Movement had the ‘primacy of speech’ and the ‘absolute primacy of the oral classroom’ (ibid, p. 189) as two of its three basic principles and as such it was no surprise that the focus was on the L2. If these were the aims of the reform movement, then what of the results? Palmer lists these as three:

- a) To promote the rational and systematic study of pronunciation by means of phonetic theory and transcription .
- b) To promote the idea that a language is used primarily as a means of communicating thoughts.
- c) To promote the idea that foreign languages should be learned by methods approximating to those by which we learn our native language (Palmer 1922, pp. 124-125).

It is the third of these results of the Reform Movement, or more precisely the pursuit of this, that led to the entrenchment of the idea that the L1 should not be used in language classroom. Today the idea of approximating the method for learning the L2

on the way the L1 is acquired immediately brings Krashen (e.g. 2003) to mind, but it was way before Krashen's time that Palmer suggests that the L1 was forced out of the language classroom. It was, Palmer believes, a result of a faulty diagnosis. Reacting to what they believed to be a fault in the Grammar-Translation method, Palmer suggests the reformers incorrectly identified the L1 as being the cause of all language learning ills. He suggests that targeting the L1 in this way was a 'red herring' and that its removal has not benefited the language learner:

...translation and the use of the mother tongue, as it turns out, are perfectly harmless and in many cases positively beneficial; the evil lay in the exaggerated attention which had always been paid to the grammatical construction; that was the dragon that the St. Georges might well have slain had not the red herring of 'translation' unfortunately been drawn across the track. As it was, the red herring was duly run down and annihilated, and the dragon still lives (ibid, p. 125).

Whilst the Reform Movement did stress the need for an oral method, with connected and related texts, this did not mean that traditional or grammar teaching methods were out of vogue. Writing in the first published volume and issue of *ELT Journal* in 1946 Hornby, after explaining de Saussure's classification of language into *langue* and *parole*, which he chose to translate as code and activity, puts forward the proposition that adult language learners learn best when dealing with code, i.e. grammars and dictionaries (Hornby 1946a).

Out of the Reform Movement sprang various teaching methods all seeking to revolutionise the language learning experience. One of these methods, the Direct Method, is said to be the main driving force behind the L2 fallacy; 'The conventional

wisdom that holds that monolingual teaching is the best way of getting bilingual results dates back a century at least and is a legacy of the Direct Method' (Widdowson 2001, p. 8). The general perception of the Direct Method is that it banished the L1 from the language learning classroom, 'The Direct Method has one very basic rule: No translation is allowed' (Larsen-Freeman 2000, p. 23). This perception was widely held during the Reform Movement, notwithstanding the fact that one of the key figures in the Movement, Henry Sweet, was strongly in favour of the use of translation (Sweet 1899, 1964). Consider the following comment by Mackin in the preface to Sweet's Practical Study of Languages;

The trouble [with the Direct Method] arose from the interpretation given by many teachers, and some national authorities, to the word Direct. For them the Direct Method meant: 'That method of teaching a foreign language in which the use of the mother tongue is totally excluded (Sweet 1899, p. iii).

Commenting on the Direct Method, Hornby (1946a) argues that it is not necessary for it to be understood as being anti-L1. He says that misunderstanding existed on the part of many of those using the term *direct*, for most people associate it with the banning of the L1 from the classroom. It is thus criticised since teachers are forced to spend large periods of time trying to explain a single lexical item, or point of grammar, which could easily be covered in seconds or minutes using the L1, a point articulated well by Cook 'Rather one minute of instructions in the L1 and 9 minutes in the L2 doing the task than 9 minutes in the L2 and 1 minute in the L2 doing the task' (Cook 2006, p. 59). A good example of what Cook is saying can be found in comments by a teacher in Macaro's (2001) study investigating the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. Here the teacher is explaining why, in a French class, she uses English in a given situation

The kids had the dice and the paper [in preparation for a particular activity]...I thought they're not understanding and they're not going to listen until I say it [in English] to them so they understand clearly (Macaro 2001, p. 539).

Macaro comments on this teacher's choice saying 'It is in the giving of procedural instructions that the gap between the ideal [of not using the L1] and the attainable is more pronounced' (ibid). Hornby (1946b) concludes that even though a teacher may be using the L1 in class they may still be using the Direct Method;

The British teacher who goes to India, Egypt or China, or any area where the language of his pupils is unknown to him, will teach English, often successfully, without using the language of his pupils. The Indian, Egyptian or Chinese teacher working with him will almost certainly make a considerable use of the vernacular. But he may well be using the Direct Method (p. 36).

He clarified the confusion by giving his own definition of the Direct Method, saying the word 'Direct' refers to any method which results in a 'close association between a new concept and the word' (ibid). Thus defined, in this very general way, it is easy to see how Hornby's Direct Method could utilise the L1. In a series of articles on linguistic pedagogy Hornby makes it explicitly clear that he favours the use of the L1; 'there comes a time when translation is more and more necessary' (ibid, p. 39). He describes procedures widely associated with the Direct Method of not using translation to define difficult to explain terms as being 'uneconomical of time' (1947c, p. 151). Finally he notes that 'translation...[is] a means of ensuring correct identification [of lexical items] (1947b).

Despite Hornby's comments and his attempt to re-define the Direct Method, it continues to be known as a method which excludes the L1. As stated earlier it is most closely related to the Berlitz language centre franchise which utilises the Direct Method in a manner that has proven to be extraordinarily successful from a commercial perspective.

Phillipson himself traces the L2 fallacy back to the report of the Commonwealth Conference on the Teaching of English as a Second Language which was held at the University College of Makerere in Uganda in 1961. Phillipson (1992) claims that the Makerere report recommended that the L1 be used only as a last resort. He goes on to talk about the extreme sanctions used against students who dared to venture into the L1 during class, including physical and psychological violence and quotes some of the more extreme positions adopted on bilingualism including the view of Michael West, who he describes as being one of the founding fathers of ELT, describing bilingualism as an 'inevitable disadvantage' (Phillipson 1992, p. 190). Colonialism also played a significant part in the evolution of the L2 fallacy according to Phillipson, with its disdain for native languages of conquered or occupied peoples. However, this linkage of the L2 fallacy with colonialism is not as clear cut as Phillipson suggests. There was, for example, at times a clear policy in India and Hong Kong under British colonial occupation of emphasising the L1. Whilst Phillipson is correct in stressing the negative attitude that the colonialists had for the L1, this would not necessarily correlate with a reduced emphasis. An 1854 dispatch from the East India Company, for example, outlining the education policy for occupied India states that the masses should be taught in the L1, not in English (Pennycook 1998). The idea is that teaching the colonised peoples in the L1 will result in an educated populace who will be easier to control

...while maintaining and promoting English education, can we not adopt a vernacular language, as a medium better suited than a strange tongue for the general diffusion of knowledge and the general reform of ideas, manners and morals of the people – cannot European enlightenment and civilisation be better taught through a language which is understood, than through one which is foreign and unknown and can never be acquired by the vast majority of the 140 millions of British India? (ibid, p. 92).

Whilst these passages, and Pennycook's analysis in general, do not discuss the specific point of L1 use in language instruction they do offer an alternative perspective to Phillipson's claim that it was as a direct result of a policy of marginalisation of the of native languages that the L2 fallacy spread. What would be fair to conclude would be that the L2 fallacy 'is highly functional in inducing a colonised consciousness (Phillipson 1992, p. 187).

Phillipson wrote his book in 1992 and the tone of his writing suggests that he believed that imperialism or perhaps neo-imperialism was and continues to be a motivating force behind the choices made by language planners, curriculum developers and indeed even language teachers. From the history outlined above it would surely be fair to conclude that the Direct Method, the most extreme form of which banished the L1, was not a derivative of any ideological movement other than one which had either the maximisation of language acquisition, or for the more cynical the maximisation of profit in the case of the Berlitz schools, as the main motivating force. What works against the theory that banning the use of L1 in the L2 classroom is simply a pedagogical decision based on language teaching or acquisition theory is the fact that many practitioners who would not describe themselves as being adherents of the Direct Method still favour a policy of excluding the L1 altogether. To understand if

that is a pedagogical or ideological decision would require an analysis of ELT history on this issue from a more contemporaneous perspective.

4.3 Contemporary history

The last fifty years have seen a number of different methods for learning language come to the fore. Below is an analysis of the role that the first language plays in each of the major methods that have come to prominence in that time period.

4.3.1 Grammar Translation

The grammar translation method, founded in Germany, was labelled as such by its detractors for what they perceived to be its excessive focus on two areas: grammar and translation (Howatt 2004, Richards and Rodgers 2001). The main feature of the grammar translation method was the use of sample sentences which students were required to translate into and out of the foreign language with a rigid focus on grammar rules (Richards and Rodgers 2001, Larsen-Freeman 2000). The first language always played a prominent role in the classroom with it being the main reference (Richards and Rodgers 2001) and also being the main language used in the classroom (Larsen-Freeman 2000). The grammar translation method was popular for about a hundred years, between the 1840's and 1940's and even today it continues to be used in many parts of the world (Richards and Rodgers 2001). With the move towards more communicative methods and the desire to focus on more inductive methods of language instruction the grammar translation has fallen by the wayside in mainstream methodology books such that translation is rarely used as a desired outcome in language classes.

4.3.2 The Direct Method

Details of the direct method have been mentioned in detail above and so it is unnecessary to mention them again here. The main point in connection to the use of the L1 is that, as has been mentioned previously, whilst the common perception is that the direct method banned the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom this is not actually the case all the time for whilst Larson-Freeman (2000) suggests that in the direct method 'The students' native language should not be used in the classroom' (p. 27) and Richards and Rodgers say that in the direct method 'Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language' (2001, p. 12) there is a dissenting voice in Hornby (1946a) who has been quoted above as suggesting that the direct method need not necessarily be anti-L1.

4.3.3 The Silent Way

The Silent Way which was designed by Caleb Gattegno relies on the teacher remaining silent as much as possible in the classroom. Theoretically it adopts a cognitive approach to language learning (Gattegno 1972) with a focus on structure, such as sentence level grammar (Richards and Rogers 2001). Whilst the Silent Way advocates a policy of maximising student talking in the class, the L1 is seen as a useful instrument, not only for classroom management, but also as a means to assist students to scaffold their learning, especially for lower level students

The students' native language can, however, be used to give instructions when necessary, to help a student improve his or her pronunciation for instance.

The native language is also used (at least at beginning levels of proficiency) during the feedback sessions. More important, knowledge students already

possess of their native language can be exploited by the teacher of the target language. For example, the teacher knows that many of the sounds in the students' native language will be familiar, if not identical, to sounds in the target language; he assumes, then, that he can build upon the existing knowledge to introduce the new sounds in the target language (Larson-Freeman 2000, p. 67).

4.3.4 Suggestopedia/Desuggestopedia

Suggestopedia, which was later renamed Desuggestopedia due to its emphasis on desuggesting psychological barriers to language learning, is based on the science of suggestology. Both suggestology and Suggestopedia were founded by Georgi Lozanov (Richards and Rogers 2001) who authored a report for UNESCO (Lozanov 1978) wherein he makes the claim that Suggestopedia can increase the speed at which a second language can be acquired by up to five times. Pedagogically there is room for the use of the first language as translation is actively encouraged, as in the following example, 'During the reading [of a given passage] students are able to refer to the translation in their mother tongue' (Lozanov and Gateva 1988, p. 93).

4.3.5 Community Language Learning

Community language learning, or CLL, was designed by Charles Curran and makes heavy use of the L1 (Richards and Rogers 2001). The method is a derivative of a teaching methodology called Counselling Learning which seeks to apply practices found in counselling to learning. CLL seeks to take those same counselling practices and apply them to language learning. The basic idea is that a relationship similar to that found in a counselling context, one of counselor and client, should exist in the

language classroom with the teacher taking the role of counselor with students as clients. The method makes use of translation of as a teaching tool both at the beginning a language activity, where initial *messages* to be translated are provided in the L1 and then later in the feedback stages where the L1 is used to clarify meanings (Curran 1976).

4.3.6 Total Physical Response

Total Physical Response, usually abbreviated to TPR, was developed by James Asher. The basic premise of the method is that learning the second language is similar to learning the first (Asher 1969), and for this reason is viewed as being a natural method, part of those supported by the body of evidence advanced by Krashen (Richards and Rogers 2001). The method invokes childhood experiences of learning the first language where children typically learn language through responding to actions, in particular in response to imperatives from parents such as eat, sit, walk etc. As a result the classroom where TPR is being used would oftentimes have a focus on the physical response to imperatives from students. Since TPR is part of the methods that are known as natural methods, there is little or no room for the use of the first language, even at beginner levels, ‘rarely would the native language be used [in TPR] (Larson-Freeman 2000, p. 115).

4.3.7 Communicative Language Teaching

Communicative language teaching, CLT, has been the single most dominant language teaching methodology of the past three decades (Howatt 2004). It continues to influence language teaching today more so than any other single teaching method, despite claims of its death (Bax 2003). It is the methodology of choice for short

duration teaching certificates such as the Certificate of English Language Teaching to Adults, the CELTA, the certificate of choice for many English language teaching professionals with 12,000 adults taking the course annually (Cambridge ESOL, 2009) As such, it is worth commenting in depth on the methodology, its origins, its current status in academic and teaching circles and its view on the role of the first language in the classroom utilising a CLT methodology.

The theoretical basis of CLT is that the objective of language teaching is communicative competence (Richards and Rogers 2001). Communicative competence here refers *not* to the ability to be a ‘competent communicator’ (Howatt 2004, p. 330) but instead to the theory articulated by Hymes in a modification or addition of Chomsky’s concept of competence which involves knowledge of and use of the language in a manner appropriate to context (Howatt 2004, Munby 1978, Spada 2007). Chomsky makes a distinction between *competence*; ‘the speaker-hearer’s knowledge of his language’ and *performance*; ‘the actual use of language in concrete situations’ (1965, p. 4). Hymes argued that Chomsky’s categories of competence and performance provided ‘no place for competency for language use’ (Munby 1978, p. 14). Hymes’ theory was more practical based than Chomsky’s and outlined the knowledge that a speaker needed in order to be able to function communicatively in society. The practical application of Hymes’ thesis was that the focus in language teaching should not be on grammar alone, and syntax specifically, as it had tended to be

Hymes’ work raised important questions about an exclusive focus on the accurate use of grammatical forms in L2 teaching when it was evident that knowledge of a language (first or second) includes knowing how to use forms appropriately in different contexts (Spada 2007, p. 273).

It is important to articulate here that whilst Hymes and others such as Firth (1957), Austin (1962) and Halliday (1973) amongst others articulated theories that would affect the development of CLT, they were not founders of CLT in the same way Caleb Gattegno was, for example, with the *Silent Way*. In this respect CLT has no single founder or designer and for this reason CLT has never been defined in the same way as other methods such as the Natural Approach of Krashen and Terrel (1983). CLT always has and continues to be seen as an approach to language teaching that could easily incorporate other methods (Spada 2007). It seems strange then that a method as loosely defined as CLT would not have room for the first language. Although the L1 is not excluded theoretically from CLT in the same way that it is *seen* to be for the Direct Method or TPR, its use remains controversial. This controversy is manifested, as an example, in the fact that the International Handbook of English Language Teaching has a section on misconceptions about CLT, one of which is the fact that ‘CLT means avoidance of the learners’ L1’ (Spada 2007, p. 277). The ambivalence towards the use of the L1 is seen in this quote from Larson-Freeman when commenting on the role of the L1 in CLT

Judicious use of the students' native language is permitted in CLT. However, whenever possible, the target language should be used not only during communicative activities, but also for explaining the activities to the students or in assigning homework. The students learn from these classroom management exchanges, too, and realize that the target language is a vehicle for communication, not just an object to be studied (2000, p. 132).

Most CLT literature makes little or no comment on the use of L1. This, according to Cook (2001) is typical of contemporary language teaching methodologies which he says ‘do not so much forbid the L1 as ignore its existence’ (p. 404). He also adds that

‘Most descriptions of methods treat the ideal classroom as having as little of the L1 as possible, essentially by omitting any reference to it (ibid). As an example, Munby’s *Communicative Syllabus Design* (1978) makes no mention of the L1 and its pedagogical value in the L2 classroom. Larsen-Freeman is most likely correct when she says that judicious use of the L1 is permitted in CLT. The idea is that unlike extreme understandings of the Direct Method there is nothing written in CLT methodology texts to suggest that the L1 should not be used but conversely there is nothing suggesting that it should be either; ‘Most teaching manuals take the avoidance of the L1 as so obvious that no classroom use of the L1 is ever mentioned’ (Cook 2001, p. 404). An argument could be advanced to suggest that the communicative aims of CLT are somewhat at odds with the use of the L1, in that communication in the L2 is maximised when its use in the classroom is maximised. This could lead some teachers into a dilemma in that, whilst they recognise the benefits of using the L1 at times, the opportunity cost of doing so, i.e. not using the L2, would lead to less input, something CLT advocates strongly in favour.

4.3.8 Conclusion

From the analysis above several conclusions can be drawn. The first of these is that no method was ever unanimously agreed to exclude the L1 from the language learning process. The one method that came closest to this was the Direct Method, but, as was observed, some of the giants of the Reform Movement were far from convinced that rejection of the use of the L1 was central to the Direct Method. Secondly, several other methods, including Krashen’s Natural Approach, have an ambiguous position regarding the use of the L1. Whilst on the one hand there was no unequivocal ban on the use of the L1, there was no outright support for the use of the

L1, and as such in post-Chomskyan times it is easy to see how some teachers may take literally the idea that second language acquisition is similar to first language acquisition and hence requires maximum exposure to the L2.

The question then remains, why is the L1 regarded with such suspicion? Perhaps the answer lies in the works of two giants in linguistics and applied linguistics, Noam Chomsky and Stephen Krashen.

4.4 Chomsky and Krashen

According to Canagarajah

Chomskyan linguistics denigrated the influence of L1 in SLA. By upholding native-speaker competence as the norm for linguistic communication, it failed to consider the ways in which the learner's first language can contribute to the uniqueness of his or her own second language, or co-exist with the L2 (1999, p. 127).

Chomsky's work on transformational generative grammar changed irrevocably the landscape of both linguistics and applied linguistics. In linguistics it led to a revolution in thought that led people away from the ideas of behaviourism towards more cognitive ways of understanding the acquisition of language. Some theorists, e.g. Krashen, have used Chomsky's concept of an internal language acquisition device to suggest that acquisition of a second language depended mainly on language input and the quality of that input although Krashen's interpretation is not correct in this respect since Chomsky himself made plain that his theoretical work applied to the acquisition of the L1; 'it should, however, be noted that Chomsky himself has not extended the theory [of universal grammar] to L2 learning, apart from occasional

scattered allusions’ (Cook 1985, p. 2). Despite the fact that Chomsky has made plain his desire not to enter the field of SLA, some have suggested that his work has had a negative effect because it idealizes away variation, performance, and especially bilingualism and hence is less suitable to SLA than it is to linguistics (Sridhar 1994, p. 801). Krashen, whose *Natural Approach* to language second language acquisition gained great popularity and notoriety in equal measure suggests that ‘[language] acquisition is based primarily on what we hear and understand’ (Krashen and Terrell 1983, p. 1). One of the principles upon which Krashen’s Natural Approach to language teaching is based is that ‘comprehension precedes production’ and hence the ‘instructor always uses the target language’ (ibid, p. 20). However, it would be erroneous to derive from this that Krashen was against the use of the L1 in class or that he favoured language immersion in the L1 for he makes the point that use of the L1 ‘facilitates early production’ (ibid, p. 46) and the use of the L1 is seen as a way of reducing a second language learners’ affective filter; where having a low affective filter ‘means that the performer is more “open” to the input (Krashen and Terrell 1983, p. 38). However, it would be fair to say that the methods Krashen advocates are primarily based on the assumption that the L2 will be the medium most, if not all, of the time of instruction in the second language classroom. The natural approach is said to be ‘based on the use of the language in communicative situations without recourse to the use of the native language’ (Krashen and Terrell 1983, p. 9). Levine comments on this passage by saying that the use of the term ‘recourse’ is indicative of the stigma attached to the use of the L1 in the natural approach (Levine 2003).

4.5 Urban myth or scientific theory?

From the preceding detailed examination of the history of ELT from the perspective

of the role of the L1, the only thing that could be said to have been established was that there was never, at any time, a clear consensus in any method of language teaching against the use of the L1 in the second language teaching classroom. As such, the next step would be to question the generally held view by many teachers that L1 use in the second language learning classroom is detrimental to the second language learning endeavour and to investigate if there is any evidence to support it.

4.6 Evidence to support the L2 fallacy

Surprisingly there are very few studies or academic papers that support the L2 fallacy. In fact, Atkinson (1993) goes so far as to suggest that no research existed to support the assertion that the L1 should *never* be used in the L2 classroom. An example of how little evidence there is in favour of the outright ban on the L1 in the L2 classroom is found in Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005). In their article examining the use of the L1, in this case Turkish, in the L2 classroom they include in their review of the literature a section headed '*literature opposing L1 use in L2 classrooms*' (p. 304). Under this heading they include only four studies (these are: Turnbull and Arnett (2002), Duff and Polio (1990) and (1994), Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) and Macdonald (1993)) that advocate the exclusion of the L1.⁵

The inclusion of these studies is highly debateable. Macdonald (1993) is a text about how to use the target language in class not a research study into the exclusion of the L1 from the L2 classroom. Macdonald does not engage in a discussion of the merits or demerits of using the L1 but rather seeks to provide ways of using the L2. As such

⁵ Üstünel and Seedhouse (2005) incorrectly include Cook (2001) under the heading *literature opposing L1 use in L2 classrooms* (p. 305), erroneously claiming that he advocates the non-use of the L1 in the L2 classroom when, as has been shown earlier in this chapter, he militates in favour of the exact opposite, i.e. the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom.

her inclusion in any list suggesting she is an advocate of the exclusion of the L1 would be contentious

The Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) is a brief literature review and does not contain any new research. Their conclusions from the literature review would suggest that they are not in favour of the exclusion of the L1, saying ‘In public and state schools and in centralized educational systems, where most if not all, teachers are non-native speakers of the second language, excluding the mother tongue simply does not work (p.231).

Turnbull and Arnett (2002) is also a literature review, though more extensive than the aforementioned Kharma and Hajjaj (1989) study. There is nothing in the article to suggest that the authors are in favour of the exclusion of the L1 and comment that ‘future research must determine...when it is acceptable and/or effective for teachers to draw on the students’ L1 (p. 211). This would suggest that they are cognizant of the fact that the L1 can have a beneficial impact if used in the right way.

The Duff and Polio (1990) is a research article exploring the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. The authors took data from classes where different languages were being taught. The classes were thirteen in number covering the following languages: Korean, Swedish, Uzbek, French, Quechua, Serbo Croation and Portuguese. Audio recordings of each class were taken twice and then teachers were interviewed. Students were also given a questionnaire to ask them, amongst other things, how much of the TL they understood. Triangulating the data they found a large discrepancy in the amount of L2 use in the classroom, from 10% to 100%. Their conclusion was that, going by the fact that some teachers were able to deliver lessons 100% in the L2 that this should be the goal of all teachers. There are two major

criticisms of their methodology. The first is that they decided not to transcribe the audio recording, preferring instead 15 second intervals to listen and decide the nature of utterance and to codify whether the L2 was being used. Secondly, and most importantly, they do not establish empirically whether exclusive L2 use is more beneficial, i.e. leads to more accurate output in the L2 than cases where there is selective use of the L1. .. There does not appear to be a single piece of empirical evidence that shows that excluding the L1 from the L2 classroom leads to increased language learning. Whilst there is evidence that shows that the amount of L2 in the class is linked with the amount of language a student learns this is not the same as evidence supporting the L2 fallacy. In fact, it goes without saying that a student who studies in a class where the teacher uses English 80% of the time is likely to learn more than a student who studies in a class where a teachers uses the L2 only 5% of the time as Turnbull (2001) has shown. What is not clear, and for which no empirical evidence appears to exist, is whether a student who studies in a class where the L2 is used 100% of the time outperforms a student who studies in a class where the L2 is used 95% or 90% of the time.

Polio, writing a response to an earlier article that suggested the L2 only policy needed rethinking, puts forwards several reasons why teachers may use the L1 in class. Such reasons include the fact that some ELTs use the L1 'because they have not been trained in ways to make the L2 comprehensible' (Polio 1994, p. 154). This is essentially a slur on the teaching ability of many ELTs and is not supported by any empirical evidence. She goes on to add that 'by not using the L2 exclusively in the FL classroom, teachers are actually holding students back and, in some cases, perpetuating existing power relationships (ibid, p. 155). Unfortunately she does not

provide any evidence for such 'holding back' and decides not to detail exactly the 'negative' results of using the L1 in class.

A second study, an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Kaneko, looks at the issue of L1 use in the L2 language class in some depth. Her general conclusion was that 'L2 input resulted in more student uptake than L1 use did' (1992, p. 102) and conversely that 'The more the L1 was used, the less the students [learnt vocabulary]' (ibid, p. 85). Despite findings which suggest that maximising the use of the L1 may be beneficial she is still moved to write that 'if the students' level of English is insufficient for understanding grammatical explanations, teachers' L1 explanations may work effectively' (ibid, pp. 85-86). This would work for situations where the grammar teaching is explicit as opposed to a situation where the focus is a more communicative approach.

Various other reasons have been provided for excluding the L1 from the classroom including the idea that learning the second language is similar to learning the first, when only the TL was used. This argument that the learning of the first language is similar to the second lacks strong empirical evidence and runs counter to the evidence previously discussed in chapter three, that very few second language learners ever progress to native speaker competence whereas all first language learners do. It also ignores the interaction that occurs cognitively between the first and second languages, what Cook (1999) refers to as multicompetence. Whilst the discussion of whether learning the second language can be modelled on the learning of the first language is a complex one, and would require a thesis in itself to do it full justice, what can be said with some degree of certainty is that there is little evidence to suggest that the learning process of the second language learner is in any way hampered by the use of the L1. Accepting that the L2 should be used as much as possible in the classroom,

the question is not about the exclusion of the L2 but the inclusion of the L1. If beginner second language learners, in particular, could benefit from the use of the L1 in learning an L2, then surely its inclusion needs to be addressed, rather than discussing the irrelevant point of the exclusion of the L2. An assumption underpinning this whole debate must be that the L2 must be used in the L2 classroom.

There may also be times, particularly in EFL teaching, when avoiding the L1 may be the only option: 'The avoidance of the L1 is a practical necessity in much EFL' (Cook 2001, p. 405). The discussion here relates not to these situations, where the use of the L1 is not possible due to students in one class having a large number of different L1s and/or where the teacher does not know the L1 of some or all of the students. What *is* being discussed here is the scenario where the teacher does have the capacity to use the L1, as in the case of the CASS in Oman, but chooses due to the teaching methodology he/she has chosen, not to utilise it. In this case it would appear that there is little evidence to support the assertion that using the L1 harms the language learning process. Below the arguments in favour of using the L1 in the L2 classroom are evaluated.

4.7 Evidence to support the use of L1 in the L2 learning classroom

In contrast to the paucity of evidence in support of the L2 fallacy, there is some research to suggest that L1 use in the L2 learning classroom can help students in learning a second language. For example, Friendlander (1990) finds that when students use L1 to produce a writing plan for a Chinese topic to be written in English they benefit from the use of the L1. This study, using a relatively small sample of 28 students, provided evidence that when writing about a Chinese topic using Chinese

helped plan and produce better essays. Both the plan and the essays were rated according to word count and a holistic rating. There are some weaknesses in the approach adopted by Friendlander such as the necessity to translate everything into English before being graded. The conclusion of the study suggested that when writing about a local context the L1 would assist in the production of better essays. In this context it would suggest that Omani students at the CASS writing about Omani subjects would benefit from the use of Arabic in the planning and writing phase..

Strohmeyer and McGrail (1988) discuss the results of a project aimed at Spanish English as second language (ESL) learners that used photography to enhance their literacy education. The authors describe how they changed the dynamics of the classroom by introducing Spanish, to some student resistance at first, into the English language classroom. What was found was that the use of Spanish allowed students to write more confidently and to produce more creative output. Both of these are of course subjective judgements nonetheless the study notes in some detail the progress of a number of students and the benefit both teacher and student attributed to the use of the L1; Spanish in this case.

Brooks and Donato (1994), using a Vygotskian framework, investigated the nature of different aspects of their spoken language, including their use of the L2, in problem solving. 8 pairs of high school students studying Spanish were asked to engage in an information gap Spanish language activity. Their interactions were recorded on video and audio. The authors use an established set of instrumental functions of spoken based on Ahmed (1988 cited Brooks and Donata 1994). Analysing the data they comment that the use of English, the L1, during discussion about the task serves ‘to enable the learners to establish control of the discourse and the task’ (Brooks and Donato 1994, p. 268). They go on to say that ‘We are not suggesting that the use of

the L1 during L2 interactions is to be encouraged necessarily but rather that it is a normal psycholinguistic process that facilitates L2 production' (ibid). Again as with the Friendlander study above the studies major weaknesses is the small number of participants however this is perhaps compensated for by the solid theoretical foundation, focussing upon metatalk and metacognition using a Vygotskyan, upon which the study is based. DeGuerrero and Villamil (1994) investigated the interactions and social relationships that resulted from dyads engaged in peer revision. Using audio recordings to from 54 ESL learners they transcribed the interactions between each dyad during peer review sessions. Using an extensive coding system that divided the transcripts into three types of episodes; *on-task*, *about-task* and *off-task*. The first of those related to utterances that would constitute part of the task, the second utterances about the task, i.e. how to do it, and the latter utterances not related to the task at all. After transcribing and tabulating the data from the episodes the authors commented on the use of the L1 in the interactions of the dyads and said 'the fact that...the majority of the interactions were in the students' L1' (ibid, p. 492). They continued on to say 'L2 writers use the native tongue to retrieve information from memory, generate content and improve the quality of text (ibid).

Rolin-Ianziti and Brownlie (2002) investigated the use of the native language in French classes at the University of Queensland conclude that '...a few strategic uses of NL [native language] may introduce input modifications that effect FL [foreign language] learning positively (p. 423). The study utilised almost 7 hours of audio recordings taken from the classrooms of four French teachers. The recordings were transcribed and then coded. The data was taken from five groups of students who totalled 150 in number.

In a small scale study conducted in Jordan, Al-Abbas (1996) investigated the use of Arabic, the L1, on the achievement of 'vocabulary and grammatical structures' in English of 'university first year level' students (p. 206). His research was based on the results from two questionnaires, one delivered to students and one to teachers from different governmental schools in Jordan. He suggests that his findings

lend support to the tendency of the majority of teachers who resort to the students' mother tongue in teaching English as a foreign language for the purposes of explanation of the meanings of words and certain grammatical items (p. 213).

He also claims that his

...results also lend support to a study conducted by Al-Absi (1991) on the effect of the mother tongue on students' lexical achievement in Wadi Sir vocational Centre where he found that students taught by a bilingual method showed better performance in their achievement of vocabulary (ibid).

The major limitations of Abbas's study is that his conclusion about the role of the L1, Arabic in this case, is entirely based around the responses to the questionnaires by the teachers. Clearly the accuracy of this data could be questioned.

Support for the use of the L1 as advocated by Al-Abbas above can be found in a large number of publications. Perhaps the most detailed theory of L1 use in the L2 classroom is provided by Butzkamm (2003) who offers a theory composed of no less than ten maxims . The theory

predicts that the mother tongue as a cognitive and pedagogical resource will be more important for pupils of seven or eight upwards, by which time the

mother tongue has taken firm root, and it will be more in evidence in the conventional classroom, where exposure to the FL is inevitably restricted (p. 31).

The weight of this combined research is strong and suggests that the use of L1 should be far more than simply tolerated, it should be actively encouraged. Unfortunately, that is not the case in most language classrooms today with little or no reference given to the role of the L1.

It is important to point out here that whilst evidence supporting the use of L1 in the L2 classroom does exist this should not be used as justification for the exclusion of the L2 from the L2 classroom or for the use of the L1 in such situations where the L2 could easily and more effectively be used, what Moodley (2007) refers to as '*overuse*' or '*irresponsible use*' (p. 710, italics mine). An example of this is provided by Kim and Elder (2008) where one particular teacher uses English in a Korean language lesson to such an extent that the authors are moved to write that the teachers'

classroom talk revealed little commitment to using the TL as a communicative medium. He [the Korean teacher] was observed to resort to English even when teaching basic greetings...which he felt the need not only to translate but also to deconstruct grammatically...The grammatical explanation [of the Korean greeting] offered in English was in fact inaccurate and also unnecessary given that this is a fixed routine that could easily be taught formulaically (p. 176).

What is being advocated is use of the L1 within certain boundaries. Exactly what these boundaries are is difficult to say since there is a paucity of research in this area, a point made by Macaro who says that

As a teaching community we need to provide, especially for less experienced teachers, a framework that identifies when reference to the L1 can be a valuable tool and when it is simply used as an easy option. In this way we can work towards a theory of optimality (2001, p. 545).

The same point is made by Carless when he says

It would be useful if teacher educators could provide more concrete guidance to teachers as to when student use of the MT [mother tongue] may be beneficial (2008, p. 336).

Levine (2003) attempts to establish such a framework, as advocated above by Macaro, by suggesting three tenets regarding the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. The first of these is the *Optimal TL Use* Tenet, which is based on the terminology first used by Macaro (2001) and simply suggests that second language educators need to accept that the L1 has a role in the L2 classroom. Instead of choosing to exclude it, what language educators should do is delegate a pedagogical function to the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. This idea of specifying a role for the L2 is the second of Levine's tenets, which is referred to as the *Marked L1* Tenet. The final tenet is the *Collaborate Language Use* Tenet and suggests that students should be given a role in establishing the role of the L1 in the L2 classroom. The three tenets provided by Levine provide a positive way of examining and regulating the role of the L1 in the L2 classroom. Levine suggests he takes a more pragmatic view than someone like Cook (2001), and suggests that opening the door fully for the L1 is not a good idea. He comments that the findings of his own study into the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom 'call into question the prevailing norm, as described by Cook (2001), whereby the L1 is used for discussing grammar, class assignments, course policies,

and the like' (Levine 2003, p. 354). It's unclear from what Levine is saying whether he is suggesting that Cook himself advocates using the L1 in a blanket fashion or if this is simply an existing position that is described by Cook. Either way the position of Cook on this issue is clear in that whilst favouring the systematic use of the L1 at no times does he suggest that it should be used all or even most of the time for specific class management or pedagogical functions. Cook's perspective is that the teacher needs to evaluate each use based on a set of criteria. He lists four criteria that teachers should take into account when deciding when and how to use the L1. The first of these criteria is *efficiency*, i.e. does the use of the L1 make some classroom processes easier such as classroom management. The second criterion is *learning*, which questions the efficacy of the use of the L1 in aiding the student in their learning objectives. The third criterion is *naturalness*, which suggests that teachers should aim to make students as comfortable in the class as possible and if the L1 can assist in this it should be used. The fourth and final criterion is *external relevance*, which posits the idea that if the use of the L1 can assist students learn some aspect of the L2 hitherto withheld from them then that can only be a positive thing (Cook 2001). The use of these criteria are positive instruments which can assist teachers plan their use of the L1 but rather than expecting teachers to evaluate each and every use, which is what Cook (ibid), is suggesting when he says 'If there is no over-riding obligation to avoid the L1, each use can be looked at on its merits' (p. 413), a better approach would be for teachers to understand the basic concepts and then adopt a consistent framework of where and when they are willing to use the L1.

An alternative to Cook's criteria for the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom is offered by Macaro (2001). He offers the following taxonomy for the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom: *The virtual position, the maximal position and the optimal position. The*

virtual position states that the L2 classroom functions as a model of an L2 country and hence all attempts should be made to exclude the L1 since there is no pedagogical value attached to the use of the L1. *The maximal position* suggests, like *the virtual position*, that there is no pedagogical value in the use of the L1 but suggests that since perfect conditions for learning and teaching do not exist the use of the L1 is inevitable. *The optimal position* suggests that there is real pedagogical value in the use of the L1 and that the use of the L1 may assist students in their second language learning endeavours. Using this taxonomy the first two categories, *the virtual and maximal positions*, approximate to the fundamentals of the L2 fallacy. In this chapter what has been shown is that the preponderance of empirical evidence suggests that teaching in the second language classroom should vacillate towards the optimal position. Although Macaro (2001, p. 532) suggests that there is a lack of evidence ‘either way’ as to the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom, what has been demonstrated above is that there is evidence that using the L1 can indeed aid the second language acquisition process.

4.8 Conclusion

This thesis is not designed to investigate arguments related to the nature of second language acquisition itself, such as arguments about whether Universal Grammar (Chomsky 1980) or the Language Acquisition Device (Chomsky 1965) exist for second language learners. What this chapter has sought to do is investigate the veracity of one particular belief, namely that the L1 should be excluded from the second language classroom based on pedagogical grounds.

What has been shown is that there is no empirical evidence that would justify the total exclusion of the L1 from the L2 classroom. From the arguments above it is clear that

there is no pedagogical reason whatsoever for the exclusion of the L1 and that the use of the first language should be promoted and used in a systematic fashion and that the belief that the L1 has a positive and necessary role in the second language classroom is based on sound pedagogical principles.

Chapter Five

The English Medium Fallacy

5.1 Introduction

The foreign medium has caused brain fag, put undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them for filtrating their learning to the family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land. It is the greatest tragedy of the existing system. (Gandhi 1954 cited in Ramanathan 2005, p. 54).

The English medium fallacy (EMF) is defined here as being the belief that efficacious education can only take place when English is the medium of instruction (MOI). The fallacy is defined as such based on the observation of many colleges and universities around the world who have decided that the only medium of education worthy of consideration is English. Graddol (2007) in research for the British Council suggests that 53% of all students in higher education in the world study in English. Of this 53%, 13% study in countries other than the UK, US, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Phillipson alludes to the EMF in his section on the monolingual fallacy;

A Eurocentric monolingual approach contributes to the failure of the majority in school and to their exclusion from technical and scientific knowledge.

Monolingualism in education, and in particular the content and ideology of

English when taught and used as a medium of Education, is at the heart of the cultural dislocation. The ethos of monolingualism implies the rejection of the experience of other languages, meaning the exclusion of the child's most intense existential experience. This is a direct consequence of linguistic educational policies (Phillipson 1992, pg. 189).

The Ministry of Higher Education in Oman decided several years ago to switch the medium of education in all colleges of applied science from Arabic to English. The CASS was no exception and here this decision will be evaluated from an academic perspective. The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the EMF and ask whether it really is a fallacy. In a similar vein to the previous two chapters, this chapter will begin with a historical account of the origins of the fallacy. From there arguments both in favour and against the fallacy will be analysed in detail. The chapter ends with a conclusion relating the findings to the context at the CASS.

Upon initial inspection it would be easy to think that a simple typology could be established to categorise different countries and their language policies. There are those countries, for example, like the US who have a significant minority who do not speak the language of the majority and hence have to consider the provision of bilingual education to cater for these people. Examples of this kind are the UK, the US and many European states. Another category could be those ex-colonial states that in the initial post colonial period were forced to deal with the acute intersection of language, identity and politics. Examples of this are India, Singapore, and Sudan etc. A third category could be states that were never colonised yet for economic reasons are considering issues related to the MOI. Saudi Arabia is perhaps the best example of this. The problem with this is that the reality of 21st century language policy prevents such a simple analysis. In this globalised world the reality in almost every

country is that each is trying to balance concerns with culture and/or religion on the one hand and economic competitiveness on the other. Through the course of this chapter examples from language policy in India, Singapore, Malaysia, Pakistan, Hong Kong, Uganda, Sudan, South Africa, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Slovenia, Bolivia and others will be provided. In each case the same types of language policy issues are being played out. And in almost every case it is the English language that is the main protagonist, battling it out with the local languages for what has been described as ‘linguistic capital’ (Silver 2005, Hornberger and Vaish forthcoming). However what is interesting in the case of the CASS and perhaps Oman generally is the decision to teach entirely through the medium of English with the national language being so readily removed from the tertiary sector.

5.1.1 Sub Questions

The main question under discussion here is as follows, ‘can the decision of the CASS to switch the MOI from Arabic to English be described as an example of the EMF?’ In the course of this chapter as the main question is addressed and investigated it is anticipated that several sub-questions will be answered. These are as follows:

1. Why do states select a MOI that is *not* their L1?
2. Of the reasons given in (1) above which apply to the CASS in Oman?
3. Do children whose MOI is the L2 perform better or worse than those whose MOI is their L1?
4. How does the answer to (3) above relate to the CASS in Oman?
5. How have other states who are struggling with similar language policy issues to Oman reacted and how can their decisions assist in understanding the decision by the CASS to switch MOI from the L1 to the L2?

This list of questions is by no means exhaustive and as the chapter progresses other questions may be raised and answered. The purpose of this list is to provide an overview of the chapter and a guide to the reader to explain the direction the chapter takes. The desired outcome is that an answer to all these questions will result in a conclusion at the end of the chapter highlighting the findings and ultimately answering the main question.

5.2 Why do states select a MOI that is not their L1?

When states like Oman consider language policy, there are clearly a number of issues they need to take into consideration. Here those issues will be explored and analysed and related back to the CASS in Oman. In order to understand why a state or an institution such as a university would choose an L2 as a MOI it would be prudent to ask why the L1 is not up to the task. Ansre (1979) provides a good starting point because the four ‘rationalisations’ why European languages were maintained as MOI in Africa he outlined are very comprehensive and most of the arguments that are advanced in favour of using an L2 as opposed to an L1 for the MOI fall somewhere within these rationalisations . Below the four rationalizations are listed from Ansre (1979):

1. The cost of producing educational material in indigenous languages is excessive in both money and human effort
2. The world is ‘shrinking’ and pupils need an international language to be able to have dealings with people from different countries and large groups
3. With so many languages and tribes in the country, there are tendencies towards tribalism and divisiveness and therefore it is better to use a neutral foreign language to achieve national unity

4. Since we need rapid technological development and yet since none of the languages is 'developed' enough for use in giving modern technological education, we must teach in the languages which have a highly developed technical and scientific terminology and concepts (p. 11).

Ansre claims that these four reasons for using an L2 as opposed to an L1 as the MOI are widely held amongst 'highly placed and influential people' (ibid). These rationalisations can be compared to what others have said on the reasons for selecting the L2 as the MOI. Alidou (2004) gives three broad reasons why European languages continue to be used as the MOI: economic reasons (textbook publishers only publishing in European languages), political reasons (removing colonial languages erodes the power base of the elite) and pedagogical reasons (lack of training for faculty to teach bilingually). In a similar vein Annamalai (2004) outlines three reasons used by those who favour using English, an L2, as the MOI in India. These are the need to access scientific knowledge which can only be done in English, the lack of scientific terminology in local languages such as Hindi and the fact that use of a local language, such as Hindi, would disenfranchise parts of the population for whom Hindi itself is an L2 and thus prevent students moving to different universities throughout India.

Variations of these reasons or rationalisations can be found throughout the academic literature. From the above the reasons for using the L2 as an MOI can be summarized as falling into the following broad categories. These are outlined below, before being followed by a detailed discussion of each.

1. Economic reasons - These include the prohibitive cost of translating and subsequently updating textbooks and other teaching materials. It also relates to the

costs involved in training teachers to teach in the L1 after perhaps a prolonged period teaching in the L2. UNESCO lists both the ‘shortage of educational material’ and the ‘lack of appropriately trained teachers’ (2003, p. 16) as being amongst the core difficulties preventing the L1 being used as the MOI. Phillipson refers to these ‘difficulties’ as ‘economic imperialism’ which ‘permits the marketing worldwide of monolingual textbooks emanating from the Centre, which in turn reinforces anglocentricity and the hold of ELT professionalism (1992, p. 193). Tollefson and Tsui articulate an aspect of the problem well when they say that ‘In countries where resources are scarce, the rate of illiteracy is high, and basic education is available to only a small percentage of the population, investment in the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction is ethically untenable (2004, p. 17). In poor countries such an observation can surely hold but what of countries where wealth is in abundance, such as Gulf countries, is use of an L2 as the MOI in those countries also ‘ethically untenable’?

2. Linguistic reasons – These include reasons related to access of scientific literature in the L2 (typically English), the lack of contemporary scientific terminology in the L1 and the desire to use the L2 (again typically English) to gain a competitive advantage by having a workforce capable of communicating fluently in English, for example.
3. Nationalistic reasons- These include reasons related to national unity, where for example several languages exist at national level and one unifying language is required.
4. Demand reasons- This is one of the most common reasons given for selecting the L2 as the MOI. From Colonial India to contemporary Singapore and Malaysia

parents' demands for, primarily, English as the MOI is given as the reason driving its selection as the MOI.

The four reasons above are articulated in a general manner, and intentionally so because each individual context, meaning each individual country, has very specific reasons for selecting or not selecting the L2 as the MOI. However despite these specificities the general categories do hold and can act as a useful typology to analyse language policy. Below each of these four reasons will be analysed in more detail.

5.2.1 Economic reasons for selecting an L2 as the MOI

Funding, or the lack thereof, is seen as the key deficit that is preventing the spread of local languages as the MOI. This argument is captured well by Tollefson and Tsui when they say

With national budgets inadequate for bilingual programs that use local languages [as MOI], outside providers of funding ensure that medium of instruction continues to be offered almost exclusively in colonial languages. Control of resources, in other words, often means control of medium-of-instruction policy (2004, p. 287).

There is an argument to be made that suggests that lack of resources is a key contributing factor to the selection of an L2 as the MOI. However this argument only goes so far and certainly does not explain why countries with abundant resources such as Oman choose not to implement Arabic, the L1, as the MOI. The issue of why wealthy nations choose not to select their national language as the MOI will be discussed in detail below but this section begins by looking at financial or economic

reasons why countries with less abundant resources may choose not to use their national language as the MOI.

Ansre (1979) claims there is a large barrier to entry that prevents countries from using their L1 as the MOI since the cost of translating teaching material such as textbooks and constantly updating them would simply be too much to make it feasible. He goes on to say that those people who hold this view that the financial restrictions are too great to make producing local teaching material available, 'may be unconscious victims of...Linguistic Imperialism' (ibid, p. 12). He goes on to define linguistic imperialism as being

...the phenomenon in which the minds and lives of the speakers of a language are dominated by another language to the point where they believe that they can and should use only that foreign language when it comes to transactions dealing with the more advanced aspects of life such as education, philosophy, literature, governments, the administration of justice, etc. (ibid).

The economic barrier is maintained by leading publishers who show little or no interest in translating texts and making available local versions in local language (Hayes 2005). Efforts at overcoming such barriers are not helped by unfortunate comments such as these 'In India, much time is *wasted* on the preparation of textbooks and terminologies written in regional languages' (italics mine, Tse et al 2001, p. 25). What that last quote suggests is that attempts have been made to prepare teaching materials in the L1. A good example of this is the effort undertaken in Malaysia where a governmental agency was founded in 1957 (Hassan 2005) called the Dewan Bahasa Dan Pustaka, the Language and Literature Bureau, known as the DBP. The remit of the DBP is to promote the use of Bahasa Malaysia, the Malaysian

national language adopted after independence (Gill 2004). The agency does this by preparing scientific vocabulary, translating books, publishing anthologies, journals and periodicals in Bahasa Malaysia (ibid, Martin 2008). The DBP also publishes a dictionary called the Kamus Dewan, where great efforts are made to translate scientific terminology into Bahasa Malaysia (Tan 1998). It is not easy to judge how successful the work of the DBP has been but the decision in 2002 by the Malaysian authorities to permit using English as the MOI in primary schools, and its expanded use in the private higher education sector, appears to suggest that the work of the BDP may be in vain as Malaysia follows the growing trend of using English as the MOI in its education sector by making English the medium of instruction at the primary level in 2003 (Sulaiman et al 2009).

There are other examples similar to the Malaysian example, where attempts were made to translate teaching material into the L1 such as in Namibia around the period of independence when there was an emphasis on local languages. Since that time though English has come to dominate and ‘a much higher percentage of government funds are now spent on English language books’ (Coates 1995, pp. 2-3 cited in Brock-Utne 2001, p. 117). In the 1950’s in Sudan Arabicisation (sic) began with the aim of reversing earlier colonial attempts by the British to marginalize Arabic and widen the influence of English (Sandell 1982). The movement gathered momentum and in the 1960’s Arabic was made the medium of education for all government schools in Sudan and in 1990 Arabic was made the official language in the tertiary sector (Elmalik and Nesi 2008).

It is easy to see why many consider the use of Western textbooks to be a form of neo-colonialism in light of the decision by the French not to support any funding programmes of the World Bank that promote the comprehensive use of the African

languages in schools (Alidou 2004). With France being the main sponsor of African development programmes such a lack of support for the use of indigenous languages as MOI is disastrous and makes the entire concept of using local languages as MOI highly untenable. Alidou, who has worked as an educational consultant in several African countries for almost the past twenty years and has considerable experience of working with the UN and UNESCO, quotes a private communication with a UNESCO official who says:

If African governments can finance for themselves this specific aspect of their education, [i.e. using local languages as MOI] we can move forward with this linguistic question (2004, p. 204).

The quotation from Alidou (2004) does not align itself well with contemporary UNESCO policy on MOI which states that ‘that learners learn best in their mother tongue’ (UNESCO 2003, p. 7), an echo of UNESCO’s earlier policy document which said much the same thing: ‘...education can best be carried out in the mother tongue of the pupil, adult or child’ (1953, p. 15). In fact from as early as 1953 and continuing up to recent times the official policy of UNESCO has clearly been in favour of the use of the L1 as MOI. UNESCO experts comment that ‘Every pupil should begin his formal education in his mother tongue’ (UNESCO 1953, p. 68). In a more recent publication UNESCO cements its support for mother tongue education saying in a position paper published in 2003 ‘It is an obvious yet not generally recognized truism that learning in a language which is not one’s own provides a double set of challenges, not only is there the challenge of learning a new language, but also that of learning new knowledge contained in that language’ (UNESCO 2003, p. 15). The paper also states that ‘instruction in the mother tongue is beneficial to language competencies, achievement in other subject areas, and second language learning’

(ibid). From these quotes and from the two aforementioned UNESCO documents it is clear that in principle the organization supports mother tongue education as a matter of principle. It is possible that this support fails to be backed up by action on the ground or through the provision of adequate funding. It is certainly telling that the very last comments in the 1953 report are related to funding; ‘UNESCO would undoubtedly perform a useful task by providing aid in various forms for people wishing to convert their vernaculars into civilized languages’ (UNESCO 1953, p. 138).

Aside from textbook production the other major financial implication of teaching in the L1 is said to be the cost of training teachers necessary to provide practitioners with the tools they need to teach effectively. In many cases the need for trained teachers is greater than that of teaching material (Alidou 2004). When a switch to a local language is seen to have worked, such as in Wales, there has been a corresponding increase in expenditure in teacher training (Tollefson and Tsui 2004, Jones and Martin-Jones 2004).

Relating this issue back to the context of the CASS in Oman it is interesting to ask questions as to why no quality local material has been produced. With wealth in abundance and with oil touching almost one hundred and fifty dollars a barrel at the time of the collection of data for this study, there would appear to be no economic reason why teaching material in Arabic could not be produced and why teacher training could not be undertaken to ensure local teachers were appropriately skilled to undertake teaching to a high standard. Yet this has not happened; on the contrary what has been observed is a huge investment in English language texts in collaboration with Western publishing firms. In the example of the CASS this takes place in the form of the purchase of a relatively new set of English language texts

entitled *Skills for English*. The Ministry of Education in Oman were involved directly in the production of this text and arranged for the author to visit the CASS to deliver training to native English speaking teachers on how to teach the book. Although the text does contain a smattering of Arabic text as translation it appears to be a token measure. What is clear is the desire by the MOE in Oman to favour English as the MOI for the immediate future. The economic reasons outlined above, that prevent poor countries from implementing the L1 as the MOI are not present in Oman, or indeed the Gulf region generally. With that being the case a fair statement to make would be that whilst economic reasons are the cause of many former colonies and developing countries being unable to use their national language, or one of their national languages, as the MOI this cannot be said to be the case in Oman. With so many resources being invested into English language education and teaching material the production of local teaching material is very definitely possible. The reasons why this has not occurred will be analysed below.

5.2.2 Linguistic reasons for selecting an L2 as the MOI

The foreign medium has prevented the growth of our vernaculars. If I had the powers of a despot, I would today stop the tuition of our boys and girls through a foreign medium, and require all the teachers and professors on pain of dismissal to introduce the change forthwith. I would not wait for the preparation of textbooks. They will follow the change...(Gandhi 1954 cited in Ramanathan 2005, p. 54).

On initial viewing it appears that the linguistic reasons why states choose not to use their national language, or one of their national languages, as the MOI look similar to the economic reasons advanced above. What else other than resources could be

behind the lack of a sufficient vocabulary in any given language? The answer is not so simple though. Although finance is one aspect, another perhaps more pressing issue is what Phillipson (1992) refers to as a *colonised consciousness* which basically suggests that the local language is not capable of being used as a MOI, where local languages are viewed ‘as handicaps rather than resources’ (Roy-Campbell 2006, p. 2). It is a view articulated well by the former premier of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew when he described English as being the language of ‘new knowledge’ and the mother tongues (Mandarin, Malay and Hindi in the Singaporean context) as being for ‘old knowledge’ (Rubdy 2001, p. 342). This lack of confidence in local languages is articulated well by a student responding to a question by Brock-Utne (2003). Whilst observing a class in Dar es Salaam Tanzania, Brock-Utne noticed that some of the students responded differently to the teacher based on the language of instruction. In particular she noticed that this student was more involved in the class when the local language Kiswahili was used as opposed to English, whose use often left the student reticent in class. The full discussion has been reproduced below for two reasons. First, it illustrates well the idea of a linguistic inferiority complex and secondly it is very similar to a dialogue that occurred between the author of this study and an Omani student at the CASS. In the dialogue below, BU represents Brock-Utne:

BU: I noticed that you had great difficulties following the teaching when it took place in English while you seemed to follow well when the teacher for a short while spoke Kiswahili.

The student: That is true. I have problems with English. I understand very little of what the teacher is saying when he speaks English.

BU : Would it not then be much better for you if the teaching took place in Kiswahili?

The student: Of course. Then I would understand everything the teacher was saying.

BU: Would it then not be best if one would switch the language of instruction in secondary school in Tanzania from English to Kiswahili so that students like you would understand what the teacher was saying? Then English would not be a barrier to learning commerce for instance like it looked like it was not only for you but for most of the students in the class?

The student: No, one cannot do that for English is the language of science and technology. To get good jobs in this country one needs to command English well. I need to learn English. Kiswahili I know already (Brock-Utne 2003, p. 2).

From the author's journal that kept during his time at the CASS the following entry bears striking resemblance to the Brock-Utne incidence above. The entry is prefaced with the date:

13/05/2007 Speaking exam. I was speaking to one student about the college, what he likes and what he dislikes about the place. So I decided to ask him about the textbook he was using for IT. I asked him how much of it he understood. He replied, 'about 10%'. I asked him whether he preferred to study in English or Arabic and he replied 'in English because it is the language of science'. I asked him what the point of studying in English was if he didn't understand the textbook. To this he just shrugged his shoulders.

These comments give an insight into what is a common phenomenon and what it indicates is a conflation of issues. In both cases the students conflate the issue of capacity to read English with the need to have English as the MOI. It is certainly not the case that the only way to learn a language well enough to be able to access English language reading material is to use English as the MOI. In fact this idea, referred to by Phillipson (1992) as the *maximum exposure fallacy*, lacks any credible evidence. In fact if students are expected to study textbooks in a language that they simply do not understand, that can only be detrimental to their education and future prospects. Below some examples of attempts to work with local languages and to increase the scientific vocabulary will be examined and discussed with a view to ascertaining their efficacy and to question whether they are realistic endeavours or simply futile attempts predicated on an ideological basis to swim against the ever increasing strength of the tide of English as MOI.

Attempts have been made to increase the vocabulary of some local languages and include, for Arabic, the setting up of the Royal Academy of Arabic Language in 1932 (UNESCO 1953). The agency was primarily concerned with trying to expand the vocabulary of Arabic to include scientific terms. According to Hussein (1999) ‘...Arabic is desperately lacking in scientific and technological terminology...there is a backlog of 250,000 terms with no Arabic equivalents in addition to thousands of yearly emerging neologisms’ (Hussein 1999, pg. 283).

According to the UNESCO report published over fifty years ago some ten thousand words were added to the Arabic lexis as a result of the work of the Academy. Since then there have been other attempts to introduce scientific terminology into Arabic (Comte 1980) but contemporary research suggests that such endeavours are not proving successful. One recent study from Saudi Arabia had a massive 96% of

respondents to a survey 'consider English a superior language, being an international language, and the language of science and technology, research, electronic databases and technical terminology (Al-Jarf 2008, p. 193).

Developing a scientific vocabulary can only happen when the language itself is being used. One former director of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Kahombo Mateene, suggests that the underdevelopment of African languages is due primarily to the fact that they have not been used as instructional languages in those fields (Roy-Campbell 2006, p. 5). There have been calls for this to change and the OAU has several official proclamations to this effect, but such proclamations are of little value if there is no movement on the ground to change the situation and make local languages more viable alternatives as MOI. The truth of the matter is that even in cases where a strenuous effort was made to focus on the local language such as in Tanzania, Kiswahili which is spoken by about 95% of the population English continues to exert strong influence and is now the medium of education in secondary and post-secondary education despite the fact that governmental recommendations stipulated that the MOI in post secondary educated should be switched from English to Kiswahili (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir 2004).

The lack of scientific vocabulary in a language has been referred to as a 'linguistic prison' (Roy-Campbell 2006, p. 2) and calls have been made to unlock what are perceived as *language forts* (Qorro 2003). Knowledge of English when used for academic writing purposes has been referred as cultural capital (Vasconcelos 2007). This can only happen though when there is acceptance that the language is imprisoned but when, as in the Al-Jarf (2008) study above, 96% of respondents believe that English, and not Arabic, is capable of being used as a language of science it is deeply troubling. There are, of course, dissenting voices that suggest that the absence of

scientific terminology is a positive outcome rather than a negative one. An example of this is Halliday (2004) whose articulations could be taken as an argument against the development of scientific terminology. Yet even here Halliday appears more concerned with the obfuscation that scientific terminology causes, not with the situation where new realities cannot be described in concise terms without the creation of neologisms. It is one thing saying, as Halliday provides as an example, '*weapons of greater lethality*' rather than '*weapons that kill more people*' (italics in original, 2004, p. 21) but it is a different matter when a language struggles to explain in any form new realities such as the Internet or particle physics.

The argument that a language needs to be developed with respect to its ability to express scientific concepts before it can be used as a MOI has been put forward by many as a defence for not using local languages as the MOI. It is simple common sense that unless and until a language is regularly used for scientific discourse there is no way that it can be fit for purpose in this regard. It is only through the continued use of the language in academic contexts that it will develop and be able to serve as an alternative to European languages as a MOI in schools and universities.

Commenting on the case of local languages in India, and the charge that they should not be used as MOI in education until they contain a suitably strong vocabulary

Annamalai states that

The interminable problem with this argument [that the change in MOI should wait until the language contains a suitable lexis for academic discourse] is that given the current rate of knowledge growth, it is impossible to determine when one will be able to decide that the Indian languages have “caught up with” English. Furthermore, the development of a language takes place through use,

not prior to use, and it is a fallacy to argue that the language must be developed before it is put to use (Annamalai 2004, p. 189).

A good example of a country where solid attempts have been made alter the linguistic landscape to allow the language to break free from the *linguistic prison* in which it finds itself is Brazil. It is worthy of some mention here since it offers an insight into how academics can flourish while publishing in their local language and maintaining visibility in the academic arena.

In Brazil the issue of English is tied up with political tensions with the US, where English is perceived by some as a very real manifestation of US hegemony (Rajagopalan 2008). There have been attempts to fight against this, one such example being a local magistrate order requiring all foreign words in advertising, which basically means English words, be translated into Portuguese. The attitude towards English is summed up well in the following

English is clearly a foreign language [in Brazil]. Equally foreign is what makes it the case that, if English is the lingua franca of international contact, that has to do with the success of British and [North-] American imperial enterprise, in relation to which Brazil invariably, acted as a servile client. Thus, the distrust of foreignisms is the distrust of Anglophone presence in the day-to-day life in Brazil, especially that of the symbolic omnipresence of North-American corporate interests (Garcez and Zilles 2001, p. 22 cited in Rajagopalan 2008, p. 188).⁶

It is in this context that the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) was launched with the aim of improving the Portuguese scientific language (Meneghini

⁶ The original, (Garcez and Zilles 2001), is in Portuguese hence Rajagopalan's translation is cited here.

and Packer 2007). SciELO was launched by a consortium which consisted of the Latin-American and Caribbean Centre on Health Sciences Information (BIREME), the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the State of São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) with further support from the Brazilian National Science Research Council (ibid). SciELO is basically a database of Brazilian journals although there are now sites for other South-American countries such as Venezuela, Argentina and Chile. The stated aims of the project according to the SciELO website is

to implement an electronic virtual library, providing full access to a collection of serial titles, a collection of issues from individual serial titles, as well as to the full text of articles. The access to both serial titles and articles is available via indexes and search forms (SciELO 2009, Website homepage, accessed 10/03/2009)

The SciELO offers open-access to all the journals, which numbers in the region of three hundred and fifty (Meneghini and Packer 2007) and offers a way for authors to publish in Portuguese with a rudimentary English translation. The purpose of the translation is to make the publication available to a wider audience. One of the major benefits of the programme is the increased number of publications in Portuguese and the fact that those authors who are not so proficient have a wide audience to disseminate their work. The nature of the project, being online and open-access, makes it easy for scholars to get published and to conduct their own English translations. The system is not perfect but it certainly is a good start to make available research in the non-English speaking world, research that has elsewhere been referred to as '*lost science*' (Wayt 1995, p. 92). What the SciELO project does is to show that English does not have to be the only medium for academic publishing

and also that by making an avenue available for academics to publish in a language other than English where almost all the research is published in English, for example ‘The ISI database includes 938,004 scientific papers published in 2002; only 3% are written in languages other than English (Jaffe 2003, p. 44). Such a venture would be welcome in other parts of the non-English speaking world, and in the Arab world specifically where the resources certainly exist to establish such a project and where Oman, Yemen and the UAE share an incredibly small 0.008 of mainstream journal article publications (Wayt 1995).

The example of the SciELO offers a great example of how a small effort to change the status quo and promote the use of the local language in academic discourse can have very positive results. The SciELO has spread to other South American countries and is currently one of the top search items on Google Scholar. Such endeavours establish that it is by no means axiomatic that English has to be the language of academia, although even in the case of the SciELO translation to English of journal articles plays a large role in the objectives and success of the project. What needs to be taken from this section of the chapter is the fact that whilst the dominance of English in academic and educational discourse cannot be denied, local languages certainly do have a role to play. Simple efforts, like that of the Hungarian Paul Bugat who introduced forty thousand new scientific terms into Hungarian resulting in a ‘transformed vocabulary’ (UNESCO 1953, p. 136) show that any language such as Arabic can be brought up to date with new terminology, even when the effort to do so is by a single individual.

5.2.3 Nationalist reasons for selecting an L2 as the MOI

Ansre (1979) outlines the argument of those who use nationalist reasons, or reasons of national unity to be more specific, as a reason to use a European language as the MOI. He outlines their argument thus

With so many languages and tribes in the country, there are tendencies towards tribalism and divisiveness and therefore it is better to use a neutral foreign language to achieve national unity (Ansre 1979, p. 11).

What this is saying is that in some post-colonial countries there were a number of competing local languages and so to avoid disenfranchising part of the population it was felt that the old colonial language, or indeed any foreign language, could act as a unifying force. An example of this occurred in Singapore; ‘English is the only one [language] which is not Asian in origin. It is hence regarded as “neutral” for in-group relations in Singapore’ (Rubdy 2001, p. 343). UNESCO comment on this in a similar way to Ansre (above) by forwarding the argument of those who favour using a European language as the MOI; ‘Using the vernacular [i.e. one of the local languages] impedes national unity’ (UNESCO 1953, p. 50). English has often been used in this way in countries such as India and Singapore. The cases of Malaysia and Singapore provide contrasting scenarios of the language policy debate. Whilst Singapore is often cited as a successful example of the use of an L2 as the MOI, Malaysia, which chose Bahasa as their national language has been often mentioned as a success story in the Muslim world, where different ethnic minorities live and work side by side (Gill 2004, Pakir 2004). In the case of Singapore the following rather lengthy quotation gives a good example of the way English was and continues to be perceived

While the status of English in the post-independence Third World declined or was reversed vis a vis the native languages, in Singapore it went from strength to strength, until today it is the language that enjoys the highest status and support among the nation's 2.6 [now 3.2] million people. There are four official languages in multi-racial Singapore – English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil – but in practice, English dominates, both in the institutional and private life of the nation. It is the medium of instruction in all schools and tertiary institutions. It is the only one of the four official languages whose informal use extends across all ethnic groups and socio-economic levels. Hence by any indicator – official status, social prestige, extent of use, number of speakers – English is the dominant language in Singapore (Lim 1989, p. 1).

Although there are real issues of national identity and unity at stake for Singapore, there is a question of how well a foreign language can represent a local culture, 'How can one deal with a language that is both a neutral medium for development and the bearer of foreign and undesirable values' (Pennycook 2004). It is also worth noting that the architect of Singapore's rapid economic and social development over the last half of the last century, the former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, in an interview with Taiwanese journalists said that he regretted using English as the MOI and if he could redo the decision he would have chosen Chinese instead (Pakir 1993).

If Singapore is advanced as the defining example of the need in multiethnic states with competing language interests for one language to dominate to forge national unity, and for that language to be English there are a number of other countries such as Tanzania and Malaysia to act as a counterbalance to that argument. Whereas Singapore chose English, a second language for the vast majority of the population, as the MOI in schools and universities, Malaysia went with a local language, Bahasa

Malaysia. In Tanzania, Kiswahili was chosen as the national language despite the fact that it was only spoken by 5% of the population (Roy-Campbell 1995). In both cases a degree of national unity was achieved and crucially there was no widespread discontent as a result of language policy.

An example of what can happen when the language issue is ignored can be advanced in the form of the Sudan. In Sudan as a result of language policies that favoured Arabic speakers, the Southern non-Arabic speaking population became disenfranchised and eventually revolted. This is widely held to have led to the first Sudanese civil war that lasted from 1955 until 1972 (Sandell 1982). The actual situation in Sudan is not quite so straightforward. To begin with the very fact that a language barrier existed in the country was a direct result of British colonial policies that sought to gain leverage with the people of Southern Sudan by anglicizing them, and by seeking to draw them closer to the government of Uganda to the South. One of the ways the British sought to do this was by removing Arabic as a linguistic force in the South and placing emphasis on English or local vernaculars. At the time of independence the Sudanese government decided to select Arabic as the national language and all government offices then used Arabic as the official language (ibid). To then suggest that if Sudan, like other former colonies, chose English the first civil war would have been avoided lacks accuracy. The cause of the first civil war was the language policies of the British colonialists and not the perfectly understandable decision by the newly independent Sudanese government to select Arabic as their official language of government. Had the British not engaged in some social engineering and prevented Southern Sudanese from learning Arabic, at the time of independence they could very easily have found jobs in government ministries. As it was, without Arabic they were basically excluded from the civil service and as a

result found themselves marginalized. It was this feeling of disenfranchisement that led to the outbreak of war.

To conclude this section it would be accurate to suggest that an analysis of history shows that whilst using an L2 such as English can have some beneficial national unifying results such as in Singapore the opposite, as in Sudan, can also be said to be the case. Also as in the case of Malaysia the L1 of a section of society, such as Bahasa in Malaysia, can be used to have the same unifying effect.

5.2.4 Demand reasons for selecting an L2 as the MOI

‘There may be resistance to schooling in the mother tongue by students, parents and teachers (UNESCO 2003, p. 16).

This quotation above from UNESCO sums up the demand situation well. Often policy decisions are forced to take into account the views of citizens, and to submit to their collective will even when this can be seen to be detrimental to the wider benefit of society. This demand-led phenomenon can be said to have been the case even during the colonial age, when English was viewed, as it is today, as being the key to many vocations. An example is the following quote from the Burney report of 1935 in Hong Kong into education provision in the British colony ‘there is an incessant demand on the part of the Chinese parents for their children to be taught [in] English’ (Burney 1935 p. 12 cited in Pennycook 1998, p. 124).

Part of the reasons why governments are not more active in the MOI debate, and in forwarding the case of L1 MOI is because parents simply do not want it. Take this example from India

Contributing to the government's ambivalence about the implementation of the new policy on the medium of education is the strong demand for English-medium instruction from parents (Annamalai 2004, p. 188).

De Swaan (2001) makes the same point with respect to the situation in Rwanda, when he says

Each time that someone has proposed replacing French as the language of instruction by an indigenous language, the parents have been the first to object: they want for their children the education that provides the best chance on the labour market and therefore, if they can afford it, schooling in the hegemonic language, French in the present case [Rwanda] (p. 105).

The same situation arises in many other contexts. Tsui (2004) highlights how the Colonial administration in Hong Kong used the wishes of parents as justification for not following the published research of its own educational consultants which suggested that the MOI should be a local language and instead opting for English. This is also commented on by Marsh et al (2000) when they say that the difference between the published research and the demand of parents created

...the paradoxical situation in which a British colonial government pressed for greater emphasis on Chinese instruction but faced stronger resistance from the local Chinese community, which wanted more emphasis on instruction in English (p. 309).

After the handover of Hong Kong from the British to the Chinese there was an initial effort to promote Cantonese as the MOI. However, parents despite their positive feelings towards Cantonese, overwhelmingly supported English medium schools. In

one survey of 805 adults, conducted in 2002, only 12.9% of respondents intended to send their children to schools where Cantonese was the MOI (ibid). Principals of schools that were forced to adopt Cantonese as the MOI complained that they had in fact become second class schools as a result. A similar situation prevails in Tanzania, where the Minister of Education Hon. Joseph Mungai said the following

I hear there is some pressure to change. It mostly comes from professors. My own opinion is that I have to take into account what the community wants. Is it the community that has asked for this change? I get a large number of applications from groups that want a licence to start English medium primary schools. I have not had a single application from anyone who wants to start a Kiswahili medium secondary school. The Tanzanian community is not thinking about this language issue. I hear it from professors. I don't hear it from the community. The day I hear it from the community I shall start thinking about it (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir 2004, p. 70).

The minister has an extremely valid point since politicians are installed to implement the will of the people. Certainly one assumes that in a functioning democracy that would be the case. The question that clearly needs to be asked here is: should not parents be free to choose the MOI for the children? This is not an easy question to answer since it really requires an in-depth analysis of the role of government in education and also the nature of any social contract in a particular society, all themes far outside the role of this thesis. What can be said is that there is evidence in favour of using an L1 as the MOI such that a case can be made for governmental intervention based on the idea that parents may not be correctly informed of all the factors when selecting the MOI for their children and also that the job of any government is to look at the wider costs and benefits to their society of any decision.

This was stated by Brimer et al when, after researching the MOI issue in Hong Kong, they concluded that the research evidence was so clear that leaving the decision to parents and schools was unjustifiable (1985 cited Tsui 2004). Often the result of leaving the decision to parents is extremely low enrolment in schools not offering English as the MOI. There were cases in Singapore of schools where Mandarin, Tamil and Malay were the MOI having to close as a result of low enrolment (Hornberger and Vaish 2008).

What have been highlighted above are arguments that suggest that parents have generally been against the adoption of the L1 as the MOI in favour of English. This however is not always the case. There are examples where parents do argue in favour of the L1 as MOI. May (2004) gives the example of parents in New Zealand who successfully established Maori-medium pre-schools. Jones and Martin-Jones (2004) provide an example where Welsh parents were key elements in setting up a Welsh medium school in Aberystwyth in Wales. These cases of parents wanting the L1 as the MOI, present in some developed countries is rare in developing countries, and parents, led by economic concerns related to issues of employability for their children, are generally in favour of using English or some other European language as the MOI. It is difficult to argue against such views from a micro-level and most parents in the developed world would probably make the same decision. In the final analysis the basic question that needs to be asked is 'How far should the requirements of native Arabic speakers to pursue their higher studies in the English language be seen as an inevitable response to market needs, and how far a symptom of neo-colonialist power politics in which Arabic is relegated as non-useful, and Arab culture is cast as other?' (Findlow 2006, p. 21). Whilst English maintains such dominance and importance worldwide it makes perfect sense for parents to want to educate their children in

English. Even if, as will be shown below, this has a detrimental effect on their academic performance generally, the bonus or value added of speaking English well is seen to mitigate any academic performance loss. This is certainly a valid objection to using the L1 as the MOI in the developed world.

5.2.5 Evidence against the use of an L2 as the MOI

The evidence against the use of an L2 as the MOI is plentiful and covers an extremely large number of countries. A quotation regarding the situation in Tanzania and South Africa is a good place to start, summing up as it does the general conclusion much contemporary research into language policy arrives at

A key finding of the research [into the MOI in Tanzania and South Africa] is that when a foreign language, English in this case, is used, there is a much larger spread in test performance between students. This means that a small group of students succeed while the vast majority sinks. The author therefore argues for working towards a goal whereby African children like children in industrialized countries may study in their own language. Pursuing this goal should be a centrepiece in poverty reduction strategies (Brock-Utne 2007a, p. 509).

That using the mother tongue as the MOI is beneficial is a widely held belief.

UNESCO says the following

Studies have shown that, in many cases, instruction in the mother tongue is beneficial to language competencies in the first language, achievement in other subject areas, and second language learning (UNESCO 2003, p. 15).

UNESCO also establishes support for mother tongue instruction in one of the principles of its 2003 report into global education saying that ‘Mother tongue instruction is essential for initial instruction and literacy and should be extended to as late a stage as possible’ (ibid, p. 31). The report continues to outline UNESCO’s position on mother tongue instruction saying

- Every pupil should begin his [or her] formal education in his [or her] mother tongue
- Adult illiterates should make their first steps to literacy through their mother tongue, passing on to a second language if they desire and are able
- If a given locality has a variety of languages, ways and means should be sought to arrange instruction groups by mother tongue
- If mixed groups are unavoidable, instruction should be in the language which gives the least hardship to the bulk of the pupils, and special help should be given those who do not speak the language of instruction (ibid).

All of these statements make it abundantly clear that UNESCO favours a situation where the MOI is the L1 of the student. The idea that using an L2 for the MOI is detrimental to students’ academic achievements has been mentioned frequently in the academic literature (e.g. Roy-Campbell 2006, Findlow 2006, Quentin Dixon 2005, Tollefson and Tsui 2004, Tsui 2004, Nical et al 2004, Yip et al 2003, Vaish 2005). The evidence behind some of these findings are revealing and worthy of extended mention. Several of the studies just cited will be briefly described here with a view to understanding the nature and the scale of the problem of using the L2 as MOI.

Yip et al engaged in a longitudinal study between the years 1999 and 2001 that tracked students in Hong Kong. Hong Kong was a British colony until 1997 when it

was returned to the Chinese. The majority of the population of Hong Kong speak Cantonese, a dialect of Chinese. During the British rule English was the sole language of governance until 1974 when Cantonese was given a partial role. The dominance of English continued until just prior to the handover in 1997 when Cantonese was given a more prominent role (Tsui 2004). Prior to the handover to the Chinese by the British, the MOI in most primary schools was Cantonese, whilst in most secondary schools it was English. In 1998, shortly after the handover the new administration adopted a new language policy for education laying out certain criteria that would dictate the MOI in schools. The new policy was based on the belief that students learn better when the MOI is the L1 (Education Department 1997 cited Yip et al 2003). Prior to the new policy schools in Hong Kong were free to choose their own MOI, with most deciding to teach in English (Yip et al 2003). The new policy stated that only schools that accepted students who were in the top 25% of students nationally could use English as the MOI (Yip et al 2003). The rationale behind this was that according to published research the top 30% of pupils are able to study effectively in the L2. Out of about 300 schools, this meant 114 schools (Yip et al, 2003 and Tsui, 2004) were cleared to use English as the MOI. The longitudinal study by Yip et al (2003, 2006) and Yip and Tsang (2006) studied the impact of this policy on the academic school achievement of students in Hong Kong in four subjects: Chinese, English, maths and science. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, students' achievement in science over a three year period was tracked. Fifty schools were chosen from across Hong Kong, twenty five each from the English medium schools and the Chinese medium schools. Students were given the Science Achievement Test (SAT) at the end of each of the three years covered by the study. Yip et al (2003) comment on the results from the SAT from year two of the

study, in the year 2000. It should be recalled that the English medium students represented the top 25% of students in Hong Kong. The Chinese medium students were categorized into high, medium and low based on the entrance criteria of the schools. One of the main findings of the study was that there existed a negative correlation between the Academic Aptitude Index (AAI) and the results of the SAT exam for year 2 of the study. The AAI is a score given to a student based on the results of the previous two years schooling, which is moderated by a standardised public aptitude test. The fact that a negative correlation existed between the AAI and the SAT seems to be at odds with what would normally be expected: high aptitude students should score higher on the science test. To explain why this is the case it is important to understand that the AAI is a score assigned prior to the students being streamed into English and Chinese medium schools. Basically what is happening is that the higher AAI scoring students get placed into English MOI schools, and when they take the SAT perform worse than the lower AAI scoring Chinese MOI students. The study finds that there is little evidence to support the idea that the top 25% of AAI students can study well in English, with the truth being that they perform less well than their less AAI scoring peers. The study offers the following conclusions, ‘...when students learn science in a second language that they have not yet mastered, they are placed at a distinct disadvantage relative to those who learn in their native language (Yip et al 2003, p. 325). Clearly a question from this conclusion relates to what ‘mastering of a foreign language’ means. Elsewhere Yip et al refer to this mastery of the foreign language as a ‘threshold’ (ibid, p. 303) proficiency. What this *threshold* level entails, how it can be measured or achieved, is not articulated in the 2003 study. In a private email correspondence between this author and Professor Yip, he responded to a question asking him to define the *threshold* level by saying:

The determination of the threshold proficiency in English for learning in EMI is a complicated issue. Whether a S1 [SAT 1 delivered in the first year of the study] (grade 7) student is capable of learning in English is based on his/her academic performance in Primary 5 and 6 [the two years on which the AAI is based] (personal correspondence 18/02/2009).

The concept of a threshold as mentioned in Yip et al (2003) is presumably a result of comments in the Education Commission report which took place in 1990 in Hong Kong. It stated that

...research has shown that students can study effectively in English only when they have passed a certain threshold of language competence in both their mother tongue and in English, the Working Group proposed that English-medium secondary education should be open only to those who had reached this threshold (Education commission 1990, p. 94 cited in Marsh et al 2000, p. 308).

The threshold level is associated with Cummins and his hypothesis that there was a level of language that students must attain in order to maximise the benefits of their academic studies (Cummins 2000). Although the threshold level of English proficiency at which using it as the MOI remains unclear what is clear is that in Hong Kong even placing a limit and stipulating that only the top 25% of students can study in English is a failed policy. Whatever this threshold level is, and it certainly is a valid criticism of the study that the authors do not seek at any point to clarify what this point is, it does not detract from the conclusion that students studying in English, even though they come from the top 25% of students in the country, suffer as a result of using an L2 as the MOI. Clearly any scenario, as in the case of the CASS in Oman,

whereby all students are expected to study in the L2, would, according to this research, be extremely problematic to justify academically.

There have been other large scale studies, most notably Marsh et al (2000). As with the Yip et al (2003) study, Marsh et al (2000) was situated in Hong Kong and sought to analyse the effects of MOI on content subjects. In the study 12,784 students from 56 different schools in Hong Kong. The students were taken from grade 7. For the next three years, that is grades 7, 8 and 9, the students were tested using a standardised achievement test in English, Chinese, mathematics, history, geography and science. The tests were delivered in the language of instruction used in that particular school, so students who were taught in Chinese were given the test in Chinese and students who studied in English were given the test in English. The main independent variable in the study was the MOI, and it is the effect of this variable that was essentially being researched. The results of the study revealed some interesting findings. Firstly as with Yip et al (2003) there was a substantial negative correlation between English instruction, i.e. English as MOI, and the post test achievement scores in science, history and geography, which led to the observation that ‘Despite the fact that these students were much brighter than average, their scores in these three subjects [science, history and geography] were much lower than average (Marsh et al 2000, p. 316). One further interesting finding was that the substantial negative correlation between the three subjects and the post test achievement became less substantial over the three years, thus suggesting that corrective action is possible to address the problem faced by those whose MOI in education is an L2.

The main criticism of both the Marsh et al (2000) and Yip et al (2003) study is that they both measure academic achievement in quite narrow terms. If the goal of parents, students and policy planners was to study the L2 as well as the content then it

may be that some lowering of the academic standard could be justified. However the goal in the CASS as expressed by policy planners was the establishment of world class higher education in the English medium, the emphasis was on content not language and hence these studies continue to hold direct relevance.

5.2.6 CLIL and immersion programmes

There are two strands of evidence that could be used to suggest that using an L2 as the MOI could have beneficial effects. The first of these relates to teaching content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and the second immersion. These two are often confused and the terms used interchangeably but they are in fact quite distinct.

(Lasagabaster and Sierra 2010). What they appear to have in common is the language goal of both approaches and in this they differ significantly with the context at the CASS where the focus is not on the acquisition of language, in this case English but on the content being taught; 'Immersion programs emphasize developing fluency in an initially unknown language through content-based teaching in the second/foreign language' (Swain and Lapkin 2005).

The establishment of the foundation year is indicative of that goal, with the idea being that students acquire English to permit them to study in English. Immersion programmes, as used for example in the US, are a useful model would the CASS move towards bilingual education.

5.2.7 The situation in the Arab World

The context of the current research is CASS in Oman. This being the case it is important to review the academic literature on the MOI in Oman and in the Middle East region. The first thing that can be said is that there is a paucity of published research on the subject which is surprising given that large numbers of citizens from the Middle East and from the GCC, Gulf Cooperation Council comprising Oman, Saudi Arabia, The UAE, Qatar and Kuwait, attend universities in the west. It would be expected that some of these students would return home and research the education system and in particular issues related to differences between the education they have experienced in the West and at home. Unfortunately this is not the case and there are only a handful of authors who have written on the subject in the mainstream academic journals. One of these is Findlow (2008, 2006, 2005) whose articles comment in depth on the state of play of higher education in the UAE with one of her papers (2006) examining the issue of medium of instruction in the Arab Gulf. It is worth spending a moment here to comment in detail on her paper and to report findings of immediate relevance to this study. Findlow outlines early on one of the areas she is investigating:

How far should the requirement for native Arabic speakers to pursue their higher studies in the English language be seen as an inevitable response to market needs, and how far a symptom of neo-colonialist power politics in which Arabic is relegated as non-useful, and Arab culture is cast as ‘other’? (2006, p. 21).

This question is essentially what this chapter is seeking to uncover. Her research, which adopts an ethnographic framework, is based on a number of individual

interviews and questionnaires amongst stakeholders. The situation in the UAE, where Findlow's (2006) study is based is similar to Oman: both are rentier states, both are Arabic and Muslim states, both have large expatriate labour populations and both are implementing education reform. In the UAE 'US-based [educational] systems were widely perceived to be the future of the country's higher education provision for the sake of maintaining global currency' (Findlow 2005, p. 291). Findlow highlights how a system of what she calls *linguistic dualism* has developed in the UAE, and the Gulf generally, where Arabic is viewed as the language of 'localism, tradition, emotions, religion' (2006, p. 25) and English viewed as the language of 'modernity, internationalism, business, material status, secularism' (ibid):

At the tertiary level, a divided epistemological (subject-related) paradigm sees 'cultural' or locally focused subjects such as Shari'a, Islamic studies, arts/humanities, social sciences and education taught mostly in Arabic, while subjects with a global orientation, especially technologically or commercially oriented ones, or applied sciences, are taught in English (Findlow 2006, p. 25).

This dualism mirrors what was expressed by Saudi students, and mentioned above, where Arabic was seen as basically a traditional language with traditional functions and English viewed as the language of today and tomorrow. Whether this linguistic dualism is a result of majority demand is hard to say, especially so in unconstitutional monarchies where citizens have no say in educational policy, or any policy for that matter. Zughoul suggests that it is the minority view and says that

...there [are] two opposing trends in the [Middle East] area; an overwhelming majority that strongly favors the exclusive use of Arabic in the Arab societies and educational institutions and a minority which is very influential in the

decision making process which tries hard to show “liberalism” and ‘openness’ and defends the use of the foreign language in some very important domains [such] as higher education (2002, p. 145).

Zughoul does not offer any evidence as to how he came to the conclusion that the majority favour the use of Arabic but there has been more comment in the mainstream press recently relating to the language of instruction in schools. In an article in the mainstream and popular English daily Arab News in Saudi Arabia a leading columnist, when commenting on English being used as the MOI in universities in Saudi Arabia, concluded that it would lead to a ‘cultural catastrophe’. He continued on to say that the use of English would undermine the educational system in Saudi Arabia and would not solve the underlying problem of a lack of achievement in the higher educational sector (Al-Sultan 2009). Commenting on the problem of faculty with poor language skills he says ‘Assuming faculty members who studied in the US or other English-speaking countries are capable of teaching in English is totally wrong. They may, on the contrary, cause a negative effect on their students’ (ibid). Whilst these comments are taken from a daily newspaper and are not supported or corroborated by any supporting evidence it is of interest since it shows the issue of the MOI is becoming a matter of mainstream discourse and that there are problems related to students’ competency in language and their ability to study in English that are noticeable. Another issue which has been raised is that of the cost of running preparatory year programmes, similar to the one being researched in this present study. In an article appearing in the English daily The National, published in the United Arab Emirates, it is claimed that the UAE Ministry of Education is seeking ways of replacing preparatory year programmes, which mainly specialize in English, as a result of the extravagant cost of running them (Lewis 2009). Returning to the

fact that students level of English is too low to study in English, this is also commented on by Al-Abbas when reviewing the situation in Jordan

Moreover, and based on the researcher's experience as a University Lecturer at Al-Isra University, and the results of the students in the general English language course (102 101 — University obligatory course), the level of the students in the English language is very low. It has been noticed, as well, by the researcher that most of the students who transfer from the scientific faculties to the humanities faculties do this in order to escape from the specializations where English is the language of instruction. In the meantime, it is a common phenomenon that students' registration in the English language sections in Al-Isra University depends mainly on the extent to which a lecturer uses Arabic (Al-Abbas 1996, p. 7).

From this it is clear that there exists a fundamental problem in the MOI in Jordan, with students selecting courses based not on academic concerns but on issues related to language. The situation exists as a result of students not being able to cope with the demands of studying in an L2 for which they have been poorly prepared. This is the case elsewhere in the Gulf, where little published research can be found on any of the major educational projects. In fact in Saudi Arabia the world's biggest English language teaching project is taking place in their new preparatory year program which consists of some 450 EFL teachers. Despite this there is a dearth of literature on the subject and without published research it is difficult to establish the efficacy or otherwise of these projects but from anecdotal evidence alone, the situation looks grim with poor quality and lowly qualified teachers teaching exclusively via the first language leading to the alienation of large sections of the student body.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter sought to evaluate academically the English medium fallacy, defined here as being the belief that efficacious education at the tertiary level can only take place when English is the medium of instruction. In order to do that several sub-questions were posed, and the chapter sought to answer those questions. Here each of the sub-questions will be addressed with a view to answering the main question related to the EMF.

Four reasons were advanced for why states may choose to implement a MOI that is not their L1; these were economic, nationalistic, linguistic and demand reasons. The economic reasons were related to two main aspects: the production of textbooks and the training of teachers. Whilst it is conceded that for many countries these costs may indeed be an obstacle to the introduction of an L1 MOI, in this particular context, i.e. the CASS in Oman, it could not be seen as a valid reason not to use Arabic, the L1. Nationalistic reasons, or reasons related to issues of national unity, were explored in some depth. In countries where different and competing ethnicities exist, the use of a MOI that is foreign to all could act as a unifying force. Again this is a valid argument, and contexts such as those in Singapore, support such a supposition. However, as with the previous reason, this does not lend itself well to the context in this study; the CASS in Oman. Oman is a country where the overwhelming the majority speak Arabic, and hence reasons of national unity could never be advanced as a valid reason for adopting English as the MOI. The next two reasons, linguistic and demand, certainly do apply in the case of the CASS in Oman. The linguistic argument in particular is worthy of merit, and could indeed be advanced as a reason to adopt English, as opposed to Arabic, as the MOI. The main issue here is the paucity

in Arabic of contemporary scientific terminology. What was shown here was that this paucity can be overcome if the will exists to change the situation. The example of the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO) in Brazil was advanced as a good example of how an effort can be made to challenge the dominance and hegemony of English in academic publishing and also to provide non-English users with an avenue to publish their research. Whilst this researcher accepts the validity of the argument that a language lacking scientific vocabulary hardly makes for a good MOI in science subjects, it is not accepted that this has to remain the case; languages can evolve. Efforts by various individuals, including one Paul Bugat have shown that a language can be made fit for academic consumption even by the solitary efforts of individual scholars.

Of all the reasons the demand reason is perhaps the most difficult to change without sustained political will. Governments exist to enact the public will, and if the public want English MOI education then it makes sound pragmatic political sense to provide them with it. In effect what would be required here would be a sustained campaign by governments, or by the academic community, to alter public opinion in this regard. Of course the question is whether governments should be involved in changing perceptions. The answer to this question is predicated on research, since if the research suggests that using an L2 as the MOI is negatively correlated with academic achievement, such as standardised aptitude tests or high school graduation scores, then surely governments have a responsibility to act, and irrespective of whether or not they do it would be expected that the academic community would take the lead in propagating the results of the research.

The final part of this chapter examined the research in this regard and what was found was that a large number of studies exist that support the assertion that there does

indeed exist a negative correlation between student achievement and using an L2 as the MOI. Two studies were examined in depth, both of them from Hong Kong, and both of them suggesting that a return to the L1 as the MOI would be a good idea. The second of the two studies examined, Marsh at al (2000) did provide an interesting insight which suggested that overtime, and with strong English language support, the negative results of using an L2 as the MOI could be reduced. This however does not detract from the perspective that there remains a strong negative result in science and humanities subjects from the use of L2 as the MOI.

As a concluding note, this chapter sought to investigate the English medium fallacy. From the discussion above it would be accurate to suggest that whilst many countries may adopt an L2 as the MOI in education for a number of reasons none of these are compelling enough to override the results of various and numerous research supporting the supposition that use of an L2 as the MOI is detrimental to the academic aspirations of students for the majority of students. This being the case, it would be correct to conclude that the decision by the CASS in Oman to select English as the MOI in their colleges could be classified as an example of the EMF in action.

Chapter Six

Research Design and Methodology

6.1 Introduction

This study is about language planning in the Gulf and is based on a yearlong case study at the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah (CASS) in southern Oman.

During the course of the year the researcher was employed as an English language lecturer by CfBT but seconded to the Omani MOHE. It was during the course of the academic year 2006-2007 that the researcher was employed at the CASS and it was during this period that the data for this research was collected.

The methodology adopted is qualitative in nature and adopts Holliday's (2002) understanding of the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research. Some of the key differences between the qualitative model and quantitative models will be highlighted below, making reference to this current research. The chapter then moves to an examination of the research instruments used in this present study and the rationale and justification for doing so. A brief conclusion summarizing the research methodology and design will close the chapter.

6.2 Qualitative research

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, based on the 'binary distinction' (Nunan 1992, p. 3) of research into qualitative and quantitative adopted by Holliday (2002). There is no consensus on this distinction being the only way to classify research and in fact contemporary academic trends may be moving away

from such static classifications (Nunan 1992). However, whilst the distinction between qualitative and quantitative may be increasingly fuzzy, the distinction certainly continues to be accepted in academic discourse (Smeyers 2008). Holliday (2002) describes qualitative research as being open ended, leading the investigator into uncharted and unforeseen areas in contrast to more rigidly defined areas of investigation in quantitative research. This certainly holds true for this present research which has evolved from the initial proposal as a result of events on the ground leading the researcher into avenues not previously expected. One example of this is the focus on the IELTS exams, and the importance this holds for any analysis of the ELC at the CASS, something unforeseen at the outset.

Holliday (ibid) comments how quantitative research is normative epistemologically, that statistics and experiment can lead to some degree of truth and conclusion based on established norms. On the other hand qualitative research seeks no such reassurance, and instead adopts an interpretative epistemology such that it views its domain as being one of comment and reflection, where conclusions would be indicative of a given reality and the limits of such conclusions being mere interpretation rather than definitive normative judgements. As such, when commenting on macro issues such as the medium of instruction at the CASS, or the relative merits of native speaker or non-native speaker teachers, the results here will be interpreted indicatively, without suggesting that the results can establish any degree of objective truth. On the contrary the approach here, in line with Holliday's perspective, is that evidence would support certain conclusions but that these conclusions would themselves only assist in a degree of interpretation of the given reality at the CASS.

6.3 Participants in this study

The participants in this study fell into three broad categories. The first of these were students at the CASS. The age range of the students was given by the CASS administration as being between the ages of 18 and 21. The students came from the foundation year of the CASS, numbering 194 students, and the first year of the undergraduate programme, numbering 176 students. These numbers, the total of 370 students and the number of students in the foundation year, 194, and the first year, 176, represent the total student body for those two years at the CASS during the academic year 2005-2006. As such they do not represent a sample and so a statistical measure such as an independent means t-test, which is used to determine how representative a sample of data is for the population as a whole, is not required.

The second category of participants was 25 English language teachers teaching on English as a second language courses in both the foundation and first year at the CASS. This category can be subdivided into native English speaking teachers (NESTs) and non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs). Further background on the teachers is provided below in section 6.3.1.

The final category of participants is classified as administrators. This includes three people directly connected to the CASS. Firstly, the English Programme Director, identified as Ms AD. Secondly, the Country Manager for CfBT, identified as Mr CF. Thirdly, a senior administrator in the Human Resources Department at the CASS, identified as Mr SS. One other individual was interviewed, the President of a new University in Saudi Arabia, identified as Dr AA. He was interviewed as a means of gauging how representative the findings of the CASS were to other contexts and also to provide a regional view of the issues under discussion in this research.

6.3.1 English language teachers at the CASS

The teachers at the CASS who completed questionnaires for this study came from 9 different countries: Canada, India, Iraq, Morocco, Oman, South Africa, Syria, UK, and the US. All had undergraduate degrees and 16 of them had masters degree in English language, TESOL or related subjects. 3 of the respondents had doctoral degrees. 7 of the teachers had a CELTA, the Cambridge English Language Teaching to Adults certificate. 2 of the respondents with a CELTA also had a DELTA, the Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults.

6.4 Research instruments

A number of research instruments are employed in this study in a bid to triangulate the data to increase the validity of the research. Triangulation is here defined as being the use of multiple sources of data of the same phenomena in order to increase the validity of a given research project (Stake 2005, p. 454). The use of triangulation assists in the development of *thick* research, defined as being ‘the importance of taking into account all of the factors which may have an effect on the phenomena under investigation’ (Nunan 1992, p. 58). The distinction between *thick* and *thin* research is articulated as follows by Denzin (1994)

A thin description simply reports facts, independent of intentions or circumstances. *A thick* description, in contrast, gives the context of an experience, states the intentions and meanings that organized the experience, and reveals the experience as a process (Denzin 1994, p. 505 cited Holliday 2002, p. 79)

In order to facilitate the production of a *thick* study and to triangulate the data the following forms of data have been collected as part of this study: questionnaires, structured interviews and a descriptive journal. Below each of these will be explained in detail, including the rationale behind their respective design and/or selection for this research project.

6.4.1 Questionnaires

Two different questionnaires were used in this study, one for teachers at CASS and other Colleges of Applied Sciences and one for the entire student body of the CASS ELC. Below I will explain the design of each, the way they were distributed and comment on their validity and reliability as research tools. Both the teachers' and students' questionnaires were used to solicit their views, anonymously, on the three fallacies related to this research.

6.4.1.1 Teacher questionnaire

The questionnaire designed for the English teaching faculty at the CASS and other Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman underwent a number of revisions. There were two versions, one for native speaker teachers and one for non-native speaker teachers. The final versions can be found attached as Appendix A (native speaker teacher) and Appendix B (non-native speaker teacher) at the end of this study. The questionnaire was divided into five sections. Four of these related directly to the three main areas under investigation in this study, viz. the native speaker fallacy, the L2 fallacy and English medium fallacy. Section five of the questionnaire, perhaps clumsily, is in fact an extension of section three which deals with the English medium fallacy, under the heading as 'Bilingual Education'. The questions were designed to give as

much information as possible in the three areas, asking a number of different questions to ascertain teacher's views on a range of issues. The questionnaire was piloted on one English teacher prior to its dissemination. The teacher in the pilot, who had resigned and was leaving the College shortly afterwards was asked if he minded completing the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher and so that any ambiguity in the questions could be made clear and also so that any questions could be answered, thus allowing for modifications in the design. In response to several questions where the responder queried the meaning of a particular item the question was rephrased to make the meaning clearer, or was removed entirely and replaced by a different item. With a limited number of teachers in CASS it was decided against piloting the questionnaire a second time. With hindsight it may have been better to do so, to assess the changes that had been implemented.

The questionnaire was delivered in two phases. The first involved teachers at the CASS. During the course of the academic year 2006-2007 faculty in the English language department became aware of the research being undertaken by the researcher and the nature and scope of this research. The questionnaire was thus not unexpected. A copy of the questionnaire with accompanying instructions was placed in an envelope and left on the desk of each ELT. The instructions made it clear that the questionnaire was anonymous though some of the questions made identification of the responder possible and hence it was assumed that those who wished to conceal their identity would not fill in those questions. As it happens all the responders did answer these questions but the researcher did receive comments back from some of those who completed the questionnaire that suggest that it would have been better not to have included those questions that made identification of the author possible.

However the majority of responders appeared to have no issue with this, although

their silence on the matter cannot be taken as guaranteed consent. Again, with hindsight, it perhaps would have increased the reliability and validity of the results to have withdrawn all the questions which made identifying the responder possible.

The researcher received very little feedback from any of the responders as to the design of the questionnaire, and so perhaps it is fair to assume that in the main it was easy to follow and the questions comprehensible.

6.4.1.2 Student questionnaire

The questionnaire that was delivered to the students was a more challenging prospect than that delivered to the ELTs for a number of reasons the primary one being language. Students at the CASS in the ELC had an extremely broad range of English language competency. Using the IELTS scale, students could be said to have a range of anywhere between 2.5 and 6 points. This is difficult to say with a large degree of accuracy since the students entering the CASS were not IELTS tested and so this assessment is based on the students' performances in tests throughout the academic year. In any case, there were a large and significant number of students, easily the vast majority, who would have been unable to cope with the demands of responding to the questionnaire in English. For this reason, and to ensure that students were aware of exactly what was being asked of them, a decision was made to run the questionnaire in Arabic. The Arabic version of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix C, and the English one as Appendix D. This decision led to a number of complications which will be highlighted here.

The first complication, and the most significant, was one of nomenclature and in particular the use of the term *native speaker*. After extensive discussion with the HOD and an Omani colleague at the university, both native speakers of Arabic, it was

decided initially to use the Arabic equivalent of the term mother tongue. However after the first trial of the questionnaire and subsequent comments from the students it became clear that the term *mother tongue* was misleading. Comments from one of the senior administrators in the CASS, an Omani national, during informal conversation and later in interview made it clear that the term *mother tongue* was understood very differently from the term *native speaker*. In the interview, he said the following in response to the definition of the person whose mother tongue is English

I think that the definition of the person whose mother tongue is English is that person whose mother is English and whose father is English. However is the mother tongue of a person whose parents, mother and father, are Arab from the Gulf and who [i.e. the parents] emigrated to, for example, the UK forty years ago and who was born in the UK, English? I don't accept that that person's mother tongue is English because I think the mother tongue always refers back to the two parents. His acquiring of the English is only because he was born in the UK, had he been born in the Gulf region his mother tongue would have been the same as his parents [i.e. Arabic].

From this it is clear that *mother tongue* is understood as a term to define ethnic origin. Native speaker is used in the English version of the questionnaire in a number of different contexts, one of which asks students to stipulate which teachers they regarded as native speakers. Had the term *mother tongue* been used, essentially what students would have been asked was what they considered the racial or ethnic origin of the teachers to be. As such teachers who were, for example, ethnically Arab, as in the quotation above, would not be regarded as mother tongue speakers of English, not based on any linguistic measure but simply because they were being asked a different question in Arabic to the one in English. To clarify this, after extensive discussion

with the HOD, a native Arabic speaker and specialist in contrastive analysis, and several Omani colleagues it was decided that the term *mother tongue* could be used, since this was the only term in Arabic available that resembled native speaker, only if followed by an explanation making the contextual meaning here clear. The Arabic used for the definition of the native speaker was

الأساتذة الذين تعتبر اللغة الإنجليزية لغتهم الأم، أي أن اللغة الإنجليزية كانت أول لغة تعلموها أو تعلموها في طفولتهم

Translated as ‘that teacher whose mother tongue is English, i.e. English was the first language they learned or they learned English during their childhood’. The Arabic used here makes use of the definition of the native speaker given in chapter three of this study, where the conditions of first language learnt and language learning occurring during childhood were used as being characteristic of the native speaker. The following lengthy quotation serves as justification for ensuring that the meaning the term *native speaker* is clear

In the case of student’s perceptions, one factor deserves careful attention in future research. That is how do students define NS and NNS? Anecdotal evidence suggests that, from some student’s viewpoint, all Caucasians (including Finns, Germans, Russians, and Swedes, for instance) are NS of English. Other students, especially Asian-Americans, may not consider American-born Asians to be native speakers of English simply because they are not Caucasian. Hence, when pilot testing a questionnaire for use in survey research, or when planning interviews, researchers should ensure that their student informants have a reasonable understanding of the terms NS and NNS (Braine 2006, pg22).

Although the detailed explanation provided on the student questionnaire was quite cumbersome and garrulous, it was felt to be the only way to communicate to the students what was meant by the term *native speaker*. This highlights one important feature of the questionnaire generally. The English version, attached as Appendix D, is not a word for word translation of the Arabic. The process was actually the reverse with the English being written first and then the translation in Arabic prepared. As the translation began it became increasingly clear that conveying the meaning of the English was quite a complex process. The Arabic translation underwent some 10 different revisions, with input from the HOD and Omani colleagues. Oftentimes the problem was not only linguistic but also students' lack of familiarity with questionnaires. There was also always the suspicion amongst some of the students that the questionnaires were from the official CASS Administration and so it became necessary to stress to them the independent nature of the research, the fact that it was not linked at all to the official CASS Administration and that the results were anonymous.

The questionnaire was piloted twice, on both occasions in the researcher's office with the researcher present. Changes that were undertaken after the first pilot were:

Question 2 (a) was unclear. It needed to be re-written to make abundantly clear the meaning of the word *expertise* in Arabic (the word *خبرة* was being used) which didn't seem to be clear. An alternative, *إحترافاً*, was used, which means professional.

Question 4 – One of the teacher's names was in short form so I need to replace it with her full name.

Question 4 – The student asked if it was only the teachers who taught him who should be circled otherwise he would just be guessing. To solve this problem the instructions were made more explicit.

Following the modifications highlighted above the questionnaire was piloted a second time, on a different student, but again in the researcher's office with the researcher present. Following the second piloting a single modification was made. In the original questionnaire, question one had the names of two teachers listed as examples for each option to give students an example of what was meant by a native and non-native speaker. On reflection that was a poor decision given the fact that part of the questionnaire was designed to elicit from students their understanding of who was and was not a native speaker but it also led to confusion in the mind of the student engaged in the pilot of the questionnaire who thought that question one only referred to those teachers specifically mentioned as examples! This was indicative of what the HOD had advised when he was asked for advice regarding the design of the questionnaire. His response was that students in the CASS were very unfamiliar with questionnaires of this type and since he had been at the College, which was a considerable number of years, no one had engaged in any research involving questionnaires with students. As such he advised that the design of the questionnaire be as clear as possible, with all instructions explicit and leaving nothing for the students to understand implicitly. It's worth pointing out here that the idea of making questionnaires clear and comprehensible is certainly not something specific to the Omani context, as Nunan (1992) points out it is a given of any questionnaire design process that the questions be worded in an intuitive manner, however the point being made here is that this occurred to an exceptional degree at the CASS due to the students' lack of familiarity with questionnaires generally.

Prior to distributing the questionnaire, permission was sought from the Dean of the CASS, who was informed by the HOD of the purpose of the research and the intention to distribute the questionnaire to all students in the foundation and first year. These were the only two years in the college who were following the new English medium system. A decision was taken, again after advice was sought from the HOD and an Omani colleague of the researcher, to deliver the questionnaire in a short period of time. Ideally, the questionnaire would have been undertaken at one time, in one sitting but with such a large number of students (n=370) this was not possible. As an alternative the questionnaire was distributed over two days. The HOD, an Omani colleague and the researcher delivered the questionnaire to students towards the end of their classes. Teachers were informed in advance that this was going to happen. As far as the researcher was able to ascertain, the individual who distributed the questionnaire remained in the classroom whilst the questionnaire was being completed. This may have adversely affected the results, though neither the Omani colleague nor the HOD thought that this would be the case given that prior to students beginning the process of completing the questionnaire, the purpose was explained to them in Arabic and they were ensured of total anonymity. In particular they were asked not to look at their peers' papers nor to copy anyone else's answer.

6.4.2 Interviews

A number of interviews were conducted to attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the different factors at play at the CASS. It was felt that interviewing key stakeholders involved with the foundation year at the CASS would provide a deeper insight than questionnaires. It was hoped that the interviews would provide a more

macro level overview of the CASS and also shed light on some of the reasons for the observed phenomena.

All of the questionnaires followed, essentially, the same format which, based on Nunan's (1992) classification, were structured interviews based on this definition

[In] the structured interview, the agenda is totally predetermined by the researcher, who works through a list of set questions in a predetermined order (Nunan 1992, p. 149).

This does not match exactly what took place in some of the interviews where responses by interviewees led the interviewer to modify slightly the order of questions, to refrain from asking some questions or to ask some questions not previously intended. This was done to ensure that the major goal of the interviews, to provide an overview of the CASS and the reasons behind some of the decision making, were achieved. Had the interviews been more rigid it would have been difficult to react to the interviewees previous answer in such a way as to probe sufficiently to ask questions in the necessary areas.

Initially it was intended that the list of interviewees would include the HOD, the Dean of the CASS, the country director of CfBT, the programme director for the ELC, the coordinator for the ELC from VUW and the general director for all Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman. As it transpired from this list only the country director of CfBT and the programme director for the ELC were interviewed. The remaining individuals either refused to be interviewed or could not be contacted. Some other individuals were interviewed as it was felt their views would enhance the study. These included a former Dean of the CASS, a senior member of the Personnel Department at the CASS and the rector of a new university in the Gulf region. The

last individual was interviewed with a view to providing a more general impression of the concepts under investigation.

All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Most of the interviews, with the exceptions of the interviews with the former Dean of the CASS and the senior member of the Personnel Department, were conducted in English. The latter two were conducted entirely in Arabic or partially in Arabic, with the researcher providing the translation for the subsequent transcription. All the interviews were transcribed and are attached as appendices.

6.4.3 Descriptive journal

The descriptive component of this research takes the form of a brief journal that the researcher kept during the course of the fieldwork. The journal covers the academic year 2006-2007 and comments only on matters which the researcher considered noteworthy. The study is not an ethnographic study and so unlike a study such as Holliday (1991) where the only source of data was observations, hence the large amount of observational detail recorded, in this study the journal is only one small part of the data collected and hence it is limited in scope. The journal appears at the end of the study as Appendix L. The date of the entry using standard British notation appears on the left followed by the journal entry on the right.

6.5 Analysis of IELTS results

The final research component of the study is an analysis of the IELTS results of a random selection of students in the CASS at the end of the academic year 2005/2006. The small number of the sample, 24, serves as a valid limitation to this data yet the students were taken from all groups at random. The IELTS, an acronym for

International English Language Testing Service, is an exam that is jointly owned by the British Council, IDP IELTS Australia and Cambridge ESOL. It is a test of general English proficiency and used by over 6000 institutions worldwide as part of their entry and admissions criteria (IELTS 2009). The rating scale used for the IELTS is shown below in table 1. Although these bands can never be said to be fully representative of any candidate's English language proficiency they do offer a helpful guide and as a result are used by a large number of universities throughout the world as a key indicator of a candidate's English language ability.

Table 1 IELTS Band Scores

9	Expert user
8	Very good user
7	Good user
6	Competent user
5	Modest user
4	Limited user
3	Extremely limited user
2	Intermittent user
1	Non user
0	Did not attempt the test

Source: (IELTS 2009)

In chapter eight references will be made to the IELTS test and the above rating scale whilst analysing the scores of the students and their subsequent preparation for an English medium education.

6.6 Data analysis

The following chapter explains presents in detail the data that was collected. Here a brief overview of how the data was analysed will be presented.

The data was analysed using the SPSS statistical package. To classify the data only nominal data scales were used. Statistical analysis was then run on the data using SPSS to produce chi square values for the student data sets. The reasons for choosing this particular statistical test are outlined below.

The researcher was working at the CASS at the time this study. Clearly this presents the possibility of researcher bias. However whilst it is accepted that it is possible that the researcher could insert some bias into the events recorded herein, specifically the events viewed in the journal, the data was as recorded and analysed objectively with the researcher acting as an unbiased agent.

6.7 Ethical considerations in the study

Ethical considerations were at the forefront of this study. All participants have been granted anonymity and respondents to any of the questionnaires were not asked to identify themselves. The key ethical consideration related to the role of the researcher who was an employee at the time and also the inclusion of a small ethnographic component in the form of a journal, attached as appendix J.

From the outset the researcher made it clear to the HOD of the English department, the Dean of the CASS, and all the teachers in the English department that he was engaged in research including an ethnographic component. During the collection of the questionnaires care was taken to ensure confidentiality on behalf of the respondents. This included asking respondents to return the questionnaires to a third person in unidentifiable plain white envelopes.

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter sought to describe the process whereby data was collected for this study. It outlined the different research instruments used and the iterations some of the instruments, such as the questionnaire went through, to get to the final version. The main phase of data collection lasted for one academic year, during 2006-2007, although interviews with individuals not directly connected with the CASS continued until 2009. The following chapter presents the data collected.

Chapter Seven

Data Analysis

7.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the findings from the questionnaires used as a source of data in this study. Three different questionnaires were distributed, one to 370 students, one to 15 native speaker teachers and one to 10 non-native speaker teachers. The teaching body was small at the CASS and the author of this study was familiar with all of them and was able to delineate who was a native speaker and was not based on the definition offered in chapter three of this study. There were two other sources of data: a series of personal interviews with people directly connected to the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah, (CASS), and with others holding leadership positions throughout the Gulf region whose views and opinions add value and insight to this study.

The study is located in the genre of language policy, using the concept of linguistic imperialism as the theoretical basis. The questions being asked concern the implementation of the English language components in the foundation and first year programmes and the decision to change the language of instruction on the degree programmes from Arabic to English. In order to answer these questions a framework was developed containing three main variables: the native speaker fallacy, the L2 fallacy and English medium fallacy. If any one of these were present, it could be argued that Linguistic Imperialism was present in the CASS. The data will be analysed below thematically, with each of the three research areas being analysed

separately. Before that some initial findings related to the respondents will be highlighted.

Table 2 NST and NNSTs comparative experience and qualifications

	n=	Number of years teaching experience Mean (years)	Masters Degree	Doctoral Degree
NSTs	15	16.93	10(66.7%)	1(6.7%)
NNSTs	10	15.90	9(90%)	3(33%)

Throughout the analysis below the convention of using NST to refer to native speaker teachers and NNST to refer to non-native speaker teachers will be maintained, as is done throughout this study. A brief observation about the teachers which may assist in understanding the analysis which follows is that the mean experience of the two sets of teachers is almost the same, as shown above in table 2. As can be seen from the table the two sets of teachers are evenly matched in terms of numbers of years of experience but not in terms of qualification where NNSTs are more qualified than their NST colleagues with almost a third more holding both masters degrees and doctoral degrees; hence the argument often used that expatriate NSTs have less experience (e.g. Medgyes 1999) is not true of this study

Before beginning the analysis and presentation of the data it is important to recall that the questionnaire was distributed at the end of the academic year, 2006-2007. The relevance of this timing is that it means that students in the foundation year had

completed one academic year of schooling at the hands of the teachers, whilst those in the first year had completed two academic years of schooling.

7.2 Definition of the native speaker

The teachers were asked to write down what they understood the term ‘native speaker’ to mean. The answers have been reproduced in their entirety owing to a number of factors. Firstly, they are relatively few in number and hence reproducing them in full is practical. Secondly, despite the similarity between some of the responses, they each offer an insight into the thinking of the teachers in CASS and hence adopting a system of codification whereby responses would be coded and then tabulated, would not convey the necessary meaning of the individual responses. Finally, reproduction in full of the responses is the most effective way of ensuring that the reader is given an objective account of what the respondents actually said. Below are the responses, identified in parentheses as either NST or NNST. Analysis of the statements follows the listing of the statements.

The Meaning of ‘Native Speaker’

1. Someone who has communicated in English since birth (NST).
2. Person raised from early childhood (under 4) in an English speaking home and educational environment (NST).
3. Someone who is brought up in a country where the first language is English and/or where the guardian(s) parent(s) of that person speak English as a first language (NST).
4. A person born in an English speaking country where English is the first language (NST).

5. English is the 1st language –spoken at home (not necessarily) educated in English – speaking environment exclusively [in English]. Probably (but perhaps not) raised/grown up in an English speaking country (NST).
6. A person who was born and grew up in an English country, who has absorbed the culture, including nursery rhymes, fairy tales etc from an early age and who is familiar with the way of thinking of the people living in the target language country, by attending school and completing further education there and possibly working there. I think you cannot learn these things from a book and I strongly believe there is no substitute for that. For example, Indians speaking Indian English and living in India are not native speakers. The cultural element is lacking and they think and feel like Indians, not Americans or Brits (NST).
7. 1st mother tongue is English (NST).
8. Someone whose mother tongue is English or someone who has communicated regularly in English since a young age, say seven or eight years old (NST).
9. Someone whose first language is English (NST).
10. Someone whose English competence has reached what is commonly regarded as native speaker level (NST).
11. Someone who learned English (with or without other languages) as a child and continues to use it. So for me it's not necessarily the first language (NST).
12. A teacher whose mother tongue is English (NST).
13. Anyone whose proficiency (speaking, reading, writing etc) is spontaneous – it's a rather politically loaded term (NNST).
14. The person whose mother tongue is English (NNST).
15. A teacher whose mother tongue is English (NNST).

16. Citizen of England, US or any country in which English is the first spoken language (NNST).
17. A person who acquired English as their first (second, third etc) language at birth and used this language during the ages of 1-7 years (NNST).
18. The person who is born into an indigenous family and speaks the language of that family as his or her first language, not as his or her foreign language (NNST).

Analysis of the responses shows that 28% (n=5) of respondents suggested that a characteristic of a native speaker is that language is learned from birth. A third of respondents, 33%, held that a native speaker is one who learnt the language from an early age, with two respondents specifying an exact age before which the language should have been learnt, namely 4 and 7 years old. 28% of the respondents believed that learning the language in an English-speaking country was a necessary condition of being a native speaker. Finally, 28% of the respondents chose to define the *native speaker* by suggesting that the native speaker of English is the one whose *mother tongue* is English.

7.3 Native and non-native speaker preferences: students' views

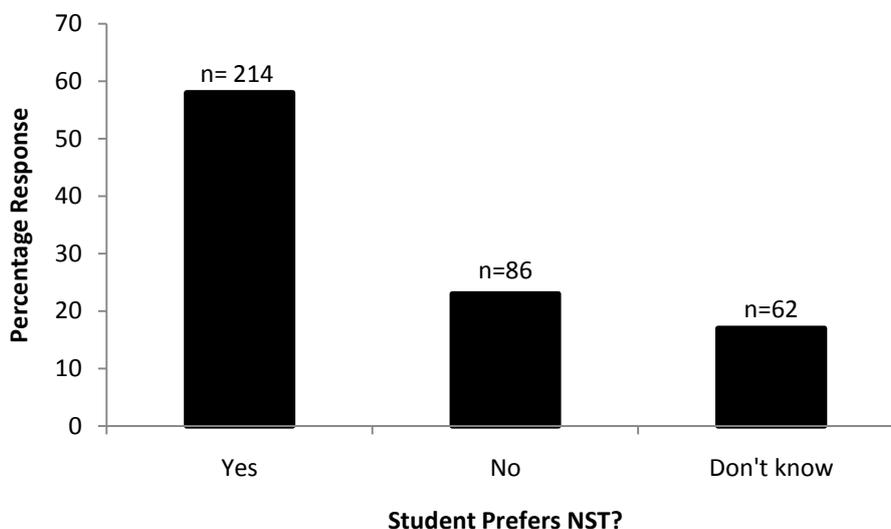
In all the tables that follow, for every question, the number stated is the number of respondents for each response followed by the percentage in parenthesis. Students were asked in a number of different ways about their preference for NSTs over NNSTs or vice versa. In the student questionnaire attached as Appendix D (the original in Arabic is attached as appendix C), questions 1, 2,4 and 6 all relate to

students preference for either NSTs or NNSTs. In order to increase the validity of the conclusions drawn from these answers the students were essentially asked the same thing in a number of different ways. Below the various different responses to the questions will be analysed. The statistical package SPSS (now known as PASW) was used to generate χ^2 values for the student responses. The results are attached as appendix K. A χ^2 test was chosen since it was felt that the key assumptions, according to Larson-hall (2009) of (a) independence of observations, i.e. that the number participants is equal to the number of observations and (b) that the data was normally distributed, i.e. there was at least 5 cases for each cell in almost all cases was met.

As a benchmark it is worth beginning with the most explicit of the questions, that is question 6 which asked students outright whether they preferred to be taught by NSTs or NNSTs.

The responses to question 5 in which the students were asked ‘Do you prefer to be taught by native speakers?’ are shown below as Fig 5.

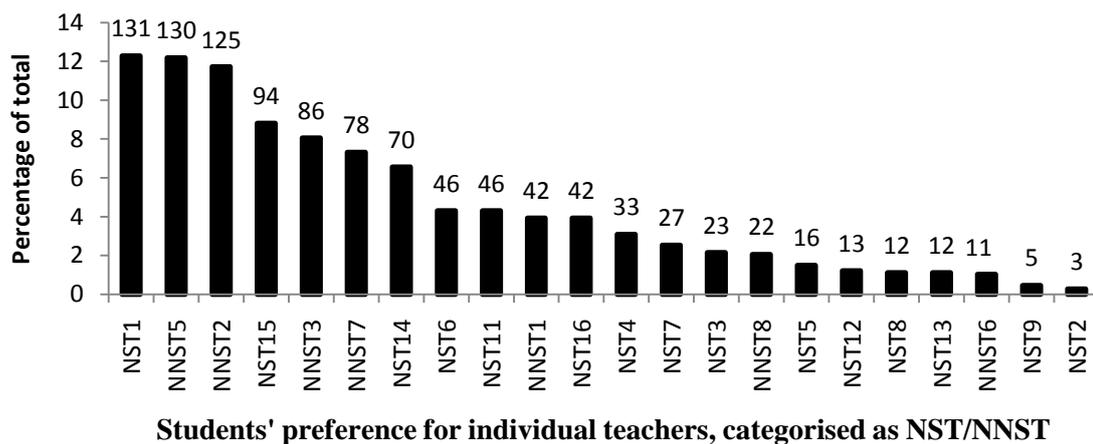
Figure 5 Question 5: Students’ preferences for NST and NNSTs



The numbers above each bar represents the number of respondents, n. What Figure 5 above shows is that students favoured NSTs over NNSTs by a ratio of almost 3:1, with 214, 57.8%, of students in favour of being taught by NSTs, 86, 23.3%, of students not wishing to be taught by NSTs and 62, 16.8% being unsure.

Figure 6 shown below shows the results of question three where students were asked to name their favourite teacher. The native speaker teachers were labelled NST1 to NST15 and the non-native speaker teachers NNST1-NNST10. Not all of the teachers appear below, rather only those who students acknowledged as being their favourite teacher.

Figure 6 Students' favourite teachers



As a means of corroborating the results in fig 5, students were asked in question four to name their three favourite English teachers. The students wrote down the actual names of teachers and these were then assigned a status as NST or NNST based on the definition of a NST given earlier in chapter three. This was possible because, as stated earlier in this chapter, the researcher was familiar with all the teachers at the CASS. The results of this are shown in fig 6, where it can be seen that NNSTs figure prominently. The numbers above each bar represent the number of students who

voted for that teacher. What can be seen from fig 6 is that 3 out of the top 5 are NNSTs.

In order to delve deeper into the reasoning of students behind their preferences for NSTs or NNSRS students were asked to state who they preferred to teach them the following language courses: grammar, reading, listening, speaking and writing.

Responses to these questions are show below in tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3 All Students views on NST/NNST efficacy at teaching the five language courses

Which teacher is best at teaching:	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Native Speaker	93 (25.1)	237 (64.1)	182(49.2)	253(68.4)	118(31.9)
Non-Native Speaker	247 (66.8)	80 (21.6)	115(31.1)	93(25.1)	171(46.2)
Both the same	28 (7.6)	52 (14)	73(19.7)	24(6.5)	81(21.9)
No response	2 (0.5)	1 (0.3)	0	0	0
Total	370(100)	370(100)	370(100)	370(100)	370(100)

Table 4 Foundation Students views on NST/NNST efficacy at teaching the five language courses

Which teacher is best at teaching:	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Native Speaker	48(24.7)	114(58.8)	77(39.7)	122(62.9)	58(29.9)
Non-Native Speaker	125(64.4)	46(23.7)	78(40.2)	53(27.3)	98(50.5)
Both the same	20(10.3)	33(17.0)	39(20.1)	19(9.8)	38(19.6)
No response	1(0.5)	1(0.5)	0	0	0
Total	194(100)	194(100)	194(100)	194(100)	194(100)

Table 5 First Year Students views on NST/NNST efficacy at teaching the five language courses

Which teacher is best at teaching:	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Native Speaker	45(25.6)	123(69.9)	105(59.7)	131(74.4)	60(34.1)
Non-Native Speaker	122(69.3)	34(19.3)	37(21)	40(22.7)	73(41.5)
Both the same	8(4.5)	19(10.8)	34(19.3)	5(2.8)	43(24.4)
No response	1(0.6)	0	0	0	0
Total	176(100)	176(100)	176(100)	176(100)	176(100)

Tables 3,4 and 5 above display the results of question 1 where students were asked who they thought was better at teaching the five different language courses in the college. Table 3 shows the results for all students and tables 4 and 5 for foundation and first year students respectively. In Table 3 the students preferred NSTs for three of the courses; reading, listening and speaking, and NNSTs for two of the courses; grammar and writing. Comparing the three tables, and in particular the foundation year students with the first year students, a number of observations can be made. Firstly, there is a negative difference between the foundation and the first year, as represented in tables 4 and 5, in the view that NNSTs were better at teaching four of the courses: reading, listening, speaking and writing. The listening course was the largest of these *negative* values, with a difference of almost 20% between the first year and the foundation year. Again, because these are not the same students it would be incorrect to label these as falling, that is why the term negative difference is employed. The second observation, related to the first one, is that this negative difference is reflected in a positive difference between the foundation and first years for subjects the students think NSTs are better at teaching.

The χ^2 values were insignificant at the 0.05 level when a comparison of NSTs and NNSTs was conducted, with the exception of listening and speaking. For listening the p-value was highly significant at 0.000 and for speaking the p-value is provided as 0.009, again significant at the 0.05 level, suggesting a significant difference in the way that the foundation and first year students viewed NSTs and NNSTs for the teaching of these skills. Reasons why this could be the case will be discussed in chapter 8.

The results of question one which asked *who do you prefer to teach you the following language courses: grammar, reading, listening, speaking and writing?* are shown below in tables 6,7 and 8.

Table 6 All Students' views on NST/NNST efficacy in different areas

Which teacher:	Is more professional	Understands learner needs more	Makes learning easier	Is an all-round better teacher
Native Speaker	129(34.9)	39(10.5)	70(18.9)	91(24.6)
Non-Native Speaker	158(42.7)	289(78.1)	235(63.5)	159(43)
Both the same	80(21.6)	39(10.5)	62(16.8)	118(31.9)
No response	3(0.8)	3(0.8)	3(0.8)	2(0.5)
Total	370(100)	370(100)	370(100)	370(100)

Table 7 Foundation Year Students' views on NST/NNST efficacy in different areas

Which teacher:	Is more professional	Understands learner needs more	Makes learning easier	Is an all-round better teacher
Native Speaker	65(33.5)	16(8.2)	40(20.6)	47(24.2)
Non-Native Speaker	86(44.3)	157(80.9)	121(62.4)	83(42.8)
Both the same	43(22.2)	19(9.8)	32(16.5)	64(33)
No response	0	2(1)	1(0.5)	0
Total	194(100)	194(100)	194(100)	194(100)

Table 8 First Year Students' views on NST/NNST efficacy in different areas

Which teacher:	Is more professional	Understands learner needs more	Makes learning easier	Is an all-round better teacher
Native Speaker	64(36.4)	23(13.1)	30(17)	44(25)
Non-Native Speaker	72(40.9)	132(75)	114(64.8)	76(43.2)
Both the same	37(21)	20(11.4)	30(17)	54(30.7)
No response	3(1.7)	1(0.6)	2(1.1)	2(1.1)
Total	176(100)	176(100)	176(100)	176(100)

The first observation is that the students favoured the NNSTs in each of these measures over NSTs. Examining the differences individually it can be seen in that the measure of empathy, i.e. *understands learner needs more*, is greatly in favour of the NNST with a large difference of 56% between NSTs and NNSTs. There is also a large difference of 37% when it comes to *making learning easier*. NNSTs are also seen as more professional and as being all-round better teachers. Interestingly as can

been in tables 7 and 8 there is no great change between years one and two. In other words students have these strong views and an additional year of instruction, where they may have perhaps matured educationally and intellectually, has not changed their position at all.

The χ^2 values were insignificant at the 0.05 level when a comparison of NSTs and NNSTs was conducted when comparing the efficacy of NSTs and NNST efficacy suggesting that statistically the students did not distinguish in a significant manner between NSTs and NNSTs.

7.4 Native and non-native speaker preferences: teachers' views

Teachers at the CASS and at other colleges were given a written questionnaire to complete. The total number of responses was 25, made up of 15 NSTs and 10 NNSTs. In this section the answers to section one of the questionnaire, relating to NSTs and NNSTs, will be reported and analysed. The questionnaire given to the NSTs differed slightly from that given to NNSTs. The former is attached as Appendix A, and the latter as Appendix B. The same set of questions appears in both the NST and NNST questionnaire with several exceptions, so that the same question had different question numbers at times in the two questionnaires. As such, all references to question numbers in the following analysis refer to the NST questionnaire unless otherwise indicated. Where a question only occurs in one of the two questionnaires, it will be identified as such.

Tables 9 and 10 below show NST and NNST views respectively on their respective efficacy at teaching the five language courses: grammar, reading, listening, speaking and writing.

Table 9 NST views on NST/NNST efficacy at teaching the five language courses

Which teacher is best at teaching:	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Native Speaker	2(13.3)	2(13.3)	4(26.7)	4(26.7)	4(26.7)
Non-Native Speaker	0	0	0	0	0
Both the same	11(73.3)	11(73.3)	9(60)	9(60)	9(60)
No response	2(13.3)	2(13.3)	2(13.3)	2(13.3)	2(13.3)
Total	15(100)	15(100)	15(100)	15(100)	15(100)

Table 10 NNST views on NST/NNST efficacy at teaching the five language courses

Which teacher is best at teaching:	Grammar	Reading	Listening	Speaking	Writing
Native Speaker	0	1(10)	2(20)	6(60)	0
Non-Native Speaker	6(60)	2(20)	0	0	1(10)
Both the same	4(40)	7(70)	8(80)	4(40)	9(90)
No response	0	0	0	0	0
Total	10(100)	10(100)	10(100)	10(100)	10(100)

From table 9, NSTs do not think that NNSTs are better at teaching any of the skills whilst table 10 shows that NNSTs are of the view that NSTs are better at teaching listening and speaking.

Table 11 shows the answers to question 4 where teachers were asked for their opinion on the relative merits of NSTs and NNSTs with respect to a range of other areas.

Table 11 NSTs' views on NST/NNST efficacy in different areas

Which teacher:	Is more professional	Understands learner needs more	Makes learning easier	Is an all-round better teacher
Native Speaker	1(6.7)	0	0	0
Non-Native Speaker	0	4(26.7)	0	0
Both the same	13(86.7)	9(60)	13(86.7)	13(86.7)
No response	2(13.3)	2(13.3)	2(13.3)	2(13.3)
Total	15(100)	15(100)	15(100)	15(100)

Table 12 NNSTs' views on NST/NNST efficacy in different areas

Which teacher:	Is more professional	Understands learner needs more	Makes learning easier	Is an all-round better teacher
Native Speaker	1(10)	0	0	0
Non-Native Speaker	0	7(70)	7(70)	5(50)
Both the same	9(90)	3(30)	3(30)	5(50)
No response	0	0	0	0
Total	10(100)	10(100)	10(100)	10(100)

The results for question four are reported in tables 11 and 12 above. The majority of NSTs, 60% or higher, held NSTs and NNSTs to be equal in all these areas. 50% or more of NNSTs held that they were more efficacious in the areas of understanding learner needs, making learning easier and all round teaching competence. 90% of NNSTs held that NSTs and NNSTs were equal in the area of professionalism.

Tables 13 and 14 show the responses to questions posed to teachers on whether the CASS should give preference in recruitment to NST or NNSTs.

Table 13 Should the College give preference for NSTs?

(Question asked to NSTs only)

Yes	3(20)
No	5(33.3)
Unsure	4(26.7)
No response	3(20)
Total	12(100)

Table 14 Should the College give preference for NNSTs?

(Question asked to NNSTs only)

Yes	1(10)
No	7(70)
Unsure	2(20)
No response	0
Total	10(100)

In question six both NSTs and NNSTs were asked whether the CASS should give preference when recruiting ELTs; NSTs were asked whether preference should be given to NSTs and vice versa for NNSTs and then they were given space to provide justification for their answer. The results of the first part of the question are shown above in tables 13 and 14. The tables show that only a minority of NSTs (20 %) and NNSTs (10%) were in favour of prioritising based on native speaker or non-native speaker status.

The open ended part of question six provided an opportunity for teachers to justify their answers and most of the respondents took the opportunity to give some comments to justify their answers. Many of the comments reiterated that the recruitment process should be competence-based, so the most qualified person gets the job irrespective of them being a NST or NNST. The remainder of the responses generally fit into two categories, those from the NSTs that emphasised their superior knowledge and practice of the language and those from NNSTs which tended to focus on non-teaching aspects such as professionalism. Below are the comments made by the teachers to this question, each one being a response to a prompt asking them why they thought NSTs/NNSTs should be given priority when recruiting teachers for the Colleges of Applied Sciences. The responses have been numbered for ease of reference. The designation NST/NNST in parenthesis follows each quote and indicates whether the respondent was a NST or a NNST.

19. [NSTs should be favoured] To provide a realistic model for pronunciation – when I arrived as the first ever native speaking English teacher at Hanoi University of Technology (Vietnam) in 1993 the university teachers of English were by and large exhibiting major pronunciation challenges that were being transferred to huge classes of undergraduates. Their improvement during two years of exposure to my NST model was dramatic. (NST)

20. In some countries native speakers are considered to add prestige to a school. In my experience, however, often the local teachers were far more effective teachers and far better role models since they themselves went through the process of learning a second language. Many of the native speakers I worked with were monolinguals and therefore perhaps not the best role models as language learners. Besides, since many native English speakers are not

explicitly taught grammar in schools, they often have poor meta-linguistic awareness. This is especially true of monolinguals, who may also be less sensitive to problems language learners face generally. And in this respect local teachers are also often better than native speakers. Another problem with native speakers is their often patronizing attitudes (conscious or not) towards students and/or their culture. I've seen a lot of this. (NST)

21. Although NSTs might have certain advantages, simply being a native speaker does not guarantee one will be a good teacher. NNSTs may have other attributes that allow them to be superior teachers. It is a case by case situation. (NST)
22. A well trained English teacher of Arab origin would be as good as or better than a native-speaker who was not so well trained, because he/she could provide other necessary qualities, such as understanding the culture and background of the students. A non-native, non-Arab teacher would have to be exceptionally well trained and good at English in order to make any valuable contribution. (NST)
23. Too many NNSTs may introduce a decline in teaching methodology and overall quality of English delivery. (NST)
24. Although native speaker teachers have a more in depth knowledge of their mother tongue, it does not mean that they always act in the most professional manner or employ the most sound methodology and techniques in their teaching. (NST)
25. When teaching English to Arabic learners, it seems logical to have a mix of NS and NNS. They can complement each other and make a good team. Native speakers coming from as far apart as Britain and South Africa have

totally different culture and accents anyway, so having good, well-trained Arab teachers would compete the departmental team, provided the NS were also well trained. Students will come across a whole range of NS accents, but will also have the chance to understand the educated Arab-English accent. Most of the Omani students will be working in Oman after their studies and using their English in an Omani context i.e. for talking to Omanis, other Gulf Arabs, other Europeans and Indians. It would therefore be unnatural to exclude well-educated and well trained Arabs from the teaching staff. The proviso would have to be that they did not have a “thick” accent and that they spoke grammatical English (especially correct question formation). (NST)

26. Depends on priorities, goals and objectives of colleges/ministry/students and employers. (NST)
27. There are too many variables here. Two big questions are, who does the employer want to hire and who do the students want to teach them- and why of course (underlined in original). (NNST)
28. They should choose the best – not on the basis of NST or NNST – but on the basis of qualifications and experience. (NNST)
29. They should [choose] the best person for the job irrespective of native or non-native [status]. (NNST)
30. The priority should be given to qualifications and teachers ability and experience in teaching. (NNST)
31. The college [CASS] should give an equal chance of recruitment to both NST and NNST, but not give priority to one over the other.
32. It doesn't matter whether he is [a] NST or [a] NNST. Whether he is qualified or not matters. (NNST)

33. When recruiting language teachers, the college [CASS] should give priority to teachers on the basis of qualifications and experience. For example, a DELTA teacher with 10 years experience is in all likelihood a better teacher than a CELTA teacher with 2 years of experience, whether a NST or not. Also, for NNSTs, one important issue is how many years the NNST has lived and worked in the UK/USA etc. A NNST who has lived in the UK for a decade might be indistinguishable from a native speaker and a much better teacher than [a] NNST who has never lived and worked in the UK/US. (NNST)
34. It depends on the school institution, centre etc and the country but for this college [the CASS] it seems to be that being a native speaker is actually quite unimportant. (NNST)
35. NST or NNST. It doesn't really matter. A person can be [a] NS but not a good teacher or may have attitudinal problems when confronted with other cultures. A good teacher proves herself/himself by his work. (NNST)

The majority of NSTs comments were sympathetic to the view that NNST should not be considered as inferior teachers. Five of the seven comments could be classified as being against any form of discrimination against NNST. Some of the comments were profound in their appreciation of the issues involved. All but one of the NNST comments gave the same message: that teachers should be recruited based on qualification and not on the basis of whether they are a NST or a NNST. A fuller discussion of these comments takes place in the next chapter.

7.5 L1 Use in the L2 classrooms: students' perceptions

The L2 fallacy was defined in Chapter 4 as being the belief that 'the teaching of English as a foreign or second language should be entirely through the medium of English' (Phillipson 1992, p. 185). Question 8 of the questionnaire given to students asked them directly whether they thought the L1, Arabic in this case, should be used in the ELT classroom. Table 15 below displays the answers the students provided.

Table 15 Should teachers use L1 in the L2 classroom?

	Yes	No	Unsure	No Response	Total
All students	322(87)	31(8.4)	11(3)	6(1.6)	370(100)
Foundation students	176(90.7)	14(7.2)	2(1)	2(1)	194(100)
First Year Students	146(83)	17(9.7)	9(5.1)	4(2.3)	176(100)

The response to this question show a majority in favour of the use of Arabic with 90% of students in the foundation year, 83% in the first year and 87% of all students in favour of the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom.

The χ^2 values was significant at the 0.05 level, with a p-value of .040, suggesting that the foundation and first year students differed significantly in their answer to this question.

The next table, 16, shows the answers to question six which asked students whether it was important for teachers to be able to speak Arabic.

Table 16 Is it important that English teachers be able to speak Arabic?

	Yes	No	Unsure	No Response	Total
All students	198(53.5)	122(33)	43(11.6)	0	370(100)
Foundation students	108(55.7)	60(30.9)	23(11.9)	0	194(100)
First Year Students	90(51.1)	62(35.2)	20(11.4)	0	176(100)

Table 16 shows that a majority, 53.5%, of all students, a larger majority of foundation students, 55.7%, and a slightly smaller majority of first year students, 51.1%, all deemed it important that the teachers be able to speak Arabic.

The χ^2 value was insignificant at the 0.05 level suggesting that there was no significant difference statistically between the foundation and first year students in their response to this question.

7.6 L1 Use in the L2 classrooms: teachers' perceptions

The use of Arabic, the L1 at the CASS, has two dimensions in this study. The first relates to the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom i.e. the use of Arabic in the English language classroom. The second is the attitude of the teachers to the use of the L1 in non-teaching activities, inside or outside the classroom.

Table 17 shows the results of question 12 which asked the teachers whether students should be prevented from using Arabic in the English language classroom.

Table 17 Should students be prevented from using Arabic in the classroom?

	Yes	No	Unsure	No Response	Total
Native Speaker Teachers	3(20)	11(73.3)	1(6.7)	0	15(100)
Non-Native Speaker Teachers	3(30)	4(40)	3(30)	0	10(100)

From table 17 it can be seen that the majority of NSTs, 73.3%, and a large minority of NNSTs, 40%, were against preventing students from using Arabic in the English language classroom.

Table 18 Should students be penalised over their use of Arabic in the classroom?

	Yes	No	Unsure	No Response	Total
Native Speaker Teachers	2(13.3)	11(73.3)	1(6.7)	1(6.7)	15(100)
Non-Native Speaker Teachers	3(30)	4(40)	3(30)	0	10(100)

In question 13, teachers were asked whether students should be penalised for using Arabic in the English language classroom. It is perhaps unfortunate that the word *penalise* was not made explicitly clear and so when interpreting the results it must be assumed that penalise could have a wide range of meanings such as reducing in class participation grades or simply telling students off. The results, shown above in table 18, were the same for question 12, with the majority of NSTs, 73.3%, and 40% of NNSTs against penalising students for using Arabic.

Question 13 contained space for the teachers to add comments to elaborate on their answers. The responses are shown below followed by whether it was made by a native or non-native speaker in parenthesis. The comments are numbered for ease of reference. The comments are prefaced with the answer the respondent gave to the

question, yes, no or unsure, in square brackets. The absence of square brackets at the beginning of a comment indicates that the respondent did not answer the first part of the question and opted to give a comment only.

36. [Yes] Asians can't learn languages because the language is often taught in their native tongues. (NST)
37. [No] Arabic is useful to transfer information quickly, effectively and engender a good atmosphere conducive for studying. (NST)
38. [No] Mother-tongue checking can be useful – especially in the acquisition of vocabulary. (NST)
39. It depends on the circumstances. If they use it to block the English learning process or not. (NST)
40. [No] Sometimes it is helpful to students who are just not getting it to have it explained to them in Arabic by other students who are. (NST)
41. [No] Translation will always occur at some level even if only inside the heads of the students. English is not their native language so they will always compare any English lexical item to the equivalent in their own language – Arabic. The extent to which Arabic is used in the classroom will depend to a great extent on the level and ability of the students and on their level of familiarity with the material. The amount of Arabic used in the classroom can vary throughout the duration of the course. (NST)
42. [No] Not unless they decide themselves they want to do this. In Germany our department had German days where we could only speak in German. If we said anything in English we put 50 cents into a can. This encouraged shyer colleagues to use German more. It was very good for them. One colleague didn't want to join, and that was fine too. Forcing people to do this is

- counterproductive. Interestingly, however, this colleague later did begin to use more German on German days. We used the money for a nice meal together, in German, of course. (NST)
43. [No] It is immoral and counter-productive to penalise someone for using their own language. (NST)
44. Learning a foreign language can be very frustrating and require intense concentration. Using Arabic occasionally can be a short cut and ease the tension. (NST)
45. [No] Waste of time enforcing rules like this. Petty, pointless and discouraging. It achieves nothing. Win them over instead. (NST)
46. [Unsure] It depends on the situation (i.e. lesson, purpose, context etc.). (NST)
47. [No] Depends how often, for what purpose etc – may need to explain concepts to each other. (NST)
48. [Yes] By penalising them they will be forced to use English and hence learn quickly. (NNST)
49. [No] One's first language shouldn't be stigmatised this way. Let students use it where they get stuck. Indeed, why doesn't the non-Arabic teacher learn Arabic? (NNST)
50. [Yes] This will ensure that they use English more often and shed inhibitions and acquire new vocabulary and ways of expression. (NNST)
51. [No] Sometimes it helps to clarify difficult parts of learning a language especially when students ask their peers who understood the lesson. (NNST)
52. [Yes] The teacher can use little Arabic to save time and effort in explaining to the students. The students shouldn't be allowed to speak Arabic. (NNST).

53. [Unsure] Encouraging students only to use English in class would give the student more opportunities to use English in class, which should accelerate learning – but to prevent the students from speaking Arabic might be counterproductive. Also, it is vital for the teacher to provide enabling language for most tasks to make it easier for the students to actually use English. (NNST).
54. [Unsure] Slow learners sometimes don't comprehend concepts – If a student gives him a clue word in Arabic, he might understand better. (NNST)

The responses show that the majority of both NST and NNSTs have an appreciation of the issues involved with respect to the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom. There is an absence amongst the NSTs of any type of anti-L1 sentiment, with the majority expressing support for the use of L1 in the L2 classroom. NNSTs also have a very positive view of the role of Arabic in the English language classroom. A fuller discussion of these comments takes place in the next chapter.

Table 19 below shows the answers teachers gave when asked if the textbooks they were using should contain some Arabic translations.

Table 19 Should textbooks contain some Arabic translations?

	Yes	No	Unsure	No Response	Total
Native Speaker Teachers	8(53.3)	6(40)	1(6.7)	0	15(100)
Non-Native Speaker Teachers	5(50)	4(40)	1	0	10(100)

In question 14 teachers were asked whether the English language textbook they were using should contain Arabic translations and/or explanations to aid students' comprehension. The results, shown above in table 19, show that a majority of NSTs, 53.3%, and 50% of NNSTs were in favour of the idea of including Arabic translations.

Teachers were given the opportunity to comment on their answer to question 14. Their responses are shown below. The comments are preceded by their initial answer (if one was given) to the questions and superseded by their status as native or non-native speakers of English in parenthesis. They are numbered for ease of reference.

55. [Yes] At elementary level. (NST)
56. Some learners like this. Germans. I personally don't when I'm learning a language but I wouldn't impose my style on a school. (NST)
57. [Unsure] This will depend on the level of the students and on the nature of the course. If the course is communicative in nature then Arabic translations should not be used. If it is a translation course then there would probably be a greater frequency of Arabic material in the texts. (NST)
58. [Yes] Especially at lower levels this is very helpful. Even at higher levels, if my explanation of a word is not understood, I encourage students with bilingual dictionaries to look up the word and communicate it to the rest of the students in Arabic. (NST)
59. [No] Except for lower level students. (NST)
60. Students feel more comfortable having explanations in their own language. In Oman, where the status of English is becoming that of a second language, there should be a gradual progression from Primary to Preparatory and secondary, where primary has all explanations in Arabic, Preparatory has

- some and Secondary has everything in English. Learners can be gradually weaned away from the mother tongue in the E.L.T. classroom. (NST)
61. [No] The textbooks should be at a level that they can just about understand (i+1). Goal is immersion and it's fatal to write translations in books. (NST)
62. [Yes] Useful, especially for lower level students. (NST)
63. [Yes] Especially for technical subjects. (NST)
64. [No] Arabic translations will be as good as 'spoon-feeding' students. Students remember vocabulary when they do the work by themselves – e.g. checking member vocabulary when they do the work by themselves – e.g. checking the words in dictionaries etc. (NNST)
65. [Yes] If that's going to enhance/expedite the students' learning of English, why not? (NNST)
66. [Yes] But again, we have to be careful. Do we want the students to speak or to understand English?! (NNST)
67. [No] If textbooks contained Arabic translation/explanation, the students will start relying exclusively on such Arabic translations and will never learn to understand meanings from the context, nor will they ever learn how to use dictionaries. (NNST)
68. [Yes] Because psychologically speaking this will assure and encourage and help the students to see something he is familiar with even if it is very little. (NNST)
69. [No] If the policy is to use English as the sole medium of tuition in all subjects, it would be ironic if English would be exempt from this rule. (NNST)
70. [No] Instead Arabic meanings can be illustrated, simplified etc. (NNST)

The results show that there were a variety of responses given by NSTs for the use of translation, though several respondents pointed out the specific benefits to beginner level students. The concept of immersion was mentioned either explicitly or implicitly by several NSTs and NNSTs as being a reason for not using the L1 in the L2 classroom. A fuller discussion of these comments takes place in the next chapter.

7.6.1 Teachers' views on the role of Arabic in the College

Table 20 shows the results of question 15, which asked teachers why they thought that students use Arabic in the classroom.

Table 20 Do students use Arabic as an easy option?

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)	No Response	Total
Native Speaker Teachers	10(66.7)	3(20)	1(6.7)	0	15(100)
Non-Native Speaker Teachers	7(70)	1(10)	2(20)	0	10(100)

Several questions in the questionnaires sought to understand the view that teachers had of the L1 outside of the strictly pedagogical domain. The results in table 20 above show that the majority of NSTs, 66.7%, and NNSTs, 70%, thought that students used Arabic when they were unable to communicate in English.

The teachers were given the opportunity to comment on their answers to this question. Their responses are shown below using the conventions adopted above for the preceding quotes.

71. [Yes] People underestimate the stress of language learning on the brain and want an easy escape. Arabic students especially are ill equipped for accepting classroom stress. (NST)

72. [Yes] (1) It is easier to use a language they are familiar with rather than face a problem with another language. (2) Laziness. (3) Lack of confidence. (NST)
73. [Yes] It's natural. The urge to communicate is basic. (NST)
74. [Yes] Many learners are lazy and will undermine the learning experience. (NST)
75. [No] I think they use Arabic to speak with each other for whatever reason including to explain things. (NST)
76. [Yes] This is what weak students would naturally do. Whatever the level of the students may be. Arabic texts should be used in a sparing and controlled manner by the teacher so as to ensure that the students are given the advantage of having the greatest possible exposure to English. (NST)
77. [Yes] They feel secure, comfortable and perhaps intelligent in their own language. Whereas they may feel the opposite in English. (NST)
78. [Unsure] Students in the main should be studying in Arabic not in English. When I taught English in Japan I used Japanese a lot in the class. Students used Japanese to explain English to each other, but also used it for general chit-chat which I didn't find threatening as long as it is limited. (NST)
79. [Yes] Why not? As long as they have been genuinely trying to express themselves in English as well. The problem is that as soon as some Arabic is spoken, the rest of the class may fall back into Arabic, and the teacher may also find herself slipping back unconsciously into Arabic. The teacher has to be alert for this. (NST)
80. [No] Because I don't speak Arabic and most of the work I do here is teacher centred. (NST)

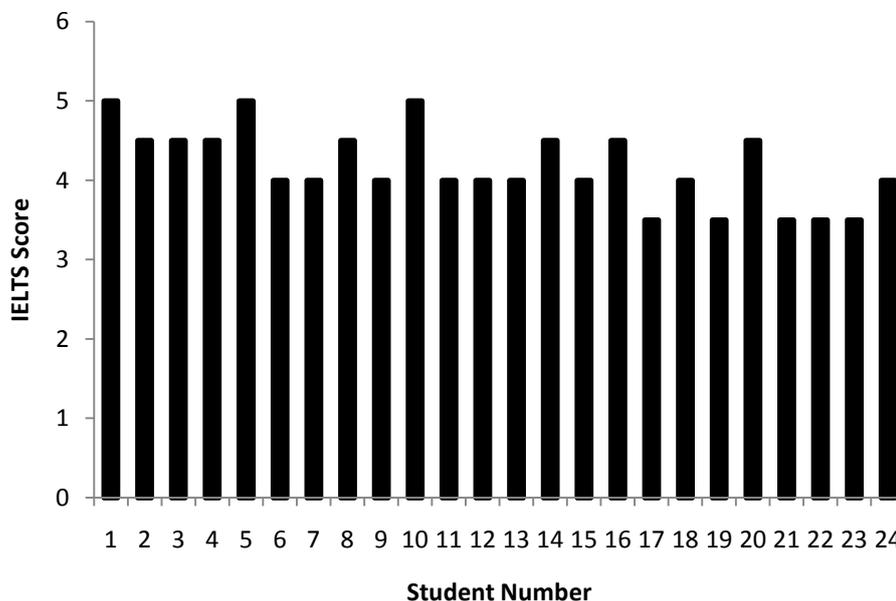
81. [Yes] I think that students generally do want to learn and will only resort to Arabic when necessary. (NST)
82. [No] I think they use Arabic because they are more comfortable using it to explain concepts etc. It is natural for them to use it. (NST)
83. [Yes] They want to communicate so when they are at a loss for words they resort back to their native language. (NNST)
84. [Unsure] One can't generalise or stereotype – every situation is unique in its own way. Some students will use Arabic not because they can't cope with English – it could be what one might term 'identification politics' or just an innocent attachment to their first language. Others will use Arabic because they are genuinely stuck. (NNST)
85. [Yes] Because when stressed out, emotionally upset, hard pressed for expression, one always tends to revert to ones native tongue. (NNST)
86. [Yes] 1.They are disappointed when they cannot speak English as native speakers. 2. They are afraid of making mistakes, so it's better to use the language you know rather than the one you don't know. 3.Fluency is an important issue in learning a new language because any learner expects that he/she will be fluent as he/she learns the rules. But the reality is disappointing. So to avoid this dilemma, the person may use two languages in speaking – to avoid pauses, mistakes and embarrassment. (NNST)
87. [Yes] Learning English, the students find it easier to speak in Arabic/L1. Also, since all their fellow students are Arabic speakers, they know Arabic will be understood. (NNST)
88. [Yes] Influence of L1 structure interferes with L2. That's the reason why students' construction of sentences has faulty word order. (NNST)

There is no reference to the concept of scaffolding in the response above, whereby students would use the L1 in a positive way to move from known concepts to unknown concepts and to assist them in bridging the gap between the known and known. Where there is support for the use of the L1 this is attributed to students needing to refer to the L1 when they not have the necessary language skills in the L2. There is no reference in any of the responses to the academic benefits derived from the use of the L1. A fuller discussion of these comments takes place in the next chapter.

7.7 English medium education: IELTS scores

The graph below shows the data related to IELTS scores at the CASS.

Figure 7 IELTS Scores for students at the CASS



The CASS wanted some way of measuring the level of the students using a standardised test that carried a strong academic reputation. They decided to offer the IELTS at the end of the foundation year to a group of 24 students who were selected

at random from the nine different English language levels in the foundation year. The results were designed to give a general impression of the English language proficiency of students entering the first year of the undergraduate degree programme at the CASS. The results of these tests are shown below in Fig 7 above. The mean result of that IELTS exam for the 24 students was 4.16.

7.8 English medium education: students' perspectives

The table below shows the students' preferences for studying the specialisations at the CASS in English.

Table 21 Students' preference for studying specialisations in English

	English	Arabic	Both	Unsure	No Response	Total Number of students
All students	68(18.4)	57(15.4)	232(62.7)	9(2.4)	4(1.1)	370
Foundation students	41(21.1)	30(15.5)	116(59.8)	6(3.1)	1(0.5)	194(100)
First Year Students	27(15.3)	27(15.3)	116(65.9)	3(1.7)	3(1.7)	176(100)

The English language component was introduced as a means of bridging the English language courses gap between where the students are when they finish secondary or high school and where they need to be to study in an academic environment where the medium of instruction is entirely English (as discussed in chapter 2). Table 21 above displays the results of question nine where students were asked whether they preferred to study their degree programme specialisation through the medium of English,

Arabic or both together, i.e. a bilingual education. The majority of all students, 62.7%, foundation students, 59.8% and first year students 65.9%, are in favour a bilingual education.

The tables below, 22 and 23 shows the breakdown of question nine per year and per language proficiency level which is labelled as group in the table below. Group 1 students were those with the highest level of English proficiency and group 9 the weakest.

Table 22 Foundation Year Students' preference for studying specialisations in English

Would you prefer the teaching in the specializations to be in:				
Group Number	English	Arabic	Both	Unsure
1	10 (38)	2 (8)	14 (54)	0 (0)
2	6 (27)	2 (9)	13 (59)	1 (5)
3	6 (23)	2 (8)	18 (69)	0 (0)
4	5 (19)	3 (11)	17 (63)	2 (7)
5	4 (19)	7 (33)	9 (43)	1 (5)
6	2 (7)	5 (19)	18 (67)	2 (7)
7	4 (20)	6 (30)	10 (50)	0 (0)
8	3(27)	0 (0)	8 (73)	0 (0)
9	1 (8)	3 (23)	9 (69)	0 (0)
Total	41 (21)	30 (16)	116 (60)	6 (3)

Table 23 First Year Students' preference for studying specialisations in English

Would you prefer the teaching in the specializations to be in:				
Group Number	English	Arabic	Both	Unsure
1	5 (21)	0 (0)	19 (79)	0 (0)
2	7 (35)	1 (5)	11 (55)	1 (5)
3	4 (18)	3 (14)	14 (64)	1 (5)
4	4 (20)	1 (5)	15 (75)	0 (0)
5	1 (4)	8 (33)	15 (63)	0 (0)
6	1 (5)	5 (25)	13 (65)	1 (5)
7	2 (13)	4 (27)	9 (60)	0 (0)
8	1 (6)	3 (19)	12 (75)	0 (0)
9	2 (17)	2 (17)	8 (67)	0 (0)
Total	27 (15)	27 (15)	116 (66)	3 (2)

Tables 22 and 23 above show the breakdown of the answer to question nine by year: table 22 shows the foundation year students' responses and table 23 the first year students' responses.

7.9 English medium education: teachers' perspectives

Teachers were asked in question 24 to comment on the decision to change the medium of instruction from Arabic to English. This was the only open question in the entire questionnaire and it was hoped that teachers would take the opportunity to express themselves fully and without inhibitions. Despite the question being open it

was easily possible to gauge whether the respondent was in favour or against the use of English as the medium of instruction in the Colleges of Applied Sciences.

Table 24 Should teaching in the specialisations be in English?

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Unsure (%)	No Response	Total
Native Speaker Teachers	4(26.7)	4(26.7)	3(20)	4(26.7)	15(100)
Non-Native Speaker Teachers	4(40)	5(50)	0	1(10)	10(100)

The data from table 24 above show the results of question 24 in numerical form where it can be observed that NSTs were evenly divided between those who believed the specialisations should be in English and those who thought they should be in Arabic with 26.7% for both. 50% of NNSTs were in favour of the specialisation being in Arabic but almost as many, 40%, were in favour of them being in English.

The actual written responses to question 24 are shown below. The designation NST/NNST in parenthesis follows each quote and indicates whether the respondent was a NST or a NNST. The responses have been numbered for ease of reference.

89. 'I champion it...It is certainly a right step forward for Oman as it would take them into globalization where sharing knowledge, trade etc has become a must. For the students, it is a bit hard as they are not well prepared in English in their secondary education to take such a heavy dose of English' (NNST).
90. 'It [the switch to English] will make the students having to settle for a lower level academically, initially, but later on, it will open the door to all the resources available in English and in the long run, it will enable Omani students to achieve better results academically (NNST).

91. ‘Sudden changes are never welcomed. Teacher’s college [the old name for the CASS] will be struggling with the extra workload while students will find it difficult to master English in a few weeks. But in the long run, it’ll be worth the hard work for then Oman can open up to the world without there being any language barriers (NNST).
92. We are holders of high degrees in English and it is our job to use our own qualification to achieve this target (NNST).
93. First off, I strongly believe that people (from ministry down to students) urgently need to be disabused of the notion that “knowing” English is synonymous with “development”. Language is intricately bound to power. Germans, French, Japanese, Russians etc proudly do their ‘thing’ in their national languages because among other reasons, they want to preserve their identity. Whoever wants to ‘do business’ with these nations has to learn their languages. Similarly I see no reason why anyone should kow-tow (sic) to the English-speaking part of the world. Omanis can (and should) have their education in Arabic (NNST).
94. Students - [will] graduate with good English but less practical knowledge of their major or field of study. This has always been our [Omani] problem here: graduates without experience or interest in their specializations →all their concern is to pass and get a good job and stop there for the rest of their lives (educational problem [in Oman] from elementary to university. [Regarding] Oman – We will have an ignorant generation in all aspects of life including teaching and learning!!! (NNST).
95. I don’t think that the switch [to English medium of instruction] is beneficial for anyone: the students are obviously struggling and so are the teachers. In

the end the whole thing remains an attempt: an attempt on the part of the teachers to teach, and an attempt on the part of the students to learn, but without any learning really taking place. The choice of the medium of instruction needs to be reconsidered by the Ministry of Education if they're really concerned about the students "learning", instead of simply "passing" and "getting degrees" (NNST).

96. I wish the students could have had at least two subjects being taught in Arabic. Why should any (community) language get less importance? This (self hatred) frustrates students as all the knowledge they acquired seems meaningless unless and until they are fluent enough to express themselves in English. One of the students at the speaking test started with 'I seek refuge in Allah'! She was certainly haunted by the English language ghost- a feeling of insecurity as she wasn't fluent in English (NNST).
97. 'Oman is making serious efforts to help its people become international. This will carry over to foreign as well as home country employment. This is admirable good for Oman's future' (NST).
98. 'Without doubt English is the international language of communication and business, so in my opinion this move can only benefit present and future students as it will give them the ability to conduct business with any country – it won't restrict them to Arab speaking countries only. It can only benefit people and the country as it will open up Oman for international trade and business and will open up the world for more Omani business men and women' (NNST).
99. The top universities in Turkey use English as the medium of instruction. These universities produce extremely accomplished graduates who also speak

excellent English. All this is great is great for students' prospects within and outside Turkey and it makes good business sense for the country. With time I think the same could be true here (NST).

100. First it [the switch to an English medium] has to happen. At the university I taught at in Turkey the medium of instruction was English – only it wasn't. The professors didn't speak English well enough so they didn't in fact use it. There's a gulf between theory and practice and it's not easy to overcome. If the professors actually use English, then what? Will students improve their language courses and be able to interact better in international work environments? Or will they just be let through and if so will this ever change/ how long will this take to change? It should create a need for better qualified ESL teachers- but again, don't bank on it (NST).

101. I think many of them [the students] might be less well served [by the switch to English]. For some of them, to learn English is an almost impossible task, and if they were allowed to do their major in Arabic in Arabic they might have more chance of succeeding. On the other hand, English is an interesting language, and it can't be a bad thing if many of the populace could speak even a little of it (NST).

102. I think the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry needs to rethink the pace of the implementation of this decision [to switch the medium of education]. Also the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education need to coordinate efforts and face reality. Secondary school [English] exit levels and college entrance levels need to be realistic and they need to match. I think the reality is that the students entering the Colleges [of Applied Sciences] are so poorly equipped [English language] skill-wise that it

is a huge farce at this time. The result is going to be a very poorly trained workforce and narrowly educated students who find themselves ill-equipped to cope with the realities of an every changing and developing world (NST).

103. From my experience invigilating First Year vocational degree programme exams, I have noticed that the content level seems low for a degree course. This could be because the First year is also still to some extent a foundation year as the students have never done these courses before. However it could equally well be that the fact that the courses are taught in English means that the subject matter has to be “dumbed down” in order that the students understand the concepts in English. Or it could be that the teachers are not native speakers who have specialized in Design, Business etc. Or it could be that the students are not selected. Perhaps some students should be doing these courses in English and others are more able to cope with the new input in Arabic (NST).

Many of the comments of the NNST recognize the problematic nature of switching to an English MOI. There is no evidence in the answers from the majority of the respondents of a negative attitude towards the Arabic language or the use of Arabic as the MOI. Only four of the respondents referred to the global status of English as being a cause which would necessitate the use of an Arabic MOI. A fuller discussion of these comments takes place in the next chapter.

7.10 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to present the data that was collected during one year through the 2005-2006 academic year. The data presented was from three questionnaires: one given to native speaker teachers, one to non-native speaker teachers of English in the

CASS and one to all students in the foundation and first year of study at the CASS.

The data has been presented here objectively. What follows in chapter eight is a full discussion of this data in light of the research objectives of this present study.

Chapter Eight

Discussion of Results

8.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed data from one of the research instruments, namely the three questionnaires; one of which was distributed to students, one to native speaker teachers and one to non-native speaker teachers. In this chapter the results will be placed within the wider context of the study with a view to establishing a coherent narrative with respect to the original research questions and areas under investigation in this study.

This study is an investigation in language planning in the Gulf region using the concept of linguistic imperialism (LI), first articulated by Ansre (1979) and introduced into wider academic discourse by Phillipson (1992) as the central theoretical framework. Three fallacies, as defined earlier, were taken as the measure of the existence, or otherwise, of LI and these were: the native speaker fallacy, the L2 fallacy and the English medium fallacy. This chapter will be thematic with each of the three fallacies discussed individually prior to a more general discussion which will seek to bring all three fallacies together with a view to directly addressing the original research question.

The discussion will be followed by a series of recommendations based on the conclusions established from the evidence presented.

8.2 The native speaker fallacy

The native speaker fallacy was defined in chapter two as being the idea that ‘...the ideal teacher is a *native speaker* who can serve as a model for the pupils’. Thus the fallacy affects language planning such that institutions around the world will look only to native speakers when recruiting for ELTs. There are a number of consequences that result from the existence of the native speaker fallacy and these will be explored in this chapter.

The literature review on the native speaker fallacy, presented in chapter three, established that an academic argument in favour of favouring Standard English over various other varieties could be made but that it did not follow from this that native speakers alone should be employed as teachers whose job it was to deliver a model of Standard English. Using evidence from the critical period hypothesis, it was shown that whilst non-native speaker teachers could not, in general, attain full native speaker competency they could get close, what is usually referred to as near native speaker competence, and that those at this degree of proficiency could indeed act as a model for Standard English in the English language classroom. This is the academic argument, what follows is a presentation of the findings from the data to investigate whether or not the principal stakeholders at the CASS agreed with such sentiments or whether there exists an inherent bias against the non-native speaker in which case the case would be made for the existence of the native speaker fallacy at the CASS. The implications for education in Oman are multifarious from funding issues to real pedagogical practice in the classroom. All of these implications will be explored within the chapter generally and those related specifically to the native speaker fallacy will be commented upon here in this section of the chapter. The most appropriate

place to start this section is to analyse the definition of the native speaker as understood at the CASS.

8.2.1 Native speaker definitions

The definition of the native speaker adopted in chapter three for the purposes of this study was *someone whose first language is English and who learnt English as a young child and continues to use it*. This definition was adopted early on in the study and before the data from the questionnaires were gathered. It will be an interesting exercise to compare this definition with the definitions provided by the faculty at the CASS. The above definition can be separated into three different parts;

- I. The native language is the first language of the speaker
- II. The language was learnt as a young child
- III. The speaker continues to use the language

Of the eighteen respondents, eleven (61%) included the idea of the language being the first or mother tongue in their definition. The concept of mother tongue is interpreted here to infer the first language although that may not be the intended meaning; contextually it would make sense for it to mean the first language since literally speaking mother tongue refers to the language learnt directly from the mother. A majority of the respondents believe that for a language to be considered native, it must have been the first language learnt. This would support the critical period hypothesis (CPH) which, as discussed in detail in chapter three, suggests that later learners of a language cannot attain native speaker competency. Several of the respondents made explicit reference to a specific age at which the language must be learnt, all falling between the ages of one and eight, which suggests that some of them were aware of the research on the CPH. It is unclear whether the other respondents based their

views on research such as the CPH, which did inform the definition adopted in this study, but nonetheless the views of the majority of respondents do agree with the first part of the definition.

The second part of the definition, based again on findings from the advocates of the CPH, is that the language was learnt as a young child. Part two is similar to part one of the main definition, where it forms a defining relative clause, to further clarify the meaning. This is an important point and the findings from the questionnaire are revealing in that, whereas six of the respondents said that, in line with the CPH, the native language is that which is learnt in childhood, a further five respondents suggested that for it to be considered a native language, it must be learnt from birth. Although the numbers are small, and this will be discussed later in the chapter when issues related to validity and reliability of the study are tackled, five out of eighteen represents 28% of the respondents holding a belief for which there is no known scholarly corroboration. Suggesting that the native speaker must learn the language from birth could be seen to be suggesting that it is almost a genetic issue, those born to Spanish speaking mothers, as an example, and who begin learning Spanish from day one, literally, are the only valid native speakers of Spanish. This would appear to be a rather exclusive definition, almost defined to exclude the maximum number of people. In many ways it resembles the response given by the rector of a new University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, who when asked to define what he understood by 'native speaker' in the context of the university's recruitment practices for their new English language centre, responded:

Native speaker to my understanding is a native guy. Blue eyes, white skin. That is my definition of the native speaker. When I am recruiting now [for NSTs] that is my first priority, why I say this, because the community, the

society, when they come and see someone [teaching] who is a native it means white skin and blue eyes. That's their definition of natives. To respond to the society I will bring them what they want. I am sorry Muhammad Ismail [the interviewer] I know that some people [i.e. non-Caucasians] are born in the UK and America and they are more American than Americans and more British than British, they mastered the language more than them [i.e. the Caucasians] but I'm in a business [and] I have to respond to my customers (Interview with Dr AA, August 11th 2008).

This view is quite prevalent in the Gulf region and is certainly in existence at the CASS as evidenced by the comments quoted earlier, on p. 148, from a senior member of the HR Department when asked to provide his definition of the native speaker and which alluded to the link between ethnicity and mother tongue.

The response provided by Mr SS is similar in tone to that of Dr AA and to that of the five respondents in that all them have in common the idea that being a native speaker is essentially an attribute of birth, since learning from birth is the same as being born with it with the exception of those unable to communicate for medical reasons. The last definition raises another interesting point with reference to the term 'mother tongue'. This term was used as a description of the native language by five of the respondents (28%). The significance of the term as used by Mr SS is that it was a term used in Arabic, and then translated by the author into English. That answer above in which the term 'mother tongue' is used is a response to a question for the definition of the native language, with the original question and subsequent response given in Arabic. The significance lies in the translation. When designing the original questionnaire much thought was given to how the term 'native speaker' could be

rendered into Arabic since no known equivalent term was known to be widely in use.

The result was the following term in Arabic:

الأساتذة الذين تعتبر اللغة الإنجليزية لغتهم الأم (الأصلية) ، أي أن اللغة الإنجليزية كانت أول لغة تعلموها أو تعلموها في طفولتهم

This translates as follows: [The native speaking English teachers are those] teachers for whom English is considered their mother tongue, (original) i.e. English was the first language they learnt or it [English] was learnt in their childhood. This definition coheres with the definition given in chapter three and restated at the beginning of this chapter with one exception being that the part related to them continuing to use it was omitted based on the assumption that given the context because they were English teachers, and the definition was provided in that context, it was obvious that they had continued to use it. The definition was not provided in an abstract fashion but was provided for the students with explicit reference to the teachers at the College. The term ‘mother tongue’ was used here, with the remark ‘*original*’ in parenthesis, after much thought and discussion with the chair of the English department, a native Arabic speaker, and one of the Omani lecturers, again a native Arabic speaker. The fact that there was no widely used, well known term to use in Arabic is indicative of how the term does not carry the importance in the Arab community that it does in English.

This could be for a number of reasons such as the relative global and economic statuses of Arabic and English and the fact that the history of Arabic is very different to that of English in that there are many states, primarily North African, such as The Sudan, which are considered Arab or Arabic speaking that were not historically Arab at all and it was only through the arrival of Islam that Arabization occurred. As a result of this phenomenon Arabic is not tied to a specific geographic location or to a specific race of people. In contrast English continues to be viewed by many as being

the preserve of five or six countries and essentially to be the property of Caucasian peoples, as evidenced by Dr AA's comments above.

The third part of the definition relates to the continuing use of the language. Since the context of the questionnaire was native speakers of English and because the reference was teachers of English the issue of continuing usage was only raised by one of the respondents. Given the context this is not surprising.

The above discussion shows that the definition adopted for this study, grounded as it was in definitions provided in established dictionaries and academic literature, was shared by a majority of the teachers in its constituent parts with the exception of the aspect related to continuing usage, which as explained above could be down to the context.

One of the results from this question was particularly interesting and that is that 28% of the respondents believed that learning the language in an English-speaking country was a necessary condition of being a native speaker. This definition appears to suggest that environment is key to determining who is and who is not a native speaker. What this suggests, and some of the comments linked to this support this assertion, is that some of the respondents were keen to exclude people from the native speaker community even though they may only know one language. This is evidenced by the comment by one teacher, referenced in chapter seven as quote number six on page 165, conflating issues related to citizenship with those of language. Debate is currently rife in the UK, for example, regarding what it means to be British, but this is completely distinct from a discussion over what it means to be a native speaker of English. The two are completely separate, although if one is engaged in an attempt to perpetuate and maintain a status quo that favours people

from one country over another in linguistic terms then making such distinctions as British being equivalent to a native speaker is a very powerful tool. The reality is that there is no possible academic evidence to support the assertion that being a citizen of an English speaking country is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for being a native speaker of English. Despite this, several other respondents also linked citizenship with the native speaker by defining the later as

- I. A citizen of England, US or any country in which English is the first spoken language (NNST).
- II. A person born in an English speaking country where English is the first language (NST).
- III. Someone who is brought up in a country where the first language is English and/or where the guardian(s) parent(s) of that person speak English as a first language as first language (NST).

All of these comments are basically in line with the view held by the Ministry of Higher Education in Oman (MOHE) who, when contracting the British educational services company the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT), made clear that for them a native speaker is defined as one holding citizenship from a select number of English speaking countries. In an interview with the country director of the Centre for British Teachers, CfBT, who were contracted to supply English language teachers to the Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman, including the CASS, he said that the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) had quite a restricted view of the term ‘native speaker’:

They [the MOHE] tend to think of someone with British, New Zealand, Australian, Canadian, United States are native English speakers. Only recently have they accepted South Africa, as being a native English speaking

[country] (Interview with Mr CF, Thursday 10th of May 2009, attached as appendix F).

This is contrasted with Mr CF's own definition which appears to be far more flexible and inclusive. Responding to a question about the definition of the native speaker he said:

... someone who is raised and brought up into the English language. So anybody who is born in a place like Britain, United States, Australia, South Africa ...sometimes I have arguments [with the MOHE] here in Oman for me there is no doubt that somebody who is from a country like India where English is not necessarily the first language [of the country] but it [English] was the first language of their family, so a person who was born into an English speaking family whether it was mixed race or whatever is also a native English speaker whatever their passport. Then I would say, I would extend it to somebody of any race or nationality who was educated largely in English. I mean I can think of an instance of an Omani woman who is 100% Omani, her parents are Omani, she was born in Oman, her first language is Arabic but her parents moved for business reasons to Canada so her schooling was from the age of four right up to tertiary level was all in English. So even though she was not technically born into, or was not born into English I would count her as a native English speaker because to all intents and purposes her English is equivalent to a native [English] speaker. And by extension, so that to me is clear: she is a native English speaker, the grey area is where you have somebody who is not born to English and perhaps not been educated in English from their early years and yet when you speak and listen to them their English is almost indistinguishable [from a native speaker], a native speaker

speaking to them would not be able to say that that person was not brought up to English. I would put all those [preceding people] under native English speaker. Beyond that you have got people who were not brought up speaking English, who have an excellent standard of English, and who you feel for the purposes of the job are as good as a native English speaker but one would have to qualify [that person] as a near native speaker. But you could say that for this particular work the near native speaker's skills are as good as the native speaker's (ibid).

What the quote illustrates is that the focus on the native speaker as someone from the centre is not something that this particular centre agent, CfBT, is pushing. It illustrates that the idea that *centre* agents carry hidden agendas is deeply mistaken. Both the view of the MOHE in Oman, as expressed by Mr CF, and that of the member of the personnel department Mr SS show what could be described as a colonised consciousness. Such a scenario where the focus is on innate attributes can have a demoralising affect on non-native speaker teachers as shown in this entry from the journal kept by the author during his time at the CASS:

N is a new teacher from India. When I met her for the first time she looked and sounded very nervous. She commented to me that she felt 'that everything I have learnt counts for nothing' (08/11/06).

It is unclear why the MOHE in Oman would choose to define the native speaker in this narrow way but the result is that the emphasis is on the innate attributes of the teacher as opposed to any pedagogical aspect. The focus on native speakers essentially crowds out any discussion of the need for having qualified teachers since, as evidenced in the comments made by Mr SS, there is acceptance that financial

constraints lead to the MOHE placing the bar low when stipulating what qualifications teachers need to hold. From the comments made by Mr SS what appears is the desire to recruit well-qualified individuals but an inability to do so based on financial constraints. In this case they have essentially two options; one is to recruit highly qualified non-native speakers from periphery countries. The second option, the one they chose, was to recruit native speakers who could be argued to be unqualified for the task at hand. The evidence that the MOHE in Oman favoured native speakers came from Ms AD, the MOHE appointed programme director for English, who in response to a question about whether the MOHE favoured native speakers replied:

Yeah, they prefer native speakers but have become increasingly aware I think that there are many non-native speakers who are equally proficient. Yes it was an issue with recruitment last year, there was one woman, rejected by one of the ministry people because she was a non-native speaker and, I was asked to re-interview her and look at her CV and I telephone interviewed her and they subsequently employed her. She was absolutely fine. So, yeah there is that kind of perception that only native speakers will do but that is changing
(Interview with Ms AD, Saturday 14th April 2009, attached as appendix E).

The comments by Ms AD that the MOHE were becoming aware of the value of non-native speakers contradict those of Mr CF where he makes clear that the MOHE was insistent on CfBT hiring native speakers only and enforcing that condition rigorously. It is important to stress that whilst the MOHE had expressed a clear preference for native speakers by making the tender for the recruitment of English teachers a tender for native speakers, this was not the view of everyone within the administration of the

CASS. A senior member of the HR Department had the following to say when asked if he preferred native speakers for the English language programme:

As for me, and this is my own personal opinion, my own opinion, I prefer that teacher who is qualified, who has the correct English teaching certification, irrespective of whether his mother tongue is English or not. I am interested in the speech of the person, his understanding of English grammar, the overall proficiency of the teacher. It's like if you take an Arab and ask him to teach Arabic he needs to study the grammar in depth before he can teach it. So as for me, I prefer that person, like the HOD in CASS who has a doctorate over the teachers we have in the CASS who have an undergraduate degree only. For example you, Muhammad, your Arabic language is better than my own Arabic language, but [that is because] you learnt Arabic from the [basic] principles, the syntax as for me I did not study learn Arabic from the grammar, rather I learnt the local dialect, the vernacular, so for me I don't hold as the measure [of whether we employ them as teachers] as being whether their mother tongue is English or not, rather I look at their entire CV, from where they were educated, how they teach, these are important issues, I mean it's possible I could [be capable] of talking [fluently] and talking and talking English but I cannot convey meaning to the students [i.e. I cannot teach] then no matter what my qualifications, whether I have a doctorate or bachelors [degree] or whether my mother tongue is English if I cannot assist the students to understand and comprehend [the lesson in the classroom] what is the point?

These sophisticatedly articulated views are far from the colonised consciousness that Phillipson (1992) insists in present in some developing countries. It shows that at least some stakeholders are aware of the dangers of recruiting people based on their

status as native speakers and irrespective of whether they are qualified to teach. The analogy with Arabic is one which is widely quoted in the Middle East amongst people who are against the policy of recruiting native speakers who lack qualifications. It resonates particularly due to the important symbolic role of Arabic in the Middle East.

This difference in qualifications between the native and non-native speakers is evidenced both in the admission of the MOHE representative Ms AD and by Table 2 (p. 163) in the previous chapter which shows that there is a marked difference in the relative qualifications of native and non-native speaker teachers. In response to a question about the quality of the native speaker teachers working in the colleges of applied sciences in Oman she responded by saying;

Absolutely yeah, that's [i.e. teacher quality amongst native speakers] is a big issue . We've got people, not in this college particularly, but as you say we've got people with a bachelor's degree in whatever [subject] [studied] many years ago, and you know one guy [teaching at one of the Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman] had been doing soap stone carving for ten years somewhere in the back blocks, did the CELTA and hit the road. You're quite right; it's a big issue I think. You know these discrepancies in the marking standards are not always because teachers don't want to do it, or are lazy, they just don't know how. So it's an issue yeah teacher quality, yep (Interview with Ms AD, Saturday 14th April 2009, attached as appendix E).

These comments, from someone representing the MOHE in Oman, show that the Ministry were at least aware of the problem. The data from the CASS shows that almost all the non-native speaker teachers, nine out of ten, had masters level degrees with three of these nine also having doctoral degrees. Compare this with the native

speakers, where only two thirds had masters degrees and only one had a doctoral degree and the disparity becomes clear. It is important to understand these disparities as being the result of a willing and aware policy by stakeholders in the MOHE. This was stated by Mr CF who said the following in response to a question asking why CfBT has not argued more vociferously for non-native speaker teachers:

One could argue that there are reasons for having non-native speakers but in this case there was no point in arguing that because the tender which went out before we [CfBT] had the contract was to bring in native speakers. That is what they asked for. And so if we started saying that we don't think that this is necessarily the best idea there would be no argument they would say well we'll go and talk with somebody else [about fulfilling the tender]. So one can sort of philosophically talk about the advantages and disadvantages of native and non-native speakers, but in practical terms this was not something we could have argued in this particular case (Interview with Mr CF, Thursday 10th of May 2009, attached as appendix F).

Such a position by the MOHE in Oman would appear to undermine their own goals of wanting the best teachers. Their narrow definition of the native speaker as someone from one of the major English speaking countries, that did not even include South Africa initially, was seen by CfBT as being counterproductive

If we don't accept people [classed as native speakers by CfBT but not by the MOHE] who have these [language] skills, you will have to accept somebody who they [the MOHE] says qualifies as a native English speaker because they are Caucasian but aren't as skilled. Now which of the two do you want, do you want the unskilled Caucasian or the skilled Indian? (ibid).

8.2.2 The preference for native speakers?

One of the main reasons given by those who support the preference for native speaker teachers over non-native speaker teachers is that students are said to express a solid preference for the native speaker over the non-native speaker teacher. This was articulated well by the rector of a new university in the Gulf, represented here as Dr AA, who was quoted earlier in this chapter saying that his view was that in general the students wanted a native speaker in the English language classroom. Before analysing whether the data supports such an assertion that students always favour the native speaker it is worth recalling a discussion that took place in chapter three regarding student preferences towards Standard English.

It was stated in chapter three that there appeared to be two trends supported by the academic literature. The first of these was the fact that students appeared to express a preference for Standard English as found in the UK and the US. The second finding was that native speakers themselves expressed preferences for standard forms of the language above local dialects and vernaculars. The questionnaire that was distributed makes an assumption with respect to the Standard language and student preferences, which is that if they expressed a desire to learn the language to native speaker competency, as question three in the questionnaire asked, it was effectively the same as asking them if they wanted to learn the Standard language or a version thereof. With hindsight it would have been better to separate out these two questions but to do so would have required an explanation on the paper of what is understood by the different varieties of English. The complication here was the fact that students were prone to view different varieties of English in the same way they understood the different dialects of Arabic. However there is a difference between the situation in

Arabic and that of English, since there is no debate raging in the Arab world as to what constitutes standard Arabic as Modern Standard Arabic is accepted throughout the Arab world as the standard. The situation in Arabic is very different to other language situations due to the complex interplay between the Islamic faith, which is the official religion of every Middle Eastern country with the exception of Israel and Iran. With hindsight a question on the preference of students to learn Standard or other varieties of language should have been included but at the time it was felt that explaining the difference between Standard English and other varieties, and the fact that other varieties are not simply English with mistakes but can actually be considered codified languages in their own right, would be too time consuming and difficult to articulate in a few words on a questionnaire.

Asking the students outright whether they prefer native speaker teachers to non-native speaker teachers is one way of establishing the students' preference in this regard. However, asking the question only in this way would miss the complexity of the situation. This is shown by the apparent contradiction in the answers to the various questions which were linked to the issue of preference. Here those contradictions will be explored and reasons why such contradictions exist suggested.

8.2.2.1 Contradictions

When students were asked whether they preferred a native speaker teacher to a non-native speaker teacher they responded in favour of the native speaker teacher, with a ratio of almost 3:1 in favour of the native speaker (see Figure 5, p. 167). It would thus appear that the students want to be taught by native speakers. However answers to other questions cast doubt on this conclusion. For example, the answers to question four (see Figure 6, p. 168), designed specifically to detect contradictions in the

students' answers, show that two of the top three, and three out of the top five, most popular teachers were non-native speakers. So students were on the one hand saying they wanted to be taught by native speakers and on the other hand were saying their favourite teacher happened to be a non-native speaker. All students on the programme were taught by either native speakers or a combination of non-native and native speakers. Hence what can be excluded is the possibility that students only selected a non-native speaker in answer to question four because they were only taught by non-native speakers. One possible way to understand why the students answered in this way is to understand that the official line from the Ministry and from centre agents supports the native speaker fallacy. Students are bombarded with the message that native speaker is best and so, when asked a simple question about whether they prefer to be taught by native speaker teachers, they answer yes since that is what all the major players in education in Oman are saying. However when asked for their personal experiences, i.e. who their favourite teacher is, they refer back to their own experiences in the classroom. In this case the message of the MOHE or the different centre agents holds no relevance for they are being asked a very personal question related to their own educational experiences. The results show that the students have a positive experience in the classroom with non-native speakers and the idea that the opposite is always the case is not supported by the evidence in this study. In fact what the evidence points to is a confused mindset on behalf of the students which could easily be explained by the proliferation of the native speaker fallacy.

Evidence of the ability of the students to evaluate teachers based on what the students perceive the teachers' strengths and weaknesses to be comes from the responses to questions one and two. Question one asked students whether they preferred to be taught by a native or a non-native speaker for the four language skills plus grammar.

The results of question one show that the students carry a level of discernment that they are often not given credit for. It is worth comparing the results of question 1(a) and question 1(d) (see Table 3, p. 169). The former asks about grammar and the latter about speaking. In 1(d), 68.4% of the students expressed a preference in favour of having a native speaker teacher for this language skill. In 1(a), 66.8% expressed a preference for a non-native speaker teacher. These results confirm what has been expressed elsewhere in academic literature, e.g. Madrid and Canado (2004), and Arva and Medgyes (2000). This preference for having native speaker teachers to teach speaking is similar to the position adopted by Arva and Medgyes who say ‘Poorly qualified NESTs [native English speaking teachers] can do a decent job as long as they are commissioned to do what they can do best: converse’ (2000, p. 369). The context of the quote is the Hungarian education system and research conducted into pedagogical differences between native and non-native speaker teachers. A brief background to the context is given by the authors as being a situation where in some of the schools covered by the research:

the natives were commissioned to teach only conversation, usually in one or two lessons a week, whereas the non-natives, being the ‘‘chief teachers’’, had to deal with everything else, including grammar (Arva and Medgyes 2000, p. 362).

The students belief in this study that non-native speaker teachers make better teachers of grammar are mirrored by comments by teachers, both native and non-native, in the Arva and Medgyes study. One native speaker commented that ‘This is wrong and this is the correct way you should say it, I know, but I can't explain why it's wrong or right’ (ibid, p. 361) and the following is a quote from a non-native speaker teacher: ‘Most native teachers I know never really came across grammar until they started

teaching it. So you have to learn it as you go along (ibid)'. There are clear differences between the context at the CASS and that of the Arva and Medgyes study, and these differences are significant and make the findings from question one even more telling. The key difference is in the qualification level of the native speaker teachers in Arva and Medgyes study. None of them had a masters and the mean teaching experience was 1.5 compared with 16.93 in this study. Furthermore there was a difference in qualifications also. In the Arva and Medgyes study none of the teachers had a masters degree in a teaching subject and were described by the authors as being 'poorly qualified as EFL teachers' (p. 359). In this study two thirds of the respondents had a masters degree and one had a doctoral degree. What is even more revealing from the data is that in this study as the students spent more time with the teachers their preferences for native and non-native teachers in grammar and speaking both increased. In the foundation year 64.4% of the students preferred to have a non-native speaker teaching them for grammar. This increased to 69.3% for first year students. There was also an increase in the preference for native speakers for speaking classes between the foundation and first year. In the foundation year 62.9% of the students preferred to have a native speaker teacher for speaking classes. This increased to 74.4% for the first year. The questionnaire took place towards the end of the academic year and so what the results show is that after about one years teaching the students were favourably disposed towards having a native speaker for speaking classes and a non-native for grammar classes and that this disposition increased after a further years teaching. These findings are in line with the conclusions drawn by Arva and Medgyes (2000) and suggest that there is some merit behind the suggestion that native speaker teachers should (a) not teach grammar and (b) teach speaking classes in place of non-native speaker teachers.

Student preferences for reading classes are similar to those for speaking classes, a preference for native speaker teachers that increases from the foundation year to the first year. This could be explained due to the fact that ‘phonological awareness is highly correlated with reading ability’ (Pang et al 2003). This being the case the students may have desired to have a native speaker whose phonological presentation of the lexis in the textbook being studied was easier to understand and follow than a non-native speaker. For the remaining two skills, listening and writing, the students were not as unequivocal as they were for speaking and reading but even here there were noticeable trends. For listening classes the students expressed a preference for a native speaker teacher with the percentage of students expressing this preference increasing from the foundation year to the first year. Interestingly the change in student preferences for the listening class between the foundation year and the first year was relatively large. In the foundation year 40.2% of the students preferred a non-native speaker teacher for listening classes, with this number dropping to 21% in the first year. The proportion of students who preferred a native speaker teacher for these classes increased by a similar amount between the foundation and first year. Again, similar to the reading class preferences described earlier, this could be ascribed to the fact that listening also involves a large amount of reading aloud by the teacher and hence phonological accuracy would be an important asset from the students’ perspective. As a general rule it would be possible to say that changes from the foundation to the first year come about as a result of students’ direct experiences in the classrooms. In this case as the teaching and learning material became more complex it could easily be the case that they felt that having a clearer voice, a native voice, was better for explaining listening exercises where teachers often repeat

content found on CDs that accompany textbooks and contain the listening portion of the curriculum.

The final skill to be discussed here is writing. Here the students followed a similar pattern to grammar with the students expressing a preference for a non-native speaker teacher, with 46.2% saying they preferred a non-native speaker teacher (see Table 3, p. 169). However here, as with listening classes, there was a drop in the percentage of students favouring non-native speaker teachers between the foundation and the first year. In the foundation year 50.5% of the students expressed a preference in favour a native speaker, but this dropped to 41.5% in the first year. This could be explained by the fact that as the material become more difficult and more advanced the students felt more comfortable having a native speaker who was more capable of understanding the content and explaining it to them.

What all these responses to questions regarding the four skills and grammar show is that the students are aware of what is taking place in the classroom and express sentiments and opinions that can be explained in a rational manner. All of this appears to contradict the answer to question 6 where almost two thirds of the students expressed a preference for native speaker teachers. Another important observation relates back to the comparison with the Arva and Medgyes (2000) study. In that study the native speaker teachers were poorly qualified and had little experience, and were referred to as EFL *backpackers* for their limited commitment to the teaching profession. At the CASS, in contrast, the teachers were all seasoned professionals with extensive teaching experience and the majority educated to masters level in a teaching related subject. Despite the qualified status of the native speaker teachers, the students still expressed a preference for non-native speakers for the grammar

component of the curriculum. What this suggests is that no matter how well qualified the native speaker, it is always better to have a non-native speaker teaching grammar.

The situation holds true, in reverse, for the non-native speaker teachers. These teachers were as qualified as their native speaking colleagues, with most having masters or even doctoral degrees in their chosen subjects. Despite this fact the majority of students preferred not to be taught by them for speaking and reading. Again what this suggests is that the situation described in the Arva and Medgyes (2000) study, whereby the native and non-native speakers were given different teaching assignments based on the very fact of their being or not being a native speaker may carry some merit. Maybe the way forward is to accept that native speakers and non-native speakers bring to the language classroom very different skills sets and that these should be recognised. The contention of the author here is that this is not the reification of the native speaker fallacy but is on the contrary the articulation of rational preferences by aware students. It is not the case that every preference for a native speaker is a manifestation of the native speaker fallacy. The answers to question six, where about two thirds of the respondents said they preferred a native speaker teacher could be a case where the native speaker fallacy is shown to be in existence. Taken alone the responses to question six, (see Figure 6, p. 168) would not be enough to suggest that the native speaker fallacy is present but when compared to the answers to questions one (see Table 4 and 5, p. 169) and four then the contradictions become apparent and suggest the students have a non-educational motive for expressing a preference for a native speaker teacher in response to question six.

8.2.2.2 Teacher preferences: language skills and grammar

There were two questionnaires, one for native speaker teachers and one for non-native speaker teachers. This fact allows the results to be sorted according to native speaker/non-native speaker status. The results from the native speaker teacher questionnaire to the first five parts of question four which asked them who they thought, native or non-native, was a better teacher for the four language skills plus grammar provided little information (see Table 9, p. 174). The majority answered both to all the aforementioned parts of the question. Even in the area of speaking only 26.7% said they thought that they, native speakers, made better teachers. The majority of non-native speaker teachers on the other hand, 60%, thought that their native speakers were better suited to speaking classes (see Table 10, p. 174). This deference by the non-native speaker teachers to the native speaker for speaking classes is in line with both the students and the study by Arva and Medgyes (2000). What is surprising is that the native speaker teachers themselves did not view things that way. Another interesting observation relates to self perception. The non-native speakers were willing to accept that native speakers would make better teachers for the speaking class, a view widely held, yet for the teaching of grammar, where non-natives are held by students and others, such as in the Arva and Medgyes 2000 study, to be better suited the native speaker teachers were unwilling to concede this. Not a single native speaker teacher in this study voiced the opinion that non-native speakers would make better teachers. Clearly there exists a difference in perception between the two groups of teachers and what is also clear is the fact that the native speaker teachers were unwilling to concede that the non-native teachers could make better teachers in any of the four language skills and grammar. This is shown by the string of zeros in table 9 (p. 174) representing the percentage of native speaker teachers who

believed that non-native speaker teachers would be better at teaching any of the four language skills plus grammar.

8.2.2.3 Student Preferences: Further Contradictions

The results to question two (see Table 4 and 5, p. 169) on the student questionnaire provide the strongest possible evidence of the external voices influencing the responses students gave to question six asking whether they preferred to be taught by native speaking teachers. The response to this question, overwhelmingly positive, contrasts with the responses to question one, whose analysis has preceded above, and also with the responses to questions which will be analysed here. The students were asked to express their preference, native or non-native, in four areas related to teaching: professionalism, empathy, ability to facilitate learning and being an all round better teacher. Beginning with professionalism, a criticism of this item on the questionnaire could easily be that the term was not defined and hence had a very opaque meaning. That, however, was intentional. Rather than ask the students to make a specific measure of a specific quality they were instead asked to make a very general observation on a general quality. Professionalism could be anything from time keeping or dress, to behaviour in class or any other word the reader could link to the word professionalism. In answer to the question of why this item was included, the reader is directed back to question five (see Figure 5, p. 167). That also was a very vague and general question. The difference in the two sets of responses is indicative of a confused mindset. In contrast to question five where a clear majority responded in favour of having native speaker teachers, here in question 2(a) the response is far more ambivalent. More students thought that non-native speaker teachers, 42.7%, were more professional than native speakers, 34.9%. There was no significant change between the foundation and the first year here. What these data

suggest is that the students were unsure who was more professional, there was no overriding preference despite the fact that the majority had expressed a preference for a native speaker teacher, though this could be due to students simply not understanding the term professional, the term for which underwent several revisions during the translation from English to Arabic to find a suitable Arabic equivalent that would be clear to students.

The answers to parts (b), (c) and (d) of question two which relate to the preference students have, native or non-native, with respect to empathy, facilitation of learning and being an all round better teacher were all in favour of the non-native speaker (see Table 7 and 8, p. 172). With respect to empathy the students answered overwhelmingly in favour of the non-native speaker with 78.1% responding that non-native speakers understand learner needs more, compared with only 10.5% for the native speaker. There was a similar response to the question of who makes learning easier, with 63.5% saying non-native speakers and only 18.9% saying native speakers. When it came to the question of who made the all-round better teacher 43% responded in favour of the non-native speaker with 24.6% in favour of the native speaker. What these results show, certainly what the responses to the questions on empathy and facilitating learning show, is that the students have an awareness of their own reality. Similar to the questions related to the language skills and grammar, discussed above, these questions are very personal in the sense that they relate to their personal experience in the classroom. Clearly they have had very positive experiences with their non-native speaker teachers, people who in the majority opinion of students, understand their learning needs more and are better able to make learning easier. Continually the issue returns back to the answer to question five. Why did the students answer so unequivocally in favour of the native speaker?

Comparing the answer to question five with the answer to question 2(d), which asked students who was the better all round teacher, the expectation would be that the results would align, i.e. that about the same number of students who preferred to have a native speaker teacher would think that native speakers make better all round teachers. Yet this is not the case. In question five, two hundred and fourteen students, 60% of the respondents, said they preferred to have native speaker teachers. Yet in question 2(d) only 91 students, 24.6% of the respondents, said they thought that native speakers make better all round teachers. What these contradictions suggest is that on a macro level the students are almost pre-programmed to answer 'native speaker' to any question about who makes the better teacher. Yet when asked questions that refer back to their own experiences, very personal experiences that involve their experience in the classroom, they often answer that they prefer non-native teachers.

8.2.2.4 Teacher preferences: further observations

The responses to parts vii to X of question four in the questionnaire given to teachers (see Table 11 and Table 12, pp.175) follow the same pattern as the responses to parts (i)-(v) that asked them to state whether native or non-native speakers or both were better at teaching the four language skills plus grammar. The native speakers were non-committal in that the majority of the responses fell in the 'both' category. This was not the case with non-native speaker teachers where the majority felt that they were better able to empathise with students and hence understand their learning needs better. Non-native speaker teachers were also of the opinion that they could better facilitate learning, with a large majority saying they did this better than native speaker teachers. At first glance it may appear that the answers by the native speakers were more balanced given that they suggested that native and non-native speakers were

equal with respect to the qualities under discussion here, however that is not necessarily the case. Considering the issue of empathy, then given the fact that the non-native speakers has learnt English themselves it would be easy to assume that they have greater empathy with the students in their language learning endeavours. Certainly that was the view of the students at the CASS, as highlighted above. The native speaker teachers thought this was not the case, and held the opinion that although they had not gone through the process of learning English themselves this did not put them at an undue disadvantage.

The open ended part of question six provided an opportunity for the teachers to express themselves freely on the subject of native and non-native speakers. The first part of the question asked whether the CASS should give preference to native or non-native speakers. Native speakers were asked whether preference should be given to native speakers of English and vice-versa for non-native speakers. The answers to this first part of the question have been discussed above. The second part of the question asked the respondents to justify their answer to the first part of the question. One of the noticeable features of the responses is the awareness shown by native speaker teachers of the wider issues related to the native speaker fallacy. Although the responses of native speaker teachers to some of the questions above may lead to questions about their willingness to appreciate and understand the advantages non-native speakers bring to a language classroom, this open ended question provides a counter to that. Many of the responses were strong arguments in favour of the use of non-native speaker teachers. For example comment number 20 from page 177, by one native speaker teacher, shows a real appreciation of the role of non-native speaker teachers referring to them as ‘adding prestige’.

Other comments from other native speaker teachers such as ‘being a native speaker does not guarantee one will be a good teacher’, comment number 21, page 178 and ‘A well trained English teacher of Arab origin would be as good or better than a native-speaker’, comment number 22, on page 178 show that suggesting the native speaker fallacy is something that is propagated by all native speakers is not accurate. It is also necessary to separate valid comments on the proficiency levels of non-native speaker teachers, whereby those with low proficiency levels are not considered competent to be in the classroom, with non-pedagogical issues whereby non-native speakers are excluded for no other reason other than they are not native speakers. Comment number 25 on page 178 is a good illustration of this awareness shown by a native speaker teacher referring to the need to have a mix of NS and NNS.

The comment about the ‘thick’ accent may appear to be discriminatory but considered in the light of the entire comment appears fair and balanced. If by ‘thick’ accent what is suggested is poor phonological accuracy such that students find it difficult to understand what is being said, then that is a valid point. The last point about the need to speak grammatical English is related to the earlier discussion in chapter three of Standard English. Irrespective of the views of the reader what cannot be argued is that expressing a desire for teachers, native speaker or non-native speaker, to speak Standard or grammatical English, is a valid position in applied linguistics.

Given the current state of affairs and the fact that native speaker teachers are generally the teachers of choice for many tertiary institutions around the world, it is hardly surprising that the responses of non-native speaker teachers to this part of the question is slightly defensive. Sentiments such as ‘the priority should be given to qualifications’ were common as was the idea that ‘The college [CASS] should give an equal chance of recruitment to both NST and NNST’. An indication of the defensive

mindset of the non-native speakers is shown by the lack of any comment that actively argues in favour of the employment of the non-native speaker, in contrast to native speakers where one native speaker respondent commented that ‘Too many NNSTs may introduce a decline in teaching methodology and overall quality of English delivery’, comment number 23 on page 178 and another that NST should be used as a model in pronunciation classes, comment number 19 on page 177.

Given the fact that in response to other questions about the relative merits of teachers, the non-native speakers had been willing to express their own merits it is surprising that they did not chose to use the opportunity afforded by question six to articulate their beliefs more. This is perhaps indicative of a belief that they feel it is necessary to justify their existence in the department rather than to actively promote it. This could be taken as an example of how the bent of the CASS is one which favours native speakers and promotes this defensive mindset.

8.2.3 Native speaker fallacy - conclusions

From the foregoing discussion it is possible to articulate a number of conclusions with respect to the native speaker fallacy. The first of these is that there appears to be confusion in the minds of the students with respect to their preference for having a native or non-native teacher of English. When asked the question directly about whether they preferred a native speaker teacher the majority of the students said yes. The student questionnaire was designed in such a way as to try to ask each question in a number of different ways. The result of this design was the highlighting of contradictory responses by students to the issue of teacher preference. One possible conclusion from this is that, when asked about their own personal experiences, students tended to favour non-native teachers in a number of key areas, such as the

teaching of grammar and also the ability to make learning English easier. All of the answers to these questions are understandable; what is left open to speculation is why the majority of the students replied yes to the question of whether they preferred a native speaker teacher. One possible reason could be the difference between the abstraction and the reality. It could be that the students when considering the concept of native speakers were thinking of the concept native speakers but their responses to the questions on their micro level experiences was referring to the native speaker in their reality. This abstraction, however, would be conditional on the students having a viable concept to abstract to, i.e. a larger group of native speaker teachers. Given the context at the CASS where students came from remote areas where there were no international schools and native speaker teachers did not teach in schools this possibility is remote.

Other possible reasons for the difference in the micro and macro level answers could be that the message being delivered by *centre* agents such as language centres or by internal agencies such as the MOHE or the CASS was in favour of native speakers. It could be that the students can see for themselves the investment the MOHE are making by bringing in native speaker teachers and, from a macro perspective, just assume that is the correct decision. One possible avenue for the propagation of the native speaker fallacy could be the native speaker teachers themselves. However, when native speaker teacher responses as a whole are taken into consideration, the idea that native speaker teachers are the chief proponents of the NSF can be seen to be simplistic. Whilst some native speaker teachers clearly do not hold their non-native speakers in high regard, and do not value the contribution non-native teachers can make, this can in no way be said to represent the views of all or even the majority of native speaker respondents in this study. However what cannot be denied from the

data above is the defensive mindset of the non-native speakers. It may be that their defensiveness and unwillingness to champion their own cause may lead to the perpetuation of the NSF. Indeed were they to actively promote the values of being a non-native, values that lead them to having greater empathy and hence the ability to facilitate learning, values that the students themselves acknowledge, the atmosphere in the CASS could change.

8.3 The L2 fallacy

The L2 fallacy was defined in chapter four as being the belief that ‘the teaching of English as a foreign or second language should be entirely through the medium of English’ (Phillipson 1992, p. 185). The literature review in chapter four established that there was little evidence from established research why the first language should not be used in the second language classroom. On the contrary what was shown was that there are sound pedagogical reasons that fully justified the use of the first language and that using it in an appropriate manner could assist students in their acquisition of the second language by scaffolding their learning. This section of chapter eight seeks to uncover the views of students, teachers and administrators on the role of the second language to understand if the L2 fallacy is in existence at the CASS.

8.3.1 Position of the MOHE on the use of the L1

The Ministry of Higher Education in Oman whose views are represented here by Ms AD, the programme director for English, were clear in that they had no problem with the use of Arabic in the English language classroom. In response to a question asking whether Arabic had a role to play in the English language programme Ms AD replied

Yes, I do. With the very low level students I think it does have a place. I would hope that it wouldn't need to be used once the students proficiency improves, but yeah I certainly do [believe the L1 has a role in the L2 classroom] (Interview with Ms AD, Saturday 14th April 2009, attached as appendix E).

When asked if the students would be better served by having teachers who spoke Arabic, the L1, she replied positively. This being the case what can be said with certainty is that there was no official directive from the ministry to the teachers not to use Arabic. This being the case it would be expected that there would be an atmosphere within the CASS that was conducive to the use of the L1. However this was not always the case. This is evidenced by the following entry from the researcher's journal kept during his time at the CASS

Staff meeting with HOD: Discussing the difficulty that students have with learning English in the lower groups the discussion focused in on group 9 who are taught primarily by Dr I (a NNST). She was explaining how she tries every technique to teach her students including singing, miming and drawing and then she finished off her comments by saying 'I even sometimes teach in Arabic'. This stuck in the mind due to its defensive tone, as if singing etc was fine as a pedagogical tool but using Arabic was something sinister and unlawful not worthy of the language classroom. (26/02/2007)

It is not possible to conclude from this one comment that the use of L1 was controversial in the CASS, no evidence of this was found. However what it does show is that, despite the apparent support of the MOHE towards the use of the L1, there was at least one teacher, an Arab educated to doctoral level, who found the

matter to be slightly sensitive. However it is argued here that in general the CASS administration was supportive of the use of the L1 and had no problem with its use in the English language classroom.

8.3.2 Student perceptions on the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom

The student questionnaire contained two questions that directly dealt with the L2 fallacy. Question six asked whether it was important for the teachers to be able to speak Arabic (see p. 182) and question seven asked whether some Arabic should be used in the English language classroom (see Table 15, p. 181). As has been articulated earlier, in chapter seven, the reason why these two questions were asked together was to spot apparent contradictions in the students' answers. The answers to the two questions should cohere since a teacher can only use Arabic in the classroom if they have some knowledge of Arabic. However the responses to the two questions were dissimilar. The vast majority of the students, 87%, favoured the use of Arabic in the English language classroom, but only 53.5% said they thought that it was important for teachers to be able to speak Arabic. The figures in this study are similar to those in Schweers (1999) where he found that 100% of students in his English class in Puerto Rico were in favour of the English teacher using Spanish in class. In the Schweers study a total of 87.4% of the students believed that the use of Spanish would assist them to learn English.

The high proportion of students favouring the use of Arabic in this present study is significant since it suggests that even after almost two years of intensive English study the students still favour the use of Arabic. This is somewhat surprising since it suggests that all students, not only beginners, benefit from the use of the first

language in the second language classroom. It would suggest that even when students are at an advanced level of learning in a second language they still feel the need for the teacher to use some Arabic, perhaps in the explanation of particularly difficult items of grammar.

Having established that the vast majority of students are in favour of the use of Arabic in the English language classroom it would be expected that the answer to question six, asking whether it is important for teachers to be literate in Arabic, would yield similar results. Surprisingly this was not the case, with only 53.5% of the students answering yes to this question. Again there seems to be a difference in the responses of the students when they view macro level issues and more micro level issues related to their everyday experiences in the classroom. When it comes to the latter, it appears that their experience in the classroom leads them to a very certain conclusion: that Arabic should be used in the classroom. To appreciate the significance of this response it is important to understand the context in which it is given. For the majority of the students the foundation year at the CASS will be the first time they encounter a native English speaking teacher. Certainly it will be the first time that they will have experienced the teaching of English without Arabic. What the data suggest and support is the assertion that this is not a particularly positive experience for them since the majority of the English language teachers did not speak Arabic at the time this research was conducted. Again the reader is left to question why there would be a difference between the macro and the micro level answers. Theoretically they appear to be saying it should be English only but when it comes to praxis, Arabic should be used in the classroom. A good question to ask at this stage would be why do the students have this macro view of language teaching? It is certainly difficult to ascertain the exact reason and as has been mentioned above the MOHE is certainly

not propagating the view that Arabic should not be used. It could be the case that the teachers themselves are responsible for propagating the L2 fallacy. This will be examined next.

8.3.3 Teacher perceptions on the Use of the L1 in the L2 classroom

Question twelve in the questionnaire asked teachers whether students should be prevented from using Arabic in the English language classroom (see p. 183). The results from the native speaker teachers resemble those of the students themselves, with 73.3% in favour of the use of Arabic. The non-native speaker teachers, however, are more circumspect with only 40% of teachers, not even a majority, in favour of the use of Arabic. These findings suggest that non-native speaker teachers have a view of language learning that does not cohere with the findings of contemporary research which, as has been demonstrated in chapter four, broadly supports the supposition that use of the L1 actually assists in the learning of the L2. Why this would be the case would be an area for further research but it certainly suggests that the concept of a colonised consciousness could be present in the minds of some of the teachers. Perhaps it is they themselves who are the propagators of the message that the L1 should not be used in the classroom.

The responses to question 13 (see p. 183) where teachers were asked if they thought students should be penalised for using Arabic in the English language classroom were similar to those of question 12, with the responses mirroring exactly those of question 12. However for this question the respondents were provided with room to explain their answers. Examining the comments leads to the conclusion that the vast majority

of native speakers were extremely supportive of the use of Arabic, as comments numbered 37, 38, 40, 41, 42 and 45 on pages 184-185 show.

All of these answers suggest that these teachers are highly supportive of the use of Arabic in the English language classroom. Only comment number 36 on page 184 from a native speaker was negative. This answer is the only comment from a native speaker teacher that could be said to promote the L2 fallacy. In contrast to this one comment there were a number of comments from the non-native speaker teachers which could be said to be promoting the L2 fallacy such as comments numbered 48, 50 and 52 on page 185.

The issue of penalising students for the use of Arabic, and the support for such measures from non-native speaking teachers, is significant. Phillipson commenting on how the L2 fallacy was supported talks about how 'Those caught using the mother tongue risked corporal punishment or were identified as having done something shameful' (1992, p. 187). Canagarajah begins a chapter in one of his books on the role of the L1 in the L2 classroom with two quotes from teachers about the different methods they used to banish the L1 from the classroom. The first of these was the use of a plastic hammer used to 'lightly "hit" students' and the second was the placing of a small egg cup with sweets in on the desk of each young student. Every time the L1 was used a sweet would be taken away. These rather innocuous looking strategies are derided as being 'damaging' and 'oppressive' by Canagarajah (1999, p. 125). Whilst it is debatable whether such strategies are as harmful as both Phillipson and Canagarajah suggest what is notable is the fact that it is non-native speakers and not native speakers who are in favour of the banning of the L1. It is important to stress here the role of the periphery since both the aforementioned authors tend to suggest

that it is centre agents who are chiefly responsible for the over emphasis of the L2 and the subsequent exclusion of the L1.

Both native and non-native speaker teachers were generally split on the use of translation. About half of both native and non-native speakers were in favour of some translation with 40% against the use of translation. The issue of translation was covered in depth in chapter four with the conclusion being that there was little support in academic circles for the banning of translation. It is worth recalling the words of Palmer who generations ago said

...translation and the use of the mother tongue, as it turns out, are perfectly harmless and in many cases positively beneficial (1922, p. 125).

These comments were echoed later by such figures as Hornby who said ‘there comes a time when translation is more and more necessary’ (1946b, p. 39) and then by Widdowson who said the following

I have argued that this monolingual teaching is at odds with the bilingualization process which learners necessarily engage in when they draw on the language they know as a resource for learning the language they do not. One obvious way of dealing with this disparity is to devise a bilingual pedagogy which exploits and seeks to direct it. Such pedagogy would involve bringing contrastive analysis into classroom methodology in the form of translation activities of one kind or another. If transfer is such a major factor in interlanguage development, as according to Ellis the SLA literature makes plain, then it is hard to resist the conclusion that translation should be a major factor in the teaching which seeks to induce it (2001, p. 16).

Indeed as shown in chapter four it is difficult to find support in the academic literature at any time over the past two hundred years for the banishment of the L1 and translation. It is difficult to understand why the non-native teachers would come to this conclusion or would hold these opinions. What could be fair to assume is that many of them may have been taught English using techniques which included strong components of translation and this perhaps has negatively coloured their view towards translation. However even in these cases it still does not justify the holding of views that are clearly not in line with the overriding opinion of academic scholars. What could be a source of these erroneous views is the lack of training in methodology that some teachers have. However as has been commented on earlier almost all of the native speaker teachers were qualified to masters level and quite paradoxically it is the lesser qualified native speakers who appear more grounded in methodology. Again perhaps this raises questions about the quality of education in some of the periphery countries where resources such as the latest academic journals or known textbooks may not be available.

One interesting finding from question fourteen (see Table 19, p. 186) is the fact that many of the teachers who are supportive of the use of translation limit their support for beginners only. Comments such as ‘especially at lower levels this is very helpful’ appeared several times. It is easy to understand why teachers may come to this view, if they viewed translation as being a measure only used when the students lacked the necessary knowledge in English. The response of these teachers is contrasted with that of the students themselves who appeared to favour the use of Arabic even at the end of the second year of English teaching at the CASS, suggesting that even at intermediate or advanced levels the students were in favour of the use of the L1.

Question fifteen of the teachers' questionnaire (see Table 20, p. 189) asked the respondents if they thought that students used Arabic as a linguistic tool only when they struggled to communicate in English. About the same percentage of native and non-native teachers, over two thirds, held that students only use Arabic when they cannot communicate in English. Comments such as 'Many learners are lazy' and hence use the L1, or 'This is what weak students would naturally do' ignore the many positive benefits of using the L1 that are not related to the weaknesses of the students or to them being lazy. Further comments such as 'I think that students generally do want to learn and will only resort to Arabic when necessary' serve to reinforce the idea that the use of the L1 is a negative activity. These comments shed light on some of the earlier responses and suggest that the L1 is tolerated in class more than it is actively encouraged. Very few of the comments adopted a positive position towards the L1. The issue here is not to deny that the L1 may be used at times by students when they are struggling with English but on what basis can this be said to be always the case and how can it be established that this always is the case? Certainly the negativity of the comments associated with question fifteen reveal a lack of awareness amongst a significant section of the teaching populace as to the benefits that can be accrued through the use of the L1. What is of particular significance is the fact that once again the non-native speakers, people who surely must have utilised translation at some point during their English language learning endeavours for some benefit, are generally negative about its use. As with the native speakers they see translation as something of no pedagogical benefit, to be utilised only in times of crisis.

8.3.4 L2 fallacy: conclusions

The discussion above leads to a number of conclusions regarding the L2 fallacy, the primary one being that without any doubt it is present as a concept at the CASS and exists amongst students and teachers. The idea that the L1 is not something useful, that it does not assist in the acquisition of a second language and that it is to be used only as a last resort appears to be widespread amongst teachers, both native and non-native speakers of English. Elements of a colonised consciousness are definitely discernable in some of the responses given by the non-native speakers and perhaps it is time to rethink the notion that it is the *Centre* that is responsible for the propagation of concepts like the L2 and native speaker fallacy.

8.4 The English medium fallacy

The English medium fallacy was defined in chapter five as being the belief that efficacious education can only take place when English is the medium of instruction (MOI). The literature review undertaken in chapter five established that the majority of relevant academic research was supportive of the supposition that the use of an L2 as the MOI is counterproductive in terms of the academic aspirations of the students and the use of an L2 as an MOI for all but the most gifted students can negatively affect academic performance. Both the teachers' and students' questionnaires contained only one question with respect to the English medium fallacy. In retrospect there should have been more questions on this subject to allow for a more comprehensive picture to be painted. However these shortcomings in the questionnaire have been partially overcome with data from other sources such as the IELTS scores of the students, the journal maintained by the author and also comments

in interviews by leading personalities involved with the preparatory and foundation year programmes at the CASS.

8.4.1 Students' views on the MOI

As has previously been discussed students were positively disposed towards the use of Arabic in their English language classes. This positive disposition was present throughout the foundation and first year of education at the CASS. If the students were in favour of the use of English in their English language classes it would not be unreasonable to extrapolate those results to the specialization courses and suggest that they would also be positively oriented to the use of Arabic in those courses also. The data from the student questionnaires present a number of interesting findings. The first of these is that Arabic medium education, the L1 here, and English medium education, the L2, are viewed in similar terms. The data show that overall only 18.4% of the students are in favour of an English medium education with 15.4% in favour of Arabic medium (see Table 21, p. 193). The majority of students, 62.7%, of students favour bilingual education, something that is rarely even discussed in relation to Arab education. A comparison of the results from the foundation year and the first year reveals one interesting finding. In the foundation year students study English for 20 hours per week with a few hours of IT skills. They do not begin to study their degree programme specializations until the first year proper of the degree programme. What is shown in the table is that the students are more positively inclined towards an English MOI prior to beginning studying in English. After a year's experience there is a fall of about 6% in the number of students who favour an English medium, with a corresponding increase in the number of students favouring a bilingual education.

The researcher had expected that the higher level students would favour English whilst the majority of lower level students will favour Arabic. The data only partially support this supposition. Tables 22 and 23 (see pp. 194-195) show the breakdown of the results by group, with group number 1 being the strongest and group number 9 the weakest. In the foundation year, prior to the beginning of the specializations, there was a degree of support amongst most English groups, about a quarter of students, in favour of an English medium education. The support for Arabic was very low in the higher groups in the foundation year, with support for an Arabic medium education in the first three groups in single digits. For some of the lower groups there was some support for Arabic, with 33% of group five students, 30% of group seven students and 23% of group nine students. Clearly here the lower levels generally favoured Arabic over English. However the data shows that the overwhelming majority of students were in favour of a bilingual education. Something that is rarely if ever on the agenda and discussed in the Arab World. The data in table 22 shows that about two thirds of the students, who had not yet experienced studying their specializations in English, were apprehensive of the idea of studying in English and that bilingual education was a popular idea.

The data from the first year, shown in table 23, show that after one year of studying the specializations in English there was little change in the perceptions and views of the students. Support for English medium education dropped overall by 5% and support for bilingual education rose by 7%. Overall the picture, though, remains as it was in the foundation year - which suggests two things: first that studying in English does not result in a major change in the percentage of students who favoured English in the foundation year; second, that the experience of students studying in their specializations in English only slightly increases the support for bilingual education.

This suggests that the experience of studying in the L2 is not altogether a negative one since there is no great change in the numbers supporting English as the MOI. There is however one significant caveat here and that is the reality of education on the ground. Whilst it is true that some of the specializations were studied in English, communication skills for example was taught by one of the English teachers due to a shortage in lecturers for that particular discipline, that is not the case for all disciplines. Indeed for many of the disciplines the rhetoric was English MOI but the reality was very different as the following entry from the author's journal makes clear

I was in the HOD's office discussing, informally the decision to teach the majors in English. He mentioned to me that many of the lecturers [in the specialization programmes] had said to him that 70% of what they are teaching is in Arabic because they simply do not have the vocabulary to teach in English. This is creating problems with the 'issue logs' since these are designed to be used in the specialization subjects. The idea is to use vocabulary and subjects that are being taught, in English in the specialization subjects. The problem arises as a result of teaching being predominantly in Arabic and hence no vocabulary can be garnered from these lessons (31/10/2006).

It is strange that the students have such antipathy towards studying in their L1. It is the quintessential colonised consciousness that breeds an inferiority complex. This is shown from the following exchange which took place between the author of this study and a student at the CASS:

Speaking exam: I was speaking to one student about the college, what he likes and what he dislikes about the place. So I decided to ask him about the

textbook he was using for IT. I asked him how much of it he understood. He replied, 'about 10%'. I asked him whether he preferred to study in English or Arabic and replied 'in English because it is the language of science'. I asked him what the point of studying in English was if he didn't understand the textbook. To this he just shrugged his shoulders (13/05/2007).

The exchange shows the struggle this particular student is having trying to reconcile the idea that English is the only language of science with the fact that he understood very little of the textbook. Whilst this may be the view of only one student, the data presented in chapter seven show that only a small minority of students wish to study in their L1, this despite the fact that the literature reviewed in chapter five was supportive of the supposition that for all but the most academically gifted the use of the L2 as a MOI negatively affects their academic performance.

8.4.2 Teachers' views on the MOI

The teachers were asked one question related to the specializations which contained two components; a closed question asking them whether they believed that the specializations should be taught in Arabic and an open follow up requesting them to elaborate on their answer. The data from the first part of the question follow the pattern that has been established in earlier questions with non-native speakers more in favour of the use of English than native speakers. With both native and non-native speaker teachers there was a similar level of support for and against the use of English as the MOI. A clear design flaw in the questionnaire manifested itself here in that the teachers should have been given the opportunity to express a preference in favour of bilingual education. However the open-ended part of the question did allow for

teachers to explain their preferences in detail as well as articulating any particular support they had for bilingual education.

The comments from the teachers generally reinforce the idea that some non-native teachers suffer from the English medium fallacy and believe strongly in the concept of English being the only language that can be used in academic and professional domains. Comments such as ‘I champion it [the move to an English MOI]’ and ‘It is certainly a right step forward’ suggest a mindset whereby the non-native speaker of English feels ingratiated towards English. There were, as there has been earlier, comments that go against the findings of the literature review in chapter five, which suggests that using an L2 as the MOI negatively affects academic performance, such as the comments numbered 90 and 98 on pages 196 and 198 respectively.

However it is important to balance the comments above with comments from other teachers which had a strong sense of awareness of the dangers posed by the EMF. Comments numbered 92 and 95 on page 197 show a profound understanding of the deeper issues involved with the switch to an English medium education.

This first of these two comments highlights what is a common problem in the Gulf Region, which is the complete absence of any desire to promote Arabic as the language of science and education. There is almost complete resignation on the part of the intelligentsia to the domination of English and the necessity of education being in English. The second comment above, which refers to the idea of an ‘attempt’, quite accurately describes the situation at the CASS and will be commented on below when the IELTS scores are analysed, where education remains weak. It is important to bear in mind the context here, when referring to the idea of an ‘attempt’ where everything appears nothing more than superficial endeavours at education. As has been

discussed earlier the situation of English in Oman compares extremely unfavourably with that of other nations and was pointed out as such by Nunan et al (1987) in their report, in which the situation in Oman was compared with that of Canada. In Canada prior to studying in French, English speaking students are exposed to 4000 hours of French as compared to the situation in Oman, where the figure is between 600-800 hours.

The comments from the native speaker teachers were generally supportive of the need to use English as the MOI. Whilst some of the teachers recognized the difficulty that studying in English may pose, the general perception was that it was necessary to increase Oman's global competitiveness. Examples of this are comments numbered 97, 99 and 100 on pages 198 - 199.

Again similar to the non-native teachers there was a mix of answers with some clearly against the move to an English MOI. Examples of this are comments numbered 102 and 103 on pages 199 and 200 respectively.

What these comments, when viewed in their totality show, is that whilst there were members of the teaching body who were clearly against the move to an English MOI there was a significant proportion who were actively in favour, and many of these based their views on erroneous understandings of the effects of the use of an L2 as the MOI. As has been demonstrated in the earlier literature review in chapter five only the most academically gifted students can have any hope of fully utilizing their academic potential whilst studying a degree programme in a language other than their L2. This point will be highlighted even further when the standardised English exam results are considered. It is to that point that the study now turns.

8.4.3 IELTS results

Perhaps the single most revealing piece of data from the CASS is the set of IELTS results pertaining to the academic year 2005/2006 (see Figure 7 on page 192). The results shown were taken from a random sample of students from the CASS at the end of the academic year 2005/2006.

The mean IELTS scores of the random sample of students in the foundation year of the programme after one year's intensive study of English, was 4.16. Using the band scores shown in Table 1 (p. 159), IELTS would describe the average student entering the degree programme to be taught in English as being a 'limited user of English'. Clearly it is problematic for students who have limited proficiency to be asked to study a degree programme in English. In table 25 below the suitability of certain scores for specific degree disciplines is shown.

Table 25 Acceptable IELTS scores for different courses

Band	Linguistically demanding academic courses e.g. Medicine, Law, Linguistics, Journalism	Linguistically less demanding academic courses e.g. Agriculture, Pure Mathematics, Technology, IT and Telecommunications	Linguistically demanding training courses e.g. Air Traffic Control, Engineering, Pure/Applied Sciences	Linguistically less demanding training courses e.g. Catering, Fire Services
7.5-9.0	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
7.0	Probably acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
6.5	English study needed	Probably acceptable	Acceptable	Acceptable
6.0	English study needed	English study needed	Probably acceptable	Acceptable
5.5	English study needed	English study needed	English study needed	Probably acceptable

Source: (IELTS 2009)

When the scores from Figure 7 are compared to those set by IELTS the problem becomes clear. The CASS deals in applied sciences and according to table 25 above that would suggest that IELTS level 6 would be an acceptable score. The scores from the students at the CASS, averaging around the band 4 mark, would suggest according to IELTS as shown in Figure 7 above, a limited English language proficiency. At the outset the MOHE had set a level of IELTS 4.0 for students graduating from the foundation year and wishing to enter the first year of the degree programmes. This

was then changed to level 4.5 when it became clear that 4.0 was too low and that students would struggle in their degree programmes as a result of poor language skills. This was reflected upon by the MOHE programme manager for English:

Well it [the minimum language requirement for the degree programmes] was initially set at four as you may know, erm, and it's clear that many of the students in year one this year are unable to cope with the demands of the courses other than English because the textbooks etc are not written for people at level four. So we are gradually trying to increase the level of the students going into year one. So it was always intended that it would be raised gradually because hopefully the students coming out of the secondary school are as the years go by are going to be more proficient and we hope that eventually five might become the entry level but there's difficulty there, and I'm about to put in a proposal to her Excellency to look at a restructuring of the foundation because its dreaming to think that you can bring students into a college with no entry levels, some of them can't write a sentence as you well know, and expect then to spit them out at four or four point five in about seven hundred hours or less of tuition. So, er, you know we have to look at how we tackle this. We need to have them at a reasonable level of proficiency if they're going to do OK in year one and cope with Communication, Business etc [names of academic specialization courses at the college] but you can't get them to four point five from nothing in a year in a foundation (Interview with Ms AD, Saturday 14th April 2009, attached as appendix E).

The problematic nature of allowing students to enter into a degree programme with lower than necessary English language skills is seen to be offset by the decision by the CASS to have substantial English language support in the first year of the course

where students study 10 hours of English per year. The problem remains one of progression from lower level IELTS scores to higher levels and the amount of time this takes. There can never be an absolute rule for how long it will take an individual or group of students to progress between bands on the IELTS scale. The British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP) has said that about 200 hundred hours of intensive English study is necessary to move one band on the IELTS scale (Bool et al 2003). This advice has been contradicted by recent studies (e.g. Green 2005, Reed and Hayes 2003) which show different rates of increase over similar periods of time. Further research would be required here to ascertain the mean rate of increase but 10 hours per week for a thirty week academic year would equate to approximately 300 hours of study. According to the BALEAP advice, that would suggest an increase somewhere in the region of 1.5 IELTS bands. Students entering with an IELTS 4.5 could theoretically then, after one year's study, be around IELTS 6.0. From table 25, IELTS 6.0 would be an acceptable score to allow the students to study but there are two main problems here. The first is that in the first year of study the students will be studying their specializations and so will not be dedicated to full time English language study, the second is what has just been mentioned: they will be studying their first year degree programme in English. This idea, that somehow students can improve their English language skills whilst studying in their first year degree programme and hence compensate for language weaknesses at the time of entering is common in the Gulf. Take the following comments from the rector of a leading new private university in the Gulf

It's [the low language level of the students entering the degree programme] a clear problem, I came from King Fahd University [in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabic] where I was teaching at business school. We found students

when they come up to our [degree] level their English was not that good and we faced a problem with it. Definitely you have to work with them [the students] to improve their language, help them but definitely we will have the same situation here. The one year programme will not be enough to bring students' [English language skills] up to university level (Interview with Dr AA, August 11th 2008).

So whilst admitting that the language level of the students is too low, the solution is posted as 'working with the students' which essentially means providing language support to students once they begin their degree programmes. The difficulty with this approach is that the students spend the first year of their degree programme concentrating more on their language skills than on the degree programme itself and this places them at a great disadvantage compared with students who are studying in their L1. Another problem is that there is no guarantee that students' language proficiency will improve during that time, and also that the idea that dedicating a specific amount of time automatically results in IELTS band increases is erroneous (Green 2005).

The problematic nature of the situation at the CASS, with respect to the entry requirements onto the degree programmes, set at IELTS 4.5, is made clear when this is compared to those at the institution that has been contracted to run the English programmes at the Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman. The Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand will only admit students onto their own degree programmes back in New Zealand who have IELTS 6.0. This point was put to Ms AD who responded by saying

Yeah, U, VUW, and other international universities take in students at six and those students go straight into full time degree study. Now if we set that standard at six, how many students would we get into our degree courses each year? (Interview with Ms AD, Saturday 14th April 2009, attached as appendix E).

This answer reifies the nature of the problem, in that the decision is often not a purely educational one and there are often political or social considerations that are taken into account when such decisions are made. In this case the English Programme Manager honestly accepts that IELTS 4.5 is too low a level but that it is necessary to ensure that an acceptable number of students progress onto the degree programmes:

So we [the MOHE in Oman] have done what is done in a number of places, set the entry level lower with English support along the way. So our students go in at four point five, which I totally agree with you is too low to cope with a lot of the materials, but we support them as they go through. In the first year they have ten hours of English as you know, in year two they'll have eight hours. So that concurrently with their degree studies, they're still bringing up their English proficiency levels (ibid).

When Ms AD suggests that this is 'done in a number of places', it is unclear who she is referring to, here but it is unlikely to be Universities in countries where English is the first language. A typical statement regarding the necessary English proficiency level of Universities in the UK is found, for example, on the website of the University of Newcastle, which states that:

In general, students who have not achieved IELTS 6.5 (INTO Newcastle University Grade 65) are likely to be at risk of failing their academic

programme because of inadequate English. Students of English Language, Literature and Linguistics, Speech, Law and Medicine may require at least IELTS 7.0 (INTO Newcastle University Grade 70). Students with less than IELTS 5.5 (INTO Newcastle University Grade 55) will be at very serious risk (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/in-sessional/standards/policy.htm> accessed Friday, 25 December 2009).

8.4.4 The English medium fallacy: conclusions

The above commentary on the EMF allows for a number of conclusions to be drawn. The first of these is the necessity to discount the notion that *centre* agents are solely responsible for the propagation of the idea of an English medium education. The data clearly do not support such a supposition. On the contrary what the data do show is that oftentimes it is non-native speaker teachers who are most in favour of an English medium education and that many native speakers are profoundly and acutely aware of the problematic nature of higher education being delivered in an L2 and the danger that such a move presents to the academic aspirations of students at the CASS. The data also support the assertion that students at the CASS are aware of the problematic nature of using English as the MOI. Perhaps the most interesting finding is the mass support for bilingual education from the students and the fact that this was never even discussed as an alternative during the time the researcher spent at the CASS, which demonstrates the wide gulf between the needs of the students, their perceptions and aspirations and those of language policy planners in the MOHE in Oman and administrative officials at the CASS. The other major conclusion is that data from the single standardised test used at the CASS, the IELTS, reflect the wide gulf between international norms with respect to minimum language requirements for admission to

undergraduate degree programmes to be taught in English and those employed in Oman at the Colleges of Applied Sciences. Of all the findings from this chapter this is perhaps the most striking and most in need of further analysis and discussion. Clearly one question, an ethical one which will be developed below, is how is it that the Victoria University of Wellington will only accept students into their own undergraduate degree programme who have IELTS 6.0 but were willing to accept the Omani MOHE stipulations that 4.5 was sufficient for graduates of the Colleges of Applied Sciences foundation programmes?

8.5 Conclusions

This chapter sought to discuss the data presented in chapter nine with a view to answering the original research questions and to evaluate the efficacy of the research instruments and the data yielded by these. There are a number of basic conclusions to be taken away from these discussions. The first is that any attempt to present the dominance of English language in the CASS, or any similar setting, as being the result exclusively of centre agents is naive and ill-informed. One of the key findings of this chapter is that it is often non-native speakers who are the most vocal in advocating an English only policy and of diminishing the role of the local language. The second major finding relates to the role of educational institutions in the developed world and their work in situations such as the CASS. What was found were clear discrepancies that were difficult to reconcile between internal policies of the contracting institution, in this case the Victoria University of Wellington, and the policies they were implementing at the CASS. Whilst it is clear that the VUW was not in control of setting admission criteria to the degree programmes, questions must be raised as to how they could participate in an endeavour that would not have been acceptable in

their own institutions. The policy being referred to here is the minimum IELTS score criteria for admission to the degree programmes. The third major finding from this study was that the students are very specific in what they want. Firstly they are most certainly not people who could be said to be advocates of the native speaker fallacy. On the contrary they accepted and appreciated good teaching, whoever delivered it and this was evidenced by the fact that several non-native speakers were among the most popular of the teachers at the CASS. The other point relates to the role of English in the degree programme, where the students were unequivocal in their support for bilingual education.

The next chapter will bring the study to a close by attempting to directly answer the original research questions based on the findings from this chapter and the literature reviews.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 Introduction

So far what has been attempted is a theme-based analysis of the three different fallacies that form the basis of this study, the native speaker fallacy, the L2 fallacy and the English medium fallacy. What will be attempted now is a synthesis of the three into a cohesive whole with a view to defining a narrative for what was occurring at the CASS during the period that was the subject of this study.

The question at the outset of the study was language planning and linguistic imperialism. Phillipson's text was used as the basis for the study, with two fallacies from it being used as the basic measurement of the presence or otherwise of LI. A third, the English medium fallacy, discussed in chapter five, was added to the previous two and this constituted the theoretical foundations of the study. The process that was followed was to engage in a literature review of each of the three fallacies to determine at the outset whether they were indeed fallacies or whether they could be corroborated by the contemporary academic literature with supporting evidence. Following this, the research methodology was explained, followed by an analysis of the data from the CASS. The preceding and penultimate chapter discussed the results from all the research instruments. This leaves one final component of the study, namely to fashion what has been done so far into a coherent narrative.

9.2 On language planning and LI

Language planning is a complex social phenomenon, to which there are no easy answers. In a globalized world it becomes increasingly necessary for people to learn more than a single language to function well as global citizens at even the most basic levels. One interesting perspective is offered by De Swaan (2001) who explains the popularity of world languages in terms of a numerical value, Q_i ; this is calculated through a complex formula which examines not only the number of speakers of any given language but also the propensity of the language to connect the learner to others in any given context. Using this scenario, the Q_i for English is nearly always the highest for any given language learner evaluating their choice between various different languages that could be learnt. This being the case, to assume that any endeavour by any individual to learn English must necessarily be a case of linguistic imperialism or that the person or the institution facilitating the process is part of a wider conspiracy is clearly incorrect.

What has been observed at the CASS is that there are a number of complex factors at play governing the different fallacies and that, combined, these suggest that, whilst there would be tangible academic merit in Omani students learning English, the manner of execution is problematic. In particular, the dependence on native speakers and the decision to engage English as the MOI at the CASS and other colleges of applied science are particularly problematic decisions in light of academic evidence which would suggest that other options would have been better suited to this context. A breakdown of the findings of the study is offered below. First the findings from the literature reviews will be discussed, followed by the specific findings from the CASS in Oman.

9.2.1 Findings from the literature reviews

Finding number 1: All varieties of language are not equal, Standard English does exist; its preference by language students is a logical desired outcome.

Current academic commentary appears to be moving away from the concept of a standard for English towards more regional versions (Kachru and Smith, 2009). This is predicated on the notion that all languages are equal and that all regional varieties should be viewed on an equal footing with SE. This position was evaluated in light of evidence to the contrary which suggests that the definition of a standard language, one based on the establishment of widely available codified grammars and dictionaries, is upheld in light of the current status of different varieties of English. What has been argued in chapter three is that the concept of a standard exists in the minds of language users, both native speakers and non-native speakers, and is evidenced by the preference of both language learners and native speakers for Standard English.

This argument is supported by De Swaan's thesis of the Q-value of a language, which posits that language learners would always learn that language which offered greatest communication potential. In this case for the majority of language learners, in the globalised world, the communication potential for Standard English would always be greater than that of any local variety, in the absence of a fully codified alternative. In essence, this appears to be a somewhat circular problem for local varieties since they can never challenge Standard English until they fully evolve, in either Schneider's or Kachru's models, but are prevented from doing so by the ubiquitous nature of Standard English.

Finding number 2: Non-Native Speakers rarely attain the language competence of native speakers but can get very close.

What has been established is that a plethora of research exists to support the assertion that non-native speakers can serve as an accurate model of Standard English. Support for this came from the Critical Period Hypothesis. Whilst the CPH establishes the near impossibility of second language learners attaining native speaker proficiency, the evidence used to support this also establishes that for all but the most obscure grammatical structures, non-native speakers are able to match native speakers in language proficiency.

By linking findings 1 and 2 above it was stated that the native speaker fallacy, which suggests that the native speaker is the ideal language teacher is false. Whilst it is true that SE is a desired outcome for language learners what is not correct is the assertion that native speakers alone can deliver this. This is not to suggest that every non-native speaker teacher is a near native speaker, they are not. However those that are near native speakers are clearly competent at delivering SE in the English language classroom.

Finding number 3: The first language is a necessary teaching resource in the L2 classroom, especially for beginner language students.

It has become a truism of many language teaching contexts that immersion in the language being learned is the most effective way to learn language. The direct method is often cited as the ancestor of all such movements. Chapter four examined the basis for the claim that second language learning is maximized when instruction is entirely through the L2. What was found was that there no evidence to support such a position and that, according to Hornby (1946b), one of the early leading lights of

applied linguistics, the direct method could be implemented whilst using the L1.

Through the course of chapter four, as the literature was examined, it became clear that there was almost no published research in any of the leading academic journals in applied linguistics or related fields that supported the assertion that the L1 should not be used in L2 instruction. This was an unexpected outcome, given the ubiquitous nature of the claim that teaching via the L2 is the most effective way. Instead what was found was evidence to support the supposition that use of the L1 allows students to scaffold their learning, engage in contrastive analysis and use existing knowledge of language, lexis, syntax and structure to benefit their L2 output. The academic literature appeared to be unequivocal in its advocacy of the use of the L1 in the L2 classroom, something which is not mirrored in the teaching methodology literature

Finding number 4: Whilst there may be compelling reasons why institutions chose an L2 as their Medium of Instruction, it would in the long-term benefit their students if the MOI was the L1.

There has been, and continues to be, much dialogue and debate surrounding the MOI at both school and higher education levels. In all cases, the reasons given for the selection of the L2 as the MOI could be classified into one of four categories: economic, nationalistic, linguistic and demand reasons. Chapter five analysed each of these and showed that whilst some of them do have merit the reality is that academic performance is negatively affected for the majority of students. As such it was found that the decision to select an L2 as the MOI lacked evidence in its favour from published academic research.

9.2.2 Findings from the CASS

Finding number 5: Data from the CASS suggest that the Native Speaker Fallacy is not present in that context.

The NSF holds that native speaker teachers are inherently better than their non-native speaking colleagues. The research conducted at the CASS suggested that students were often conflicted with respect to their views on the native speaker teacher. When asked outright whether they preferred the native speaker teacher over the non-native speaker teacher the majority answered in the affirmative yet when they were further probed, with questions that sought to uncover their experience in the classroom, what was found was more complex. The conclusion from the data was that the students, when talking of their experiences in the classroom, certainly did not subscribe to the NSF. There was a strong sense of support for non-native speaking teachers.

The native English speaking faculty also were found to not be supportive of the NSF. They were sympathetic of the difficult situation that their non-native English speaking colleagues found themselves and in were appreciative of the different skills sets that they brought to the classroom.

Finding number 6: The L2 Fallacy was in existence at the CASS

Data from the CASS suggest that the L2 fallacy exists as a concept and is widespread amongst students and teachers. There was evidence of the belief that use of the L1 in the L2 classroom was harmful and that it was not beneficial to the language acquisition process. Teachers had the view that the L1 was only used when the student lacked the necessary L2 communication skills. The view was not something propagated by those involved from agencies from Western countries however and a

discernable finding was that non-native speaking teachers were firmer in advocating the L2 fallacy than their native English-speaking colleagues.

Finding number 7: The English Medium Fallacy is not in existence at the CASS

There was clear opposition amongst students and teachers to the rapid change from Arabic to English as the MOI. Many native English speaking teachers were profoundly aware of the problematic nature of the change. The majority of students were clearly in favour of bilingual education and there was little support for English medium education.

9.3 Validity

In choosing to adopt English as the medium of instruction the CASS joins a large number of tertiary level educational institutions in the Gulf region. Almost all colleges and universities that make the decision to switch the medium of instruction to English also establish foundation or preparatory year programmes where English language teaching forms the bulk of the students' timetabled course hours. In Oman all the colleges of applied sciences and also the colleges of technology together with all the public universities have foundation years. The same is true, for example, of every public university in Saudi Arabia. A cursory glance at any jobs website for the recruitment of English language teachers shows that the bias in favour of native English speaker teachers exists around the Gulf region and so the CASS is certainly in line with other institutions in this respect. The student body of the CASS is monolingual with Arabic being the first language of all the students. Again this is in line with most other tertiary level educational institutions in the Gulf region. Bearing all the aforementioned in mind it follows that it would be possible to suggest that the

findings from this study would have direct relevance for similar institutions across the Gulf region and further afield. The references to Arabic as the first language do not preclude the possibility of generalizing the findings here to non-Arabic contexts around the world where the first language is being replaced by English as the medium of instruction.

9.4 Recommendations

The findings from the study lead to a number of recommendations that would be applicable to any similar foundation or preparatory programme in the Gulf region.

Recommendation number 1: When recruiting staff, native speaker status should be only a marginal consideration based on the fact that, as stated above in finding number 2, non-native speakers can attain a close proximity to native speaker competence and can act as a model of Standard English

Recommendation number 2: There needs to be a concerted effort amongst academics in the Gulf region in the fields of second language acquisition and applied linguistics to stress the role of the first language in the second language acquisition process. Many stakeholders are oblivious to the research that suggests that the use of the L1 assists the second language learner.

Recommendation number 3: Language policy planners in the Gulf region should consider once again the problematic nature of the rapid change from an Arabic medium to an English medium. Policy planners and academics should consider the option of bilingual education in Arabic/English context.

9.5 Suggestions for further study

There is a distinct lack of research in two key areas related to this study:

1. The role of Arabic in the English language classroom in the Gulf region.
2. The role bilingual education could play in foundation or preparatory year programmes.

The second of these areas, bilingual education, is an area where there is a dearth of research in the Gulf region. In areas with large minority language speaking communities such as the US, where the Hispanic community is significant, there has been a large amount of research investigating the role of bilingual education in settings where a significant proportion of the students do not speak the official language of education, English in this case. Unfortunately there is no such research which would examine the possible role that bilingual education could play in the foundation or preparatory year programmes or even in the first or subsequent years of undergraduate study. When the poor language skills of many of the students who enter English medium higher education in the Gulf region is taken into account, such a dearth of research becomes even more significant.

Returning to the original research area, language planning, what the case study of the CASS shows is that simplistic conclusions, adopting an Occam's razor perspective, does not do justice to the complexities of the different forces at play in a multifaceted programme such as that being researched here.

9.6 Final comments on linguistic imperialism

Ansre first coined the term linguistic imperialism over thirty years ago and it has been almost 20 years since the publication of Phillipson's book bearing the same title. In that period Phillipson's book has been the focus of intense discussion in reference to the global spread of English (e.g. Canagarajah 1999, Spolsky 2005). Very few studies have actually tried to engage in a quantification of linguistic imperialism as this study has sought to do. The results, highlighted above as findings, suggest that as a framework linguistic imperialism continues to hold relevance moving into the second decade of the twenty first century. Whilst Phillipson's thesis was primarily a look back at the origins of the spread of English and how it came to dominate as a global lingua franca, what this study has shown is that there are very real contemporary applications of LI theory. In particular what was found was real need for academic discourse with respect to the planning of language in the education sector with reference to many of the fallacies outlined by Phillipson. What is required more than anything, from a purely academic perspective, is an updating of the LI theory such that it reflects contemporary realities in places like the Arabian Gulf, where a complex *mélange* of factors intertwine at governmental, institutional and classroom level. In such contexts the idea that Western agents in the form of publishers, educational providers or consultants and their ilk all arrive with pre-agreed and pre-conceived agendas does little justice to the complexities of the situation. This is not to suggest that such agendas may not be present, however it does suggest that there needs to be a higher degree of depth to the analysis of the situation. Academic discourse in the Arabian Gulf region is in its infancy, the higher education sector is growing at a rapid rate and it is hoped that as part of this expansion there will be an increase in the

published academic literature on sociolinguistics related specifically to language planning such that many of the issues raised herein could be explored further.

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Appendices

Appendix A	Teacher Questionnaire: Native speaker teacher
Appendix B	Teacher Questionnaire: Non-native speaker
Appendix C	Student Questionnaire: Arabic
Appendix D	Student Questionnaire: English
Appendix E	Transcript of interview with Ms AD
Appendix F	Transcript of interview with Mr CF
Appendix G	Transcript of interview with Dr AA
Appendix H	Transcript of interview with Mr SS
Appendix J	Ethnographic Journal
Appendix K	Statistical Analysis

Appendix A

Teacher Questionnaire: Native speaker teacher

Dear respondent,

As you are probably aware I am studying for my PhD at the moment. My research is a case study of the English language programme here at the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah. I am particularly interested in two aspects of the programme. The first of these is the native speaker teacher (NST) and non-native speaker teacher (NNST) dichotomy. I am interested in cross perceptions and self perceptions.

The second area of my research pertains to the role of the first language, L1, in the second language, L2, classroom. Here that means I am interested in your perceptions as to the role Arabic should play in the English language classroom.

Many of the questions have space to add comments but please feel free to add any additional comments in the margins or on separate sheets if necessary.

The questionnaire is anonymous, there is no request anywhere for you to give your name. When you finish the questionnaire, please place it in the envelope provided, seal it and place it on my, Dr Ibrahim's or Mona's desk. I'll collect them from there.

Finally, a very big thank you for taking the time out to answer these questions!

Sincerely,

Muhammad A Ismail

Background:

Please circle the answer which best describes you:

Gender: Male / Female

BA/BSc (which subject):

Country where degree was awarded:

MA/MSc (which subject):

Country where degree was awarded:

Is this an online/distance learning qualification? Yes / No

PhD (which subject):

Country where degree was awarded:

Other quals: CELTA DELTA Trinity TEFL Other TEFL

Work Experience

Institution	School	Language centre	College	University
Number of years experience				

Section One: Native Vs Non-Native

Throughout this questionnaire the option ‘both’ is presented for you to use when you believe that being a NST or NNST is an irrelevant criterion for judging the efficacy of an EFL teacher.

Question 1 Please define below what you understand by the term ‘native speaker of English’.

The definition of a native speaker used in this questionnaire is ‘someone whose first language is English and who learnt English as a young child and continues to use it’. Please refer to this definition for all subsequent questions.

Question 2 Who do you think is more effective at teaching English for:

(a) Lower level students?

NS NNS Both same Unsure

b) Higher level students?

NS NNS Both same Unsure

Question 3 Can you list below, in order of importance, what you consider to be important qualities that an English language teacher should possess? This may include personal characteristics, qualifications and any other virtue you believe is important.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Question 4 Please circle who you think:

- | | | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|-----|------|------|
| (i) | is better at teaching grammar | NST | NNST | Both |
| (ii) | is better at teaching reading | NST | NNST | Both |
| (iii) | is better at teaching speaking | NST | NNST | Both |
| (iv) | is better at teaching listening | NST | NNST | Both |
| (v) | is better at teaching writing | NST | NNST | Both |
| (vi) | has a better teaching style | NST | NNST | Both |

(vii)	is more professional	NST	NNST	Both
(viii)	understands student learning needs more	NST	NNST	Both
(ix)	makes learning English easier for students	NST	NNST	Both
(x)	is an all round better teacher	NST	NNST	Both

Question 5 What advantages do you think you have over a NNST?

(Circle all that apply)

Pronunciation Better education Greater understanding of methodology

Better teaching style More professional Better understanding of grammar

Other, please list: _____

Question 6 When recruiting English language teachers, do you think the college should give priority to NSTs?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Unsure

Why?: _____

Question 7 The ministry of higher education favours NSTs. If this wasn't the case, i.e. if they viewed all applications on merit irrespective of whether they were from NST or NNST, do you still think you would get this job?

Yes No Unsure

Question 8 If we took a random sample of teachers from around the Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman do you think we would find that NSTs and NNSTs are equally qualified, i.e. would the proportion of teachers holding PhDs, MAs etc be about the same for NSTs and NNSTs?

(a) Equally (b) Unequally (c) Unsure

Question 9 Do you think that one of the aims of English teaching should be to encourage students to speak English as native speakers do?

Yes No Unsure

Question 16 Why do you think this?

Question 17 Consider this scenario: you are trying to pass a real message to a student, for example you're explaining the way the final grade is constituted. The student clearly doesn't understand what you are saying.

(i) If you speak Arabic would you:

- (a) Use Arabic immediately (b) Persist in English for a while then switch to Arabic
- (c) Use English only

(ii) If you don't speak Arabic would you:

- (a) Persist in English (b) Direct the student to an Arabic speaking colleague/ask an Arabic speaking colleague to intervene

Section 3 Bilingual Education

Question 18 Did you study a foreign language at school? (If you studied more than one, please answer for the language you studied for the most time)

Yes

No

Question 19 What was it?

Question 20 Where did you study (i.e. which country) ?

UK USA Canada Other: _____

Question 21 To what level did you study?

Primary Secondary (high school) A Level University

Question 22 For how many years in total did you study this language?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Question 23 If you were asked to study a degree program like IT, communication, business or design in that foreign language, do you feel that you would be able to do so?

Yes No Unsure

EFL ESL

Section 4 Specialisation Programmes

Question 24 As you are aware, the Ministry of Higher Education has decided to switch the medium of instruction of the degree programmes from Arabic to English. What do you think the implications, if any, of this switch are for yourself, colleagues, students, the college and Oman in general?

Appendix B

Teacher Questionnaire Non-native speaker

Dear respondent,

As you are probably aware I am studying for my PhD at the moment. My research is a case study of the English language programme here at the College of Applied Sciences in Salalah. I am particularly interested in two aspects of the programme. The first of these is the native speaker teacher (NST) and non-native speaker teacher (NNST) dichotomy. I am interested in cross perceptions and self perceptions.

The second area of my research pertains to the role of the first language, L1, in the second language, L2, classroom. Here that means I am interested in your perceptions as to the role Arabic should play in the English language classroom.

Many of the questions have space to add comments but please feel free to add any additional comments in the margins or on separate sheets if necessary.

The questionnaire is anonymous, there is no request anywhere for you to give your name. When you finish the questionnaire, please place it in the envelope provided, seal it and place it on my, Dr Ibrahim's or Mona's desk. I'll collect them from there.

Finally, a very big thank you for taking the time out to answer these questions!

Sincerely,

Muhammad A Ismail

Background:

Please circle the answer which best describes you:

Gender: Male / Female

BA/BSc (which subject):

Country where degree was awarded:

MA/MSc (which subject):

Country where degree was awarded:

Is this an online/distance learning qualification? Yes / No

PhD (which subject):

Country where degree was awarded:

Other quals: CELTA DELTA Trinity TEFL Other TEFL

Work Experience

Institution	School	Language centre	College	University
Number of years experience				

Section One: Native Vs Non-Native

Throughout this questionnaire the option 'both' is presented for you to use when you believe that being a NST or NNST is an irrelevant criterion for judging the efficacy of an EFL teacher.

Question 1 Please define below what you understand by the term 'native speaker of English'.

The definition of a native speaker used in this questionnaire is 'someone whose first language is English and who learnt English as a young child and continues to use it'. Please refer to this definition for all subsequent questions.

Question 2 Who do you think is more effective at teaching English for:

(a) lower level students?

NS NNS Both same Unsure

b) higher level students?

NS NNS Both same Unsure

Question 3 Can you list below, in order of importance, what you consider to be important qualities that an English language teacher should possess? This may include personal characteristics, qualifications and any other virtue you believe is important.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Question 4 Please circle who you think:

(i) is better at teaching grammar NST NNST Both

(ii) is better at teaching reading NST NNST Both

(iii) is better at teaching speaking NST NNST Both

(iv) is better at teaching listening NST NNST Both

(v) is better at teaching writing NST NNST Both

(vi)	has a better teaching style	NST	NNST	Both
(vii)	is more professional	NST	NNST	Both
(viii)	understands student learning needs more	NST	NNST	Both
(ix)	makes learning English easier for students	NST	NNST	Both
(x)	is an all round better teacher	NST	NNST	Both

Question 5 What advantages do you think you have over a NST? (Please circle all those that apply and write in any others)

Better education Greater understanding of methodology Greater empathy

Better teaching style More professional Better understanding of grammar

Other, please list: _____

Question 6 When recruiting English language teachers, do you think the college should give priority to NNSTs?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Unsure

Why?: _____

Question 7 If we took a random sample of teachers from around the Colleges of Applied Sciences in Oman do you think we would find that NSTs and NNSTs are equally qualified, i.e. would the proportion of teachers holding PhDs, MAs etc be about the same between NSTs and NNSTs?

- (a) Equally (b) Unequally (c) Unsure

Question 8 Do you think that one of the aims of English teaching should be to encourage students to speak English as native speakers do?

- Yes No Unsure

Section 2 English is best taught monolingually

Question 9 Do you think that using Arabic (the L1 here) will hinder acquisition if it is used by the teacher in the classroom:

- (a) 10% of the time or more (i.e. quite frequently)?

- a) Yes (b) No (c) Unsure

- (b) Less than 10% of the time (i.e. infrequently)?

- a) Yes (b) No (c) Unsure

Section 4 Specialisation Programmes

Question 17 As you are aware, the Ministry of Higher Education has decided to switch the medium of instruction of the degree programmes from Arabic to English. What do you think the implications, if any, of this switch are for yourself, colleagues, students, the college and Oman in general?

Appendix C

Student Questionnaire - Arabic

إستبيان

أخي الطلب/أختي الطالبة:

يهدف هذا الاستبيان الي معرفة رأيك حول برنامج اللغة الإنجليزية في السنة التأسيسية و الأولى (التخصصية):

الجنس: ذكر / أنثى

المجموعة:

السنة: التأسيسية / الأولى

القسم الأول:

ينقسم الأساتذة في وحدة اللغة الإنجليزية إلى قسمين:

(أ) الأساتذة الذين تعتبر اللغة الإنجليزية لغتهم الأم (الأصلية) ، أي أن اللغة الإنجليزية كانت أول لغة تعلموها أو تعلموها في طفولتهم

(ب) الأساتذة الذين تعلموا اللغة الإنجليزية في المدرسة أو الكلية أو الجامعة و لغتهم الأم (الأصلية) هي اللغة العربية

الأساتذة الذين تعلموا اللغة الإنجليزية في المدرسة أو الكلية أو الجامعة و لغتهم الأم (الأصلية) هي هندية و هؤلاء الأساتذة لا علاقة لهم بقسم الأول في هذا الاستبيان.

في السؤالين التاليين إستخدم الحرف:

(س) عن الأستاذ الذي لغته الإنجليزية هي اللغة الاصلية

(ن) عن الأستاذ الذي لغته الأصلية هي اللغة العربية

(ج) إذا كنت تعتقد بعدم وجود فرق بينهما

ضع دائرة حول الإجابة التي تعبّر عن رأيك في الأسئلة التالية:

١. في نظرك من تفضل في تدريس المقررات التالية:

(a) القواعد

(س) (ن) (ج)

(b) القراءة

(س) (ن) (ج)

(c) الإستماع

(س) (ن) (ج)

(d) المحادثة

(س) (ن) (ج)

(e) الكتابة

(س) (ن) (ج)

٢.

(a) في نظرك من أكثر إحترافاً في تدريس المقررات:

(س) (ن) (ج)

(b) في نظرك من لديه استعداد أكثر في فهم حاجات الطلاب:

(س) (ن) (ج)

(c) في نظرك من لديه أكثر قدرة في تسهيل المقررات الدراسية:

(س) (ن) (ج)

(d) في نظرك من المتميز في تدريس جميع المقررات:

(س) (ن) (ج)

القسم الثاني:

٣. هل تريد أن تتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية حتى تكون لغتك مثل لغة الشخص الذي اللغة الإنجليزية هي لغته الأم؟ علماً أنّ هذا يحتاج إلى جهد أكثر بكثير من الذي يريد تعلم اللغة إلى الحد الذي يكفي ليفهم دراسته

(أ) نعم (ب) لا (ج) لا أدري

4. أكتب (بالإنجليزية) أسماء ثلاثة أساتذة في رأيك هم أحسن من الباقين في تدريس مقرر الإنجليزية:

(1)

(2)

(3)

5. هل تفضّل الدراسة مع الأستاذ الذي اللغة الإنجليزية هي لغته الأصلية ؟

(أ) نعم (ب) لا (ج) لا أدري

6. في رأيك هل من المهم أن يكون أستاذ اللغة الإنجليزية ملماً باللغة العربية ؟

(أ) مهم (ب) غير مهم (ج) لا أدري

7. في رأيك هل يجب على الأستاذ أن يشرح أشياء باللغة العربية في بعض الأحيان في محاضرة اللغة الإنجليزية حتى يساعدك في الفهم و التعلّم؟

(أ) نعم (ب) لا (ج) لا أدري

8. هل تفضل أن تكون الدراسة في التخصصات:

(أ) بالإنجليزية (ب) بالعربية (ج) كليهما (د) لا أدري

9. لو درست التخصص أربع سنوات بالإنجليزية هل تعتقد أن لغتك العربية ستكون:

(أ) أسوأ من ذي قبل (ب) أفضل من ذي قبل (ج) لا تتغير

10. عندما تدرس اللغة الإنجليزية هل تحب أن تدرس عن الثقافة الغربية؟

(أ) نعم (ب) لا (ج) إلى حد ما (د) لا أدري

11. عندما تُدرّس اللغة الإنجليزية هل تفضل أن تُدرّس عن الثقافة:

(أ) الغربية (ب) العمانية (ج) كليهما

12. في رأيك هل الكتب التي تُدرّسها في برنامج اللغة الإنجليزية تحتوي معلومات عن الثقافة العمانية والإسلامية:

(أ) أقل مما يجب (ب) أكثر مما يجب (ج) كمية كافية (د) لا أدري

Appendix D

Student Questionnaire – English Translation

Dear Student,

For this evaluation of the course place a circle around the answer you most agree with. Do NOT write your name or ID number anywhere on this paper. Please write your group number and gender only.

Sex: Male/Female **Group:**

Section One

The teachers in the department of English can be divided into two categories:

- (1) Those teachers whose native language is English, i.e. English is the first language they learnt as a child
- (2) Those teachers whose first language is Arabic but learnt English at school, college or university.

There is a third category, which is those teachers whose first language is Hindi and learnt English at school, college or university. This questionnaire does not concern those teachers, so please do not include or consider them in your answers.

In the following two questions use the letters

- (س) For teachers whose native language is English
- (ن) For teachers whose first language is Arabic
- (ج) Where you see both teachers as being equal

Question 1 Place a circle around the answer that best describes your beliefs.

Who do you prefer to teach you the following language courses

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----|-----|-----|
| (a) | grammar | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |
| (b) | reading | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |
| (c) | Listening | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |
| (d) | Speaking | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |
| (e) | writing | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |

Question 2. In your view which teacher:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| (a) | Has a better teaching style | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |
| (b) | Is more professional | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |
| (c) | Understands your learning needs | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |
| (d) | Makes learning English easier | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |
| (e) | Is an all round better teacher | (س) | (ن) | (ج) |

Section 2

Question 3 To learn to speak English as native speakers do requires a lot more hard work and effort than simply learning enough English to get understand your studies. This being the case, do you want to learn English to native speaker standard?

- | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|--------|
| (a) | Yes | (b) | No | (c) | Unsure |
|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|--------|

Question 4 Please list your three favourite English teachers:

1.

2.

3.

Question 5 Do you prefer to be taught by native speakers?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Both (d) Unsure

Question 6 Do you think it's important that your English teacher can speak Arabic?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Unsure

Question 7 Do you think it's important for the teacher to assist students to comprehend and learn by using Arabic occasionally in the classroom?

(a) Yes (b) No (c) Unsure

Question 8 Would you prefer to study on the specialization programme:

(a) In English (b) In Arabic (c) Bilingually (d) Unsure

Question 9 Do you think studying your degree programme in English will make your Arabic:

- (a) Better (b) Worse (c) No change

Question 10 When you study English, would you also like to learn about western culture?

- (a) Yes (b) No (c) Unsure

Question 11 When you study English would you prefer to study about:

- (a) Western Culture (b) Omani Culture (c) Both

Question 12 Do you think there is enough information about Omani and Islamic culture in the textbooks you studied?

- (a) Less than what their should be (b) More than what their should be
(c) The right amount (d) Unsure

Appendix E

Transcript of Interview with Ms AD, English Programme Director for the Oman Ministry of Higher Education

MAI: Interview with Joan Boyer on the 14th of April 2007 in my office. Present me, Jamil and Joan.

MAI: Question one, can you give some of the background as to how, if you know, the Victoria University of Wellington came to be involved with the ministry of education and how the connection was made?

AD: Yes. The ministry of higher education or the minister Dr Rawiya, Her Excellency, decided to transform these five colleges of education, or five of the six, they looked for an overseas partner to supply the degree programmes and decided on a New Zealand consortium. Initially they were looking at working with individual universities but in the end for strategic reasons and, I think, convenience, decided to work with a consortium which consists of Victoria University, Otago University, Auckland University of Technology and Waikato University supplying different strands of the degree programme. So Victoria [University of Wellington] was selected by the consortium as the English language provider, they have a long and creditable history of English language programmes and a good reputation as one of the top English language universities in New Zealand.

MAI: Paul Nation works there

AD: Yes he's been there for a very long time and because of his influence, I think, the English language department there is very much focused on vocabulary acquisition. [He has] a lot of publications...

MAI: Yes...In terms of the...just to clarify something, Victoria University, they are responsible in terms of the pedagogical aspects, in terms of setting the curriculum

emm, things sort of how the year is structured for example issues logs and assignments. Is all that coming from...

AD: It's supposed to be the whole programme, is supposed to come from them. Yes, the curriculum, the learning outcomes, the structure, the materials, the recommendations for textbooks and associated materials, examinations. In fact what has happened is that we have tried to give the colleges a little bit more autonomy than that in recognition of teachers' professionalism and expertise. It seems a little bit, err, directive to just dump it on them and say 'here do all this' because we have got a lot of very good people around here. So it has been adapted a bit and Victoria have been quite responsive to some of the feedback that has come back from our colleges and teachers.

MAI: What happens if there is a dispute between, say for example, something you want as a programme director and something they want. Who would in that type of , err, who would have the rank?

AD: It's our degree. We would. We haven't had disputes, we've had lots of discussions and compromises and yeah it's our degree so we are free to take or leave the materials as we wish. But eh, mostly we've taken them but ehh, both parties have learnt a lot over the last year, I think, and ehh. They didn't know too much about Omani students and their backgrounds and their capabilities and proficiency. They know a lot more now.

MAI: I mean, did they send somebody over before?

AD: Not somebody from Victoria before we started. Before I ever started my job at the ministry I was on holiday in New Zealand and I knew I was starting here so I went up to Wellington and sat with Angela Joe the coordinator. Ehm, and as a result of that we actually changed the level of the textbook that we were going to be using. You might know we used Skills [for English Textbook] level 2 while she had decided on [level] one. When I told her what I knew from my experience in Oman we decided to go up a level. She came out here, as I think you know, ehm a month or so ago,

MAI: Ah yes, yes, yes

AD: Yeah, so she knows a lot more now too than she did before that. We went to every college and ehm we had seminars in Muscat with the coordinators and heads of departments

MAI: Right, section one. Which is going to be the native/non-native issues. You can see here for example, and I assume the situation is repeated elsewhere, some of the teachers are native speaker and some of them are non-native speaker. Do you think that the course, err, or the programme would be more effective if only one group taught...i.e. if only native speakers taught or non-natives taught? Would it make the programme more effective?

AD: No

MAI: Fine

MAI: Do you think the ministry of education has a preference, whether they prefer the teachers to be native speakers or non-native speakers?

AD: Yeah, they prefer native speakers but, err, have become increasingly aware I think that there are many non-native speakers who are equally proficient. Yes it was an issue with recruitment last year, there was one woman, ehh, rejected by one of the ministry people because she was a non-native speaker and, err, I was asked to re-interview her and look at her CV and I telephone interviewed her and they subsequently employed her. She was absolutely fine. So, yeah there is that kind of perception that only native speakers will do but that is changing.

MAI: Right, err, to the role of the first language in the classroom. Err, as the programme director, it is a personal view, but as the programme director, do you think that Arabic [the first language] has any role in the English language classroom here in the colleges of applied science?

AD: Yes, I do. Emm, with the very low level students I think it does have a place. I would hope that it wouldn't need to be used once the students proficiency improves, but yeah I certainly do [believe the L1 has a role in the L2 classroom].

MAI: Do you think, talking about the lower level students then, do you think that erm, they would be better served by teachers who could speak Arabic?

AD: At those very low levels I think it helps a lot, yeah.

MAI: Ermm, Right about the IELTS, I'm quite interested in the IELTS and what's going on with that. It seems very interesting to me, the level. Can you explain to me, er please, how did the level come to be set at 4.5, even if it is an IELTS-like test for progression from the foundation to the first year? Was it purely a pragmatic decision or was it pedagogically based?

AD: How did the level for entry to first year come to be set at 4.5? [clarifying the question]. Well it was initially set at four as you may know, erm, and it's clear that many of the students in year one this year are unable to cope with the demands of the courses other than English because the textbooks etc are not written for people at level four. So we are gradually trying to increase the level of the students going into year one. So it was always intended that it would be raised gradually because hopefully the students coming out of the secondary school are as the years go by are going to be more proficient and we hope that eventually five might become the entry level but there's difficulty there, and I'm about to put in a proposal to her Excellency to look at a restructuring of the foundation because its dreaming to think that you can bring students into a college with no entry levels, some of them can't write a sentence as you well know, and expect then to spit them out at four or four point five in about seven hundred hours or less of tuition. So, err, you know we have to look at how we tackle this. We need to have them at a reasonable level of proficiency if they're going to do OK in year one and cope with Communication, Business etc [names of academic specialization courses at the college] but you can't get them to four point five from nothing in a year in a foundation so

MAI: According to UVW on their website they say that according to their estimates to move 0.5 on the IELTS scale it takes 3 months of full time study

AD: About two hundred hours of full time study. Yeah, that's what IELTS Australia says too. Half a band.

MAI: So if you go by that, erm, if we assume that they come in at IELTS two even, to get to four point five then it's going to take..[longer than the time available]. It's a huge contradiction.

AD: Absolutely, I quite agree with you and, erm, at the beginning of the year her Excellency said there would be no summer school this year. She, erm, I sent through a report saying what you've just said, amongst other things, and she's agreed that we will have a summer school for the foundation students but yeah it's a bigger issue than that even.

MAI: About the four point five, if I understood from what you said, it sounds and I've spoken to Ibrahim [the HOD] about this as well, it sounds as if the decision to put it at four point five it's a, it's a pragmatic decision, it's not a pedagogical decision. I'm trying to understand the logic because if you, if you, for example, UVW like every other university, on their website, they set entrance to their own university at IELTS six, which I think is the standard everywhere.

AD: It is.

MAI: Now, four point five, when I look at it, I can't see the difference between four point five and zero. The two seem exactly the same to me in that both of them are saying the same thing, which is that the student cannot understand the texts, in order to study. Err, just as an example of that, when I taught EAP at a pre-session at the University of Sunderland, the director made it very clear to us that basically everybody was to pass because they needed the money but still it had to be at six because this is what internationally people are aware of. If you have not got six you can't study. So four point five is the same as zero.

AD: Well it's not the same as zero

MAI: In the sense that with both zero and four point five they have the one thing in common which is that they [the students] cannot understand the texts. Which would be appear to be against VUW's own policy.

AD: Yeah, U, VUW, and other international universities take in students at six and those students go straight into full time degree study. Now if we set that standard at six, how many students would we get into our degree courses each year?

MAI: Very few

AD: Yeah

MAI: According to the last document that I saw, I think there was only three students got five point five.

AD: So we've done what is done in a number of places, set the entry level lower with English support along the way. So our students go in at four point five, which I totally agree with you is too low to cope with a lot of the materials, but we support them as they go through. In the first year they have ten hours of English as you know, in year two they'll have eight hours. So that concurrently with their degree studies, they're still bringing up their English proficiency levels.

MAI: We're going to have to whiz through this because we are really short of time. The decision to switch the medium from Arabic to English in the specializations, Do you know, was VUW consulted in that, was that part of their...

AD: No, nothing to do with them, it was the ministers decision.

MAI: There's something that I just wanted to show you briefly...(Inaudible). I'm just showing you [AD] the guidelines which I have numbered CASS001. Which is, I think you've probably seen this. It was given on may the first 2006 to heads of departments and stuff. It's called guidelines on programme structure and student workload

AD: [Talking over MAI] No, I've never seen it.

MAI: One of things it says in there anyways is, and this is the thing which I'm interested in, it's from VUW, is students are expected to do ten percent more work during the week, like extra workload, compared to students in a comparable programme at the university in Wellington.

AD: No, No [AD has not seen this document before].

MAI: I just wanted to ask you, in terms of the structure because you know the education here [in Oman] is quite new, do you that that's a realistic expectation to expect students in this environment to be able to handle ten percent more than students from, for example, a prestigious university in Wellington.

AD: No, it's pretty tough [laughing]. [Reading the question which was written on a post-it note] expected to do ten percent more work than their counterparts in New Zealand. Based on a weaker school system, can this succeed? A weaker school system here you mean?

MAI: Yeah,

AD: Yeah, err,....the student workload in New Zealand is pretty low, most students would attend about, err I don't know, twelve, fifteen hours of lectures I suppose at the most. So it is higher here, there's no doubt that. Emm, it's a good question.

MAI: I have here a memo from Jill, it quotes an email which you sent, ehh, I've docu.. I've put it down as CASS003, in which you said the following, you were talking about issues logs and assignments, and I think in the first semester a lot of the teachers were complaining

AD: Hmm [in approval]

MAI: In that you said, we cannot keep watering down the course because they think, and I assume the pronoun there is teachers, they think it's too hard for the students or its too much work for them. My question is, as far as I understand, and I've checked this, the issues logs is something which is being practiced in Wellington,

AD: Hmm

MAI: and it's a transfer from Wellington.

AD: It hasn't been practiced in quite the same way. I assumed that too but it hasn't quite been just transferred. She has...

MAI: The reason, the issue of the too hard thing, I was gonna say in terms of the transfer issue, there is some similarities in terms of the issues logs, is that at the University of Wellington they generally have the best students because they've got scholarships and academically they excel. Whereas here you've got a broad mix but they aren't the cream that you might find in a foreign university, who managed to get a scholarship although some of them might be funding themselves a lot of them are scholarship students. So in terms of, do you think that would be a problem in the level, in that the University of Victoria cannot see this, that they don't have normal English language students like we have they have, they actually have very good English language students in terms of their academic, general academic level.

AD: Yes I do take your point, but the other side of that is, it's to be an international degree . Her Excellency says it's not to be a degree that is watered down because our students are at a lower level. Ehm, it's to be a competitive qualification, some of the students will go oversees to do masters PhDs, and we have to have a degree that is therefore recognized as meeting an international standard. So yeah, it's a difficult balance to erm, provide something our students can cope with and complete and err not feel discouraged and err but it can't be dumbed down to the extent that it is no longer a competitive degree internationally.

MAI: I'm showing you what I have labelled document number CASS002...I feel a bit like Perry Mason here. It's just so that when I come back I know...

AD: Yeah I understand.

MAI: This is the minutes from the meeting the language [inaudible] had with you...

AD: OK

MAI: We were given a copy of these [minutes]

AD: I have to be very careful what I write won't I! {laughing}

MAI: In there it said, eh, I was interested because I wasn't working on level one last year I was only doing foundation, in here it states 'It was agreed that the word count for the issues 25-500 [words] OK, and then it says for assignment one it's [the word count is going to be 400 [words] and 500 [words] for the second assignment but actually it's been maintained at the present level which is 800 [words]. I was just wondering why that change didn't go through? Is it possible to know?

AD: It was up to the colleges to decide. A decision was made and this is the topic of a lot of discussion at the moment, I've just been talking at length with Michael about it. The decision's been made in consultation with the heads of departments and deans to devolve responsibility for assessment 50% to the colleges. In that only the final exam would depend on the final assessment external. Ehmm, and this is the reason why in several cases I said to the colleges this is what Victoria University have said but it's up to you to decide. Hmm, that's causing a lot of problems because there are obvious discrepancies in the level of marking that's going on, feedback to students, you know, over all the colleges. Hmm, marks being awarded or not awarded because of plagiarism and so the message that is coming back to me is that we need, in English at least if not in the other subjects, more standardization not less. The others, like R for IT seems happy, he just leaves it to his guys, do what you like for that 50% it's up to you. But for English the heads of department and coordinators are saying it doesn't work because there are too many teachers and much less objectivity in the marking of English than, for example, in IT. What's your opinion?

MAI: Ehmm, that's a good question but I have one final question [laughing]

AD OK [laughing]

MAI: In terms of, err, because of the way, the way I've seen it is that Victoria University there does seem to be a lot of transfer in what they're doing and they haven't been here and done a needs analysis as far as I'm aware. Do you think that the type of staff they have there, in terms of the quality, in fact there's a difference? Could it affect the, the, the implementation of their plan. For example, all of their teachers who are teaching English at the University of Victoria, I've checked, all of them have masters. Whereas here you have people with degrees in various different subjects and they have a CELTA which, err it's not really a teaching qualification. And so, ermm, and yet they're being asked to do some things, particularly with the assignments, which are quite academic, which are quite academically orientated. They in Wellington wouldn't have an issue with that, in Wellington, because their people have masters, and at masters level you would do a modules on research methods but somebody who did a degree thirty years ago, a BA [degree] or degree in some subject and then the only other qualification they have is the CELTA. Do you think that that would...?

AD: Absolutely yeah, that's a big issue. We've got people, not in this college particularly, but as you say we've got people with a bachelor's degree in whatever many years ago, and you know one guy had been doing soap stone carving for ten years somewhere in the back blocks did the CELTA and hit the road. You're quite right; it's a big issue I think. You know these discrepancies in the marking standards are not always because teachers don't want to do it, or are lazy, they just don't know how. So it's an issue yeah teacher quality, yep.

MAI: Right I'm going to have to go, thank you very much for your time Joan, End of interview.

Appendix F

Transcript of Interview with Mr CF, Country Manager for the Centre for British Teachers, Sultanate of Oman

Thursday 10th of May 2009, Foyer of Crown Plaza Hotel, Salalah, Oman.

Present: Muhammad Arfan Ismail (MAI)

Mr CF (CF)

MAI: Can you define for me on a practical level what you understand by the term native speaker of English?

CF: That's a very difficult one [question]. It's [about] what I argue with the ministry a lot. Obviously what it basically means is someone who is raised and brought up into the English language. So anybody who is born in a place like Britain, United States, Australia, South Africa and so on and whose family used English as their first language, there's no doubt that [person] is a native speaker. And although sometimes I have arguments [with the MOHE] here in Oman for me there is no doubt that somebody who is from a country like India where English is not necessarily the first language [of the country] but it [English] was the first language of their family, so a person who was born into an English speaking family whether it was mixed race or whatever is also a native English speaker whatever their passport. Then I would say, I would extent it to somebody of any race or nationality who was educated largely in English. I mean I can think of an instance of an Omani woman who is 100% Omani, her parents are Omani, she was born in Oman, her first language is Arabic but her parents moved for business reasons to Canada so her schooling was from the age of four right up to tertiary level was all in English. So even though she was not technically born into, or was not born into English I would count her as a native English speaker because to all intents and purposes her English is equivalent to a native [English] speaker. And by extension, so that to me is clear: she is a native English speaker, the grey area is where you have somebody who is not born to English and perhaps not been educated in English from their early years and yet when you speak and listen to them their English is almost indistinguishable [from a native speaker], a native speaker speaking to them would not be able to say that that person was not brought up to English. I would put all those [preceding people] under native English speaker. Beyond that you have got people who were not brought up speaking English, who have an excellent standard of English, and who you feel for the purposes of the job are as good as a native English speaker but one would have to qualify [that

person] as a near native speaker. But you could say that for this particular work the near native speaker's skills are as good as the native speaker's.

MAI: Just a quick clarification. You listed some countries [that are English speaking countries, but omitted] Zimbabwe, the official language according to the United Nations is English [would you consider that an English speaking country]?

CF: Yes. So someone born in Zimbabwe, I suppose I would have to qualify that, Zimbabwe and also South Africa. Even though in South Africa the language of government is English, if someone was brought up speaking Afrikaans, you might not, you would not qualify that person as a native English speaker because they might not be very good in English at all. So I suppose in all cases one would have to qualify, you might have somebody brought up in France, with a French passport, with an English and French parent [and] brought up bilingually. So there is almost any country in the world where you could say that someone brought up in that country is a native English speaker. But by the same token it's possible for instance, you might have somebody in Australia who was brought up by a Vietnamese family and his first language wasn't English. But I would say in that [latter] case that [there would be] very, very few people who were born in a place like Australia or Britain or the United States and didn't have native English speaking ability because they would have had their schooling in English whereas somebody in South Africa or possibly, I don't know, Zimbabwe, certainly somebody in South African could have been brought up speaking Afrikaans.

MAI: You have defined it quite widely there. You intimated that the Ministry [of Higher Education] had a different view, I assume that they [MOHE] would have defined it quite narrowly?

CF: They do define it quite narrowly. So for instance they are very reluctant to or they do not automatically offer a job as a native English speaker to somebody with an Indian passport. Whereas I would say that there are plenty of Indians who are clearly native English speakers. Just because they have an Indian passport does not mean that they are not [native English speakers] and in fact English is one of the official languages of India so I do think that they tend to think of someone with British, New Zealand, Australian, Canadian, United States are native English speakers. Only recently have they accepted South Africa, as being a native English speaking [country]. And yet of course it is far less clear [than that] and the ultimate test has to be when you speak to them and you talk [to then] about their background and how they acquired English. [This] to me is the ultimate test about whether they are native English speakers or not, not passports.

MAI: In a conversation I had with SS [from the personnel department at the CASS] he said to me that CfBT were given a contract to provide [to the CASS] 40 [English] mother tongue teachers and he said that they [CfBT] are in breach of that because they brought people like yourself, meaning me. I then had a long discussion with him

to try and convince him that in fact English was my mother tongue, his definition seemed to be Caucasian based. Have you experienced that?

CF: Well I think that does tend to be the way that the Omanis look at it [the definition of the native English speaker] and to me that's quite racist really. I suspect they would say the same of the Indian teachers who are employed [at the CASS and other colleges with which CfBT has a contract to supply teachers] who have Indian passports but were brought up with their first language as English. To me that is a native English speaker. And I had to argue this case with the Ministry [of Higher Education] saying 'look we have some well qualified, to me native English speakers, who it is known from references etc do a good job. If we don't accept people who have these skills, you will have to accept somebody who they [the MOHE] says qualifies as a native English speaker because they are Caucasian but aren't as skilled. Now which of the two do you want, do you want the unskilled Caucasian or the skilled Indian? I mean for example we have somebody from Sweden who is quite clearly not a native English speaker, he [this person] didn't start learning English till quite late in life but everybody knows him to be one of our best teachers. Now what do you want, do you want to follow the exact rules, or do you want to get good teachers, or do you want to follow exact rules which might mean that you don't get the best teachers?' To me the most important thing is to get the best teachers available, and observe and understand the spirit of the rules, what were they [the rules or the people who made the rules] intending? It's more important to do that than to follow the exact rules [which stipulate] that only people with certain passports [can be employed]. And I mean your case particularly, your first language was English.

MAI: An alternative line of argument could have been, as opposed to broadening the definition of native speakers, would have been to argue in favour of non-native speaker.

CF: One could argue that there are reasons for having non-native speakers but in this case there was no point in arguing that because the tender which went out before we had the contract was to bring in native speakers. That is what they asked for. And so if we started saying that we don't think that this is necessarily the best idea there would be no argument they would say well we'll go and talk with somebody else [about fulfilling the tender]. So one can sort of philosophically talk about the advantages and disadvantages of native and non-native speakers, but in practical terms this was not something we could have argued in this particular case.

MAI: This leads us to the next point. If I was to ask you, if you were to weight up the strengths and weaknesses of a non-native speaker teacher, what do you think his/her strengths and weaknesses would be as compared to the native speaker teacher?

CF: To me, the most important thing to begin with are teaching skills and I think when the Ministry [of Higher Education] asked us to bring in native speaker teachers whilst we were prepared to argue not only people brought up in certain countries, but

[what they were looking for was] people who have experienced the teaching methodology which normally goes with that sort of person. And do my interpretation of the contract or what the Ministry [of Higher Education] was asking us to do was to bring in people with specific teaching skills: being more communicative, not using too much translation, not teaching by rote all that sort of thing, not having the students just sitting in rows and not communicating with each other. And that is where for instance, bringing in an Indian teacher I wouldn't just look at their language skills because they may be excellent at language, they may be native speakers for all intents and purposes but they might have been educated in a fairly traditional way. And when I say educated I mean their teacher training. So somebody who has only been trained in India, would possibly not have the skills that we were looking for. So when I was looking at native speakers who were not brought up speaking English besides obviously their language skills, they key think I was looking for was had they experienced more modern techniques. And I think, my interpretation is that this is what the Ministry [of Higher Education] was looking for. With that native speaking ability, people who had lived in that [English speaking] country where more modern techniques were being taught. So for me besides good language skills, that had to be couple with modern teaching skills. Not somebody, we had many Indians who were very well trained in their traditional methods and are very good teachers in certain ways but I think was not what the Ministry [of Higher Education] was looking for. So it [native speaker ability] had to be coupled with good teaching skills. So that said I would take the person with the language ability and the modern teaching skills before anything else. If you then had let's say an Omani, who had those skills I can see certain advantages because he or she would be sensitive to the difficulties of the student and I'm certainly not one who says no to translation [in class], I can see the advantages, of having somebody who speaks the same language as the students, who doesn't use translation as the first resort, but who can give a quick, if there's a word which is causing, and I mean there are words which are difficult to translate, to do a quick translation [would be beneficial]. Not as a first resort but as a quick way of solving the problem. Also I mean I don't speak enough Arabic, but I speak French and German and other languages, and I find it very useful when I find a student permanently making a mistake to say 'you are making this mistake because you have this language transfer'. For instance in French, you say I am here since two months and in English we don't use the present we say [instead] I have been here for two months and so I can actually say in French you say this but do you realise that is why you are making the mistake. By the same taken, and this is another example, they [French English learners] get confused with their second conditions and I can say that look in French it is exactly the same [as in English]. You say [in French] si j'ave... or whatever, if I had the time, so I would sometimes use the speakers language to clarify a point. So I think that that is a perfectly reasonable thing to do. So an Arab native speaker who has the language skills as well as the teaching skills does have an advantage and I would be very pleased to employ somebody like that. I know that it would be very difficult to persuade the Ministry [of Higher Education] to allow me to employ an Omani, but there was that Omani that I [earlier in this interview] described

to you. Who I would take [i.e. employ] absolutely like a shot [i.e. immediately] because she knows Arabic, she understands the problems of Arabic speaking students [whilst learning English], she understands the culture, she is a native speaker to all intents and purposes, she is very well trained, so to me that is the [not audible]. It would have to be [i.e. an Omani applicant] somebody with very good language skills, modern teaching techniques and then if you've got somebody who is an Arabic speaker such as an Omani, so much the better.

MAI: An interesting point which I will come back to in a minute. Before that I would like to give you a scenario which I am sure you must face regularly not only here but elsewhere with the work of CfBT. In your email inbox you get two applications at the College of Applied Sciences, based on your own definition of the native speaker you have one guy from India [who is not a native speaker] with a PhD in applied linguistics or TESOL or whatever and say five years experience and you have a guy from England applying, e.g. David Smith [a fictional name], with five years experience yet he has a BA in law or Music, but he has a CELTA. In that situation, everything else being the same, who would get the position?

CF: I, obviously I would have to look at references and so on, but I would probably in this case go with the person with CELTA because the person with the PhD may be academically extremely very well qualified but unless I had reason to see otherwise I would not be convinced of their teaching skills. I mean I have had plenty of professors of university who even in the subject they were teaching are highly qualified but they're disastrous teachers because they have not been trained in teaching techniques. And so somebody with a PhD who would not have had that practical teacher training might easily not be a very good teacher.

MAI: I see, so from that I can infer that if he had the CELTA then...

CF: Then I would be very inclined to take him. You know, also having a reference from the CELTA tutor, because again having the CELTA is quite a wide range, I mean for instance, you have somebody here [in Oman working the CfBT] who is not a native speaker teacher, was Indian born and English was not the first language, excellent [English] language skills, did a CELTA with us and got a very good grade, was thoroughly recommended by their tutor so with that recommendation I would take them whereas I would be very wary about taking somebody who had been entirely trained in India, without a recommendation from someone who is running a more modern, communication focussed course not because they might not be excellent [teachers] but I would find it more difficult to be sure that they had the [teaching] techniques we were looking for. Simply from a distance perspective if that person was here [in Oman] and they did the CELTA here I could speak with them and it would give me far more confidence [in their teaching abilities].

MAI: From the 40 teachers at the CASS only one is an Arabic speaker, although I do speak Arabic, but only one is a native speaker of Arabic. It does pose somewhat of a

contradiction from what you were saying earlier, one which could easily be resolved by saying you didn't get many applications from Arabic speakers.

CF: I'm just trying to think. I think, she [the Arabic speaker mentioned in MAI's question above] is probably the only, well there are other people like you who are Arabic speakers but as their second language, not as their first language, I think you're right, but it's almost always to do with [the fact that] I've had very few applications from Arabic speakers and the one's that I've had I'm not convinced of their skills. Again a lot of them, well I've had them [the applications] from places like Iraq and Tunisia, but because I have very little way of checking their teaching skills because they have gone through their own traditional teaching systems it's not a thing I like to do but because the Ministry [of Higher Education] is quite strict about native English speakers and I think that includes the teaching skills, if I can't clarify that [i.e. the candidates teaching skills] I have to play it very carefully and take people who I believe not only have the language but the skills.

MAI: One of the things that is coming up again and again is the CELTA. Not only the CELTA but the methodology, which communicative, has come under heavy attack in the past five years from all corners, academically, for example Stephen Bax from Canterbury Christ Church College, a colleague of Adrian Holliday's, said in 2003 that CLT is dead, and others Canagarajah, Phillipson whatever and have come up really strongly against CLT because they think it's quite a racist teaching methodology. The reason why they say, and generally many non-native teachers say that, the reason why they say that it is racist is because it gives the native speaker a type of inherent advantage, when you compare for example a formal teaching qualification such as a one year teaching diploma that somebody might have with the CELTA some people might not consider the CELTA [a proper] teaching certification. In Poland they call them [CELTA qualified teachers] backpacker teachers.

CF: That can be the situation. And it's largely people who have not done a CELTA, who have not been in that system and have done MA's in applied linguistics and so on who will attack it in that way. And I have also worked, so perhaps I am a bit biased, I have worked and trained on a lot of CELTA courses, something like 40 in my life, and the number of trained teachers I have had who have said that I have learnt more in this month than in a year's PGCE [Post Graduate Certificate in Education] is not a one off, obviously it's anecdotal, but it's not a one off. It's happened time and time again, but I do agree it's very much an initial teaching qualification and this [the CELTA] does not make you a great teacher, you have to have experience and practice, and I think it's, well it's up to the people employing teachers who've got a CELTA to be very aware of how experienced they are and to not just say, somebody whose just scrapped through a CELTA I would not employ. So it's I would not say that it's an adequate qualification by itself, it does require experience. It does have that disadvantage that people use if for backpacking and aren't particularly committed

to the work and would just scrape through, I mean you have a very broad line of people who get through, and I think it's very much up to the employer who should be aware of it to judge what use the particular person who has passed the CELTA is making of it. You can sort of tell that by asking them what are their aims, how have they developed their ideas that sort of thing. This thing of racism I think is fairly valid.

MAI: Can I just pick up on that to explain more about that. One of the things that [Stephen] Bax mentions in his article, and [Peter] Medgyes also is someone does a four week CELTA and goes to China, sees the Chinese and they way they are teaching [language], and he thinks 'these guys don't know anything' despite the fact that they have a teaching tradition going back a couple of thousand years and he says I have the Gospel of the four week course [the CELTA] and also [people view the CELTA as problematic] because it does not give you the tools to contextualise things, so for example because they have not studied different methodologies they can't contextualise their [i.e. the students'] learning so when they walk into a classroom and see some of the grammar translation or the direct method, I mean I know Ahmad Shahbaz president of Interlink Language Centres in the US, is a fan of the silent method and TPR, total physical response, someone could say that he [the CELTA holding teachers] doesn't know anything about anything of those things [i.e. methodologies] because it's not taught and so here's where the racism comes in because they go to China and say these people are backwards, what are they doing...

CF: Yes, I can see that's a danger and it is a big part of what you're saying or what I was saying that there are different sorts of people who take the CELTA, do they take it for a quick bit of travelling or do they want to make more of it. And from my experience the ones who are doing it seriously and are aware of cultural differences and a good CELTA course should also say this is not the be all and end all. They should advocate a more eclectic approach [to teaching] saying in certain cases grammar translation works, in certain cases behaviouralist teaching works and so it is a danger, it's also a sort of course answering a critical need, there is a huge demand for teachers, so it's answering a need, therefore it's not ideal, it's cutting corners, and you can make precisely the criticisms you make, I wouldn't deny them. I'm not sure what you could call it, perhaps racism is not the right term, perhaps academic snobbery, as you say you have people who have been teaching for years and they [CELTA teachers] have no right to be snobbish about it. But the thing about native English speakers is a thing that Cambridge [examining board who own the CELTA] are very aware of and when I was working on the courses we were saying technically people who have got this certificate are, part of getting the certificate is native speaker ability or near native speaker ability, plus the training skills and where does that leave people who are clearly not native speakers, who have a bit of an accent, who make grammar mistakes, who don't use idioms accurately, and yet teaching in their own countries, can make perfectly good teachers. And we've been saying, and in fact they did introduce a course for the non-native speaker which gives you all those skills

which I think despite the criticisms are valid but you couldn't technically give them a CELTA because they haven't got native speaker ability, and myself I think there are plenty of people who are clearly not native speaker but who very often because they are far better trained can make far better teachers than a pure native speaker whose got a BA or something and a years experience and thinking that they are God's gift to the world. I am well aware that the non-native speaker who has been very well trained in education in their own country and who gains the added communicative skills that the CELTA gives you, may very often be a far better teacher than the native speaker who has just got a CELTA but unfortunately in certain parts of the world they demand a native speaker and it's a selling point to a ministry or for example for our [CfBT] institute here in Muscat we find it very difficult to employ native speakers who don't look like native speakers because we sell it as native speakers, I mean it's selling point, I mean it's a local racist, and it is a racist thing. I said to somebody, supposing I employ somebody from France who had a terrible accent, but wasn't recognised by the locals as having a terrible accent, but was a reasonably good teacher, or I employed somebody who has Pakistani heritage, British, studied English at a British university, English literature, did a teacher training course in Britain, who would the students here prefer? My Omani staff have said they would take the French speaker as opposed to the Pakistani bred or from Pakistani family who was brought up in Britain. I'm not sure that is entirely true, because we've got some very good Indian teachers who have been accepted by our students, but the fact that our Omani staff could say that indicates the excessive value put on native English speaking.

MAI: I would like to finish with one question by asking about something that is nothing to do with CfBT but I would like you to give your own personal opinion as director or country manager for CfBT in Oman. The specialisations programmes [at the CASS] have been shifted, as you know they used to be taught in Arabic, like IT, communications etc used to be taught in Arabic and now they're being taught in English and so the Ministry [of Higher Education] has brought in coordinators from New Zealand to switch them [the specialisations from Arabic to English]. Do you think that this switch, the teaching of the specialisations from Arabic to English, do you think that that is a sign that the education system is maturing and advancing?

CF: I mean there are a lot of countries which are now switching their tertiary education to English and that doesn't just mean those countries which have a fairly newly developed tertiary education system. For example in Holland a lot of the colleges, in fact all of them, are switching to English [as the medium of instruction] because they see it as a way of introducing the students to more information besides the practical thing of international jobs and so on and so on and working in the international field, so it gives them that opportunity, it also opens up broader fields of research and so on, so the fact of using English in tertiary education is not necessarily because a particular country hasn't got a very well developed [educational] system. There are practical reasons. So you could use the same practical reasons here in Oman [i.e.] it opens the students up, it gives them access to world wide information,

research and so on, as well as study abroad etc, that said, so it does have its advantages. That said I think you have to weigh it against how much the students gain from it, again taking the Netherlands as an example, they have had very good English language training for years and years, so on the whole it's not too much of a strain, for Dutch students to study in English. It [studying in English] probably doesn't detract from their ability to study a particular subject. Here in Oman, because there hasn't been English language training from grade one upwards, you've got students who've suddenly got to start using a language they are not very confident of using and expect them to do well in that subject. I would compare that to people in Britain suddenly being told 'right, you've got to study your BA in French'. Most British people have studied French at school, but I can imagine the outcry if they were told they had to study everything in French and saying we haven't got the [language skills] to gain what it is that we want to gain [from the undergraduate degree] if we have to study everything in French. So I think there are those dangers; the students will get as much out of it. I mean another point against that here you've got to think can those teachers [of the specialisations] teach in English? Myself I wouldn't go for a sudden change to teaching everything in English. I think it's fairly useful to get them using English, I think that the problem at the moment is that they've studied English in schools as a subject; it's not something you use it's just something you get marks for. And so I think getting them used to using English, as the foundation year [at the CASS] is doing, getting them used to using English, because it will be very useful for them later on, I think it has its advantages but I think I would then say that we will do one or two subjects, like some basic IT courses which are easy to study in English, we'll get you [the students] used to using English in those subjects, but if they've got competent Arabic speakers who can train them in other subjects in Arabic, I think they might gain more from that [i.e. studying in Arabic]. I wouldn't go for the nuclear version of no more Arabic and all in English. And it's a thing [which ought] to be introduced gradually and I think for instance they're talking about in a lot of countries of starting from grade 1 studying maths and science in English which CfBT is involved in. Therefore you've got children from a very young age, used to talking about a subject in English and therefore when they got to tertiary level it wouldn't be too much of a shock. I think at the moment, suddenly making everybody study in English, is probably going to be a bit counterproductive at least for the first five or six years. It might come as more better trained English speakers come through [the system]. Particularly if they've come through from grade one studying in English. I can see the advantages of having a certain amount of English, making the students confident that they can use English at work and so on, but I would introduce it gradually rather than all at once.

MAI: Just that last point you were making about introducing English and math from grade one, generally the research is, and there is pretty much a consensus, that introducing English earlier has in fact zero impact on acquisition. So the idea that if you introduce English earlier the acquisition would be greater is a misnomer, it's

actually incorrect. I think there is pretty much consensus in the [academic] research that that this not the case. That if you introduce it earlier it help, it doesn't.

CF: It doesn't help the language acquisition?

MAI: Yes, well the two are tied, if they're not going to acquire the language they are not going to understand the subject.

CF: I don't know about that particular research but from the evidence of one's own eyes, the evidence is that the earlier language is introduced the better is the acquisition.

MAI: People talk about the English medium because it gives access to the outside world, access to technology, internet, we have of course the example of Switzerland, and Switzerland is always held up to be the model example, because the education is completely in Swiss, from beginning to end, and yet they speak native speaker level of English, in fact they say their English is better than most English people, but their entire educational system is in Swiss, so you can have the two running in parallel. It's not necessary to switch the education to get those keys to knowledge.

CF: No, I would agree with that. I'm not sure that Switzerland is a good example, because Swiss people tend to be bilingual people from birth anyway because of course there is no such language as Swiss, they've got French, German, Italian and Swiss German which is a particular language in itself. So most Swiss people are brought up to be able to use a couple of languages anyway and the evidence is that if you are brought up using a couple of languages, acquiring a third is much easier. So it may be that they come out speaking English very well, I mean from my experience, I mentioned the Dutch before and they seem to have very good knowledge of English, and it's not that they are taught in English from, or the subjects taught in English, but they do have very good training English, the system is still Dutch, the teaching of subjects is still in Dutch, for primary and secondary, but running parallel to that they have a very good English language training system.

Appendix G

Transcript of Interview with Dr AA President of Dar-ul-Uloom University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Monday Augst 11th 2008

MAI: Interview with Dr AA in his office. Present: myself and Dr AA.

MAI: My first question, what do you understand by the term native speaker, when you are recruiting native speaker teachers?

DAA: Native speaker to my understanding is a native guy. Blue eyes, white skin. That is my definition of the native speaker. When I am recruiting now [for NSTs] that is my first priority, because why I say this, because the community, the society, when they come and see someone [teaching] who is a native it means white skin and blue eyes. That's their definition of natives. To respond to the society I will bring them what they want. I am sorry Muhammad Ismail [the interviewer] I know that some people [i.e. non-Caucasians] born in the UK and America and they are more American than Americans and more British than British, they mastered the language more than them [i.e. the Caucasians] but I'm in a business [and] I have to respond to my customers.

MAI: What about the example of a French speaker from Quebec who applied [to teach English in the University] and he fulfilled your criteria: he was white, Caucasian, someone whose first language was French but spoke English. Would that fall within your definition [of a native speaker of English]?

DAA: No

MAI: Do you think Arabic has any role in the English language classroom, or should teaching be exclusively in English?

DAA: Exclusively in English. I don't want any single Arabic word [spoken in the classroom], and that is a clear instruction to all my teachers: no Arabic in the classrooms.

MAI: Can I ask why that is?

DAA: Because our students, if they find someone who can speak Arabic, they will (speak Arabic with them). Always they go for the easiest [option]. I myself learnt English in the UK and I always prefer to speak in Arabic with my

classmates therefore [in Dar-ul-Uloom University] we said [i.e. mandated for ELTs] ‘Arabic is not spoken in the classrooms’ and is someone spoke Arabic he will pay a fine [of] ten [Saudi] Riyals.

MAI: Really?

DAA: Yes.

MAI: When you say someone who speaks Arabic, you mean the student or the teacher?

DAA: Both of them.

MAI: Dar-ul-Uloom is quite distinct because every institution that I am aware of in the Gulf [region] are using English as the medium of education even when they don’t have the faculty to teach in English they will still say we are teaching in English. From your website I noticed that the Colleges, apart from the College of Education, it’s [i.e. the medium of instruction] is in Arabic. Why have you chosen Arabic as opposed to English?

DAA: Actually we have four colleges, [the Colleges of] Business and Computer Science: these [i.e. the medium of instruction] are 100 percent English. We have [the Colleges of] Education and Law that [i.e. the medium of instruction] is in Arabic and we concentrate in English. Why [did] we chose Arabic language for these two colleges? Because we know that lawyers when they graduate they will work in courts etc, 100% Arabic language organisations so we need to have our students up to date with the knowledge of the subject in the Arabic language. Education we will be dealing with the Ministry of Education, their official language is Arabic, the teachers [who graduate from Dar-ul-Uloom University]. We have two majors in the [College of] Education: Computer Science and English language teachers: they are both in English. So we chose Arabic [for some colleges] because we believed the market needs graduates who can speak Arabic.

MAI: If we look at the Arabic medium [of education] one of the things that the rectors and presidents of universities and colleges say is that we chose English because there isn’t enough material in Arabic. Are you concerned when you talk about law that you will not find enough material in Arabic?

DAA: No, we will find [enough material] because the language of law in Saudi Arabia is Arabic. We are concentrating more on Sharia (Islamic law) so we have no problem with material in Arabic, but if we are teaching business in Arabic then we will have problems [finding material].

MAI: The [College of] Education, if you are teaching pedagogy and such then if you are teaching in Arabic the English literature will not be used?

DAA: Basically to be honest, I just came [was appointed President] last month. I wasn't the guy who designed the programme. If it was my decision all [the medium of instruction in all the colleges] would be in English. Even though law and education should be taught in English, and we have many Arabic support we can support the [teaching in English] but because the people who designed it [the curriculum of the colleges] they thought [that Arabic was best as medium of instruction in two of the colleges]. I came in power and I discovered that business had two [programmes] one in English and one in Arabic. I stopped the Arabic one. I'm not pro-English but it [i.e. English] is the language of the modern world. We need English to communicate with the whole world. I want my graduates once they graduate they must have the [English] language [skills]. That's why I give them the prep [preparatory] year to closed the gap between the high school and the university.

MAI: If we can look at the decision to choose English [as the medium of instruction] it is very common to hear this type of argument [that you have elucidated] we can have a look at some of the issues involved in choosing English [as the medium of instruction]. In the UK they will require from you, as you will know, if you want to get entry onto any degree programme IELTS score 6.0. If you have 5.5 you cannot get in [i.e. admission into the university]. In the United States the equivalent is about 570 on the TOEFL. There is a reason behind that, the reason that they [the UK universities] have chosen IELTS 6, it's a scientific measurement, and that's because there is a link between the content of the textbooks and IELTS 6, there's a synchronisation. So what they are saying is that if you have IELTS 5.5 you won't be able to read the textbooks. My experience, before I was here I was in Oman which is the context of this research, is that none of the institutions in the Gulf are anywhere near the level such that students beginning the degree would be at the level of IELTS 6, in Oman for example they were at 4.5. Don't you think that poses a problem when the students are unable to read the core texts?

DAA: It's a clear problem, I came from King Fahd University [in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabic] where I was teaching at business school. We found students when they come up to our [degree] level their English was not that good and we faced a problem with it. Definitely you have to work with them [the students] to improve their language, help them but definitely we will have the same situation here. The one year programme will not be enough to bring students' [English language skills] up to university level.

Appendix H

Transcript of Interview with Mr SS, Administrator at the College of Applied Sciences in the Personnel Department

Interview conducted in Arabic, translated by the author. Terms in italics are those which were translated into English during the course of the interview.

MAI - The researcher

SS - Mr SS

Terms in italics are those where

MAI: Tuesday 5th June [2007], interview with Saeed Al-Shanfari.

MAI: First question, what is your position in the CASS?

SS: Personnel Department

MAI: The manager of the Personnel Department?

SS: No, [a senior employee] in the Personnel Department.

MAI: OK, Previously we had discussed the individual whose mother tongue is English and whose original language is English. I would like from you the definition of that person whose mother tongue is English, i.e. the *native speaker*.

SS: I think that the definition of the person whose mother tongue is English is that person whose mother is English and whose father is English. However is the mother tongue of a person whose parents, mother and father, are Arab from the Gulf and who [i.e. the parents] emigrated to, for example, the UK forty years ago and who was born in the UK, English? I don't accept that that person's mother tongue is English because I think the mother tongue always refers back to the two parents. His acquiring of the English is only because he was born in the UK, had he been born in the Gulf region his mother tongue would have been the same as his parents [i.e. Arabic].

MAI: OK, in your opinion does the Ministry of Higher Education here in Oman have a preference for the English language teachers whose mother tongue is English above the teacher whose mother tongue is not English, [and whose mother tongue is] for example Arabic?

- SS: Look this is a pragmatic issue, I mean whichever language one considers, for example if I was studying French then do doubt that I would want a teacher whose mother tongue is French. However if we could not find teachers whose mother tongue is English we have no objection [to the employment] of those teachers who have sufficient qualifications and experience [and whose mother tongue is not English]. What would be the problem with that?
- MAI: OK, if you look at the picture in the Gulf region or the picture internationally and people are recruiting English language teachers. If you consider the following scenario which would you choose: one teacher submits his CV and he has an undergraduate degree in a subject other than English, for example maths, physics etc, but this teacher is from the US and his mother tongue is English, another teacher he's from the Gulf region, or elsewhere, he has a doctorate in English language teaching, like our HOD at the CASS, and many years experience or he has a master's degree. Which of these two candidates would you prefer?
- SS: As for me, and this is my own personal opinion, my own opinion, I prefer that teacher who is qualified, who has the correct English teaching certification, irrespective of whether his mother tongue is English or not. I am interested in the speech of the person, his understanding of English grammar, the overall proficiency of the teacher. It's like if you take an Arab and ask him to teach Arabic he needs to study the grammar in depth before he can teach it. So as for me, I prefer that person, like the HOD in CASS who has a doctorate over the teachers we have in the CASS who have an undergraduate degree only. For example you, Muhammad, your Arabic language is better than my own Arabic language, but [that is because] you learnt Arabic from the [basic] principles, the syntax as for me I did not study learn Arabic from the grammar, rather I learnt the local dialect, the vernacular, so for me I'm I don't hold as the measure [of whether we employ them as teachers] as being whether their mother tongue is English or not, rather I look at their entire CV, from where they were educated, how they teach, these are important issues, I mean it's possible I could [be capable] of talking [fluently] and talking and talking English but I cannot convey meaning to the students [i.e. I cannot teach] then no matter what my qualifications, whether I have a doctorate or bachelors [degree] or whether my mother tongue is English if I cannot assist the students to understand and comprehend [the lesson in the classroom] what is the point?
- MAI: If you look at the situation here in the CASS then what you see is that the College clearly prefers the teachers with bachelors degree [only] above those people like the HOD or another teacher [who also has a PhD]. This is the reality on the ground. Why is the reality like this?

- SS: This is not the reality, look you have to look at the people who contracting these teachers, can they not find teachers like what we requested, when they advertise does nobody apply [who fits our criteria of qualifications and experience]? There is something here, a mistake. They don't appear, the company that is recruiting [CfBT] don't appear to be looking at the [whole] CV, there is something [problematic] here.
- MAI: The reality of the situation is this, that you are paying, for example, 1000 Omani Riyals [a month]. Now for 1000 Omani Riyals [a month] a teacher from the US or the UK who has a master's degree, he's not going to come here, he wants 2000 Omani Riyals [a month] or perhaps 1500 Omani Riyals [a month], most likely 2000 Omani Riyals [a month].
- SS: Yes, , for 1000 Omani Riyals [month] this is like what you said, you get a teacher with an undergraduate degree. I was recently at a language centre, ELS, and I was speaking to some people there and they were telling me that the teachers were saying that the salary was too low, it was 700 Omani Riyals [a month], they want 1000 Omani Riyals [a month]. However there is a point here, that is 1000 Omani Riyals [a month] the equivalent in the UK would not get you far because it's expensive to live there but here in Oman life is cheap you can live for two months on 1000 Omani Riyals and save money. However I know and accept that 1000 Omani Riyals [a month] is a very low salary.
- MAI: Looking at the reality of this salary, you can pay 1000 Omani Riyals [a month] and get a teacher with an undergraduate degree from the US or the UK or you can go to Jordan, for example, and get a teacher with a PhD. Why does the Ministry [of Higher Education] prefer the former?
- SS: This is because the Ministry of Higher Education has outsourced the recruitment to companies. So the Ministry of Higher Education is not the one who is selecting the candidates, they simple release an RFP and firms submit proposals and then submit candidates. The Ministry is not selecting the candidates, the company which is successful with their proposal in response to the RFP is responsible for selecting the candidates. The company then pays the teacher. As an example, you, do you receive your salary direct from the Ministry (of Higher Education)?
- MAI: No
- SS: Exactly. So the Ministry (of Higher Education) pays double or triple to the company what you end up getting as a salary because they [the company] say we pay for the teachers plane tickets, accommodation, visas, medical etc. On top of that each company needs profit.

- MAI: Is there a difference in the salary between native English speaking teachers and non-native English speaking teachers who are contracted direct by the Ministry (of Higher Education)?
- SS: Look, the pay scale is linked not to whether the person is a native speaker of English but instead we look instead at his qualifications.
- MAI: So, there's no difference?
- SS: No. If you have a PhD you get the salary of someone with a PhD. If you are at the level of professor you will get the salary of a professor. If you have a bachelors, you will get the salary of a bachelors. We don't look at the issue of native speaker, non-native speaker at all, what we look at is qualifications.
- MAI: People such as Dr Ibrahim [the English language HOD] who have a PhD, do you think that people such as that exist in large quantities in Syria, Jordan etc?
- SS: Look there are many scholars such as Dr Ibrahim with PhDs in the Arab countries but the political situation of the Ministry (of Higher Education), do they want someone whose native language is English or someone with a PhD irrespective of native language? For example, you have an African, such as X [mentioned a teacher by name] what is his native language? So the Ministry (of Higher Education) only looks at qualifications.
- MAI: Onto another subject. There is one important difference between the old colleges of education and the new colleges of applied sciences and that is the medium of instruction in the specialisations has been changed from Arabic in the former to English in the latter. What is your opinion on this change, do you think it is something good that will lead to a better future for Oman or do you think it is something problematic?
- SS: Look, at the moment the international language, the lingua franca all over the world is English. The more we teach them in English the more it will strengthen them since English is the language of technology. These days all technological innovations are made in English so I believe that teaching them [the students] in English will strengthen them in English and lead them to be more scholarly, so I prefer it. As for Arabic, it is present [in Oman or the educational setting] anyway.

MAI: Some people object and say that to study in a second language requires strong language skills but the students in Oman have weak English language skills and so studying in English is difficult for them.

SS: What you have said is true but when a student enrolls in the CASS and onto a degree programme in business or IT, for example, then this person will enter the college based on his performance in various measures, including English. Many students cheat. So, not one single measure is used. In the CASS the students study English and if a student does well he will enter the specialisation of his choice, unless he fails then he will be told to go and enrol in a language centre and improve his language skills.

MAI: There is a second contention that people raise and that is that the teachers who are teaching the specialisation have weak English language skills. Their mother tongue is Arabic and they find it difficult to teach in English.

SS: Well this is clearly incorrect, if someone is teaching in a language that he is weak in, what kind of graduates will he produce?

MAI: This is the source of the contention, that once you have decided on English as the medium of instruction you need to find lecturers who can lecture in English.

SS: Yes, you need to bring them

MAI: Bring them from where?

SS: From anywhere, the world, the world is full of scholars, they don't have to be from the US, Canada or the UK, they can be from the Arab world, from India, Pakistan, Malaysia, from any place, there is condition that they must be red [i.e. a red neck].

MAI: In your opinion are there [qualified] teachers available in those countries?

SS: The teachers are available when you pay [enough]. When I pay [enough] you can get teachers. For example, medicine. You want a good doctor, pay [a high salary] brother! So finding teachers is all about the salary.

MAI: Last year I worked at the University of Qassim in Saudi Arabia. I noticed that in the College of Medicine the lecturers and professors were from Egypt and their English was very poor to the extent that they taught in Arabic but claimed to teach in English. This is the point here, that finding people who can teach in English is difficult because of the current worldwide demand for such people is very high.

SS: Look, you have raised a very important point. This goes back to what we were talking about earlier with respect to the CASS and the specialisations such as business and IT being taught in English. For example, medicine, can a student possibly graduate without having solid English language skills? How can know which medicine to prescribe or will he just prescribe Panadol [the analgesic]? Panadol itself is an English name! Or will he write the name in Arabic whilst the pharmacist will not understand. So the crux of the matter is that English has become important. If you observe here [in Salalah] at the retail outlets all the signs are in Arabic and English. If you got to the US, the UK or any place you find signs in English. In Europe do you see signs in Arabic and English? No, so this points to the dominance of English and the fact that it has become entrenched internationally as the global language. It means when you bring teachers you have to pay, we want good quality.

MAI: Well this looks problematic, but it looks like the money [to pay the necessary salaries to attract high calibre candidates] is not available.

SS: If the money is not available you get what you paid for. If you pay one Riyal you get one Riyals worth. Pay a thousand, you get a thousand's worth. Pay two thousand get two thousand's worth.

MAI: The final question. There is a compromise between Arabic and English and that is called in English bilingual education. This is where teaching is in both Arabic and English. This is present in some states in the US where there are large numbers of immigrants from Spanish speaking countries. Such people have Spanish as their native language, and don't speak English so well. There is as a result a large debate about the merits of studying in English only, in Spanish only or using bilingual education. This could be a solution here in Oman where the English language level of the students is poor, however I am yet to hear anybody even suggest that this is a viable alternative. What is that?

SS: As for the Gulf states, they remain small countries. The number of immigrants is very small. We should not compare ourselves with the US which is much larger and has large numbers of immigrants. We have many different types of school here, we have an Indian school, a Pakistani school and an English school. This what you are talking about is present in Egypt. There is also a school in Muscat which has a bilingual approach but it is very expensive and the rich and influential send their children there.

MAI: Thank you for your time, end of interview.

Appendix J

Journal

- 17/09/2006 On arrival into Muscat I immediately raised the issue with Mr CF of how difficult it would be for students in Oman to study their degree programmes in English. Mr CF agreed and compared it to him, having studied French, being asked to study for his degree in French. Totally unrealistic.
- 18/09/2006 I notice immediately the difference between the standard of the classrooms and the standard of the administration offices. Classrooms lack functioning air conditioners, are hot and stuffy and suffer from poor acoustics.
- 19/09/2006 There is a very informal atmosphere here. The HOD is teaching, I don't have a PC so he offers me the use of his whilst he teaches.
- 20/09/2006 There was a discussion in the office between Ms J and Dr I about the inappropriateness of the curriculum.
- 23/09/2006 Started teaching. There was no cassette for my listening. The text appears way too difficult for the students, who immediately went to the HOD to complain. I happened to be there when they did, and Dr I explained that the college had adopted an integrative [by this I think he means communicative] approach.
- 24/09/2006 Sitting with N in a coffee house we were discussing teaching in the college. N said the students were good because they behaved well with the teachers. I disagreed, saying I thought the students should have more respect. N said this was deference and that students shouldn't have deference for staff. For some unknown reason I felt compelled to agree even though I believe students should have deference. Afterwards I couldn't believe what I had said.

25/09/2006 **Staff Meeting with the Dean and HOD**

The main important points from the meeting are:

- a) EFL staff being asked to teach communication skills because the college has been unable to recruit qualified staff.
- b) There is a difference between how staff understand difference.
- c) In the course of the meeting, Dr Ib mentioned that the Dean had married a second time. It was noticeable that some of the teachers responded very negatively to this. It later transpired that the Dean had married his late brother's wife in order to take care and bring up the children.
- d) I was reprimanded by a member of staff for conversing with the Dean in Arabic. J asked me not to do this. This led to a brief exchange, which became quite heated.
- e) Issue of segregation: Ministry of Education has decided that classrooms will be coeducational. The dean went into some detail about this, saying the tribes had complained to him, asking him why they had to be taught in mixed classes. The dean said that he explained to them that he was powerless, that he could not do anything about this and that single sex classes were not allowed. [I found this comment strange considering the fact that I only teach single sex classes]. He said some girls had complained, and they had been accommodated, with classes being rearranged. The dean continued that the girls must get used to mixed schools. Dr Ib then made a comment, saying that in one class the girls had moved and sat alongside the boys (partitioned by the space between) and this was a great advancement. The dean agreed that this was a great advancement. All the while I was thinking, what is the pedagogical aspect of this?

04/10/2006 Students are continuing throughout Ramadhan. Students will study shortened classes without a break. That means four hours of non-stop lessons with no break. My initial reaction is to compare with Saudi where a similar situation exists.

I took a straw poll of students views on writing syllabus. I asked them how many of them were having severe difficulties with their writing, and the vast majority raised their hands. This is in direct

contradistinction to what JL says, when she says that the students have no problems with their writing.

One other observation is regarding the use of technology. As in Saudi Arabia, the college has spent vast some of money on purchasing state of the art technology, such as electronic whiteboards etc without providing faculty with any training. The net result is that they are underused, if at all.

07/10/2006 Interesting discussion with a student form year one. He came into my office, as he was waiting to see P in the adjacent office. He refused to go into P's office whilst there were some female students in there. I asked him his views on the issue of mixing and mixed education. He said this is from the rulers. He said it was not a good thing. His refusal to enter the office is a common occurrence, we often see either male or female students waiting out in the corridor for a student or students of the opposite sex to leave the office.

09/10/2006 **Staff Meeting with HOD**

There appears to be a discrepancy between the level of the written work and the listening and the speaking which I am teaching. I asked if the books could be changed for listening but was told no.

The other issue was that of student taking time off before Eid. Dr Ib suggested we should take some extreme measures to ensure they attend classes.

30/10/2006 **Staff Meeting with HOD**

D raised an issue of complaints regarding the mixing of classes. He said that there was a problem of the male students sitting 'provocatively' in front of the females, i.e. without leaving one row gap between. JL replied 'good for them [the boys]'. D reiterated that the complaint came from the female students.

Issue Logs: Students raised issues/complaints because they say they are not trained in research.

Students from the first year complain that their English proficiency is decreasing. JL comments that perhaps some of the students are lazy but the complaints appear to be coming in large numbers.

Assignments: NS raised the issue of students copying assignments wholesale from the internet. He said one of his students handed in an assignment in Dutch!

31/10/2006 I was in the HOD office discussing, informally the decision to teach the majors in English. He mentioned to me that many of the lecturers [in the specialization programmes] had said to him that 70% of what they are teaching is in Arabic because they simply do not have the vocabulary to teach in English. This is creating problems with the 'issue logs' since these are designed to be used in the specialization subjects. The idea is to use vocabulary and subjects that are being taught, in English in the specialization subjects. The problem arises as a result of teaching being predominantly in Arabic and hence no vocabulary can be garnered from these lessons. The issues logs, an idea from Ms AD, is intended for a different context it appears.

02/11/2006 **Staff Meeting with HOD.**

My notes from the meeting: I am alone in proposing that there appears to be a discrepancy between the level of the students and that of the textbooks, at least that's the way it came across in the meeting, although one of the teachers later backed me up on this.

03/11/2006 Female students from group 5/C came to same me. They complained about N. They said they thought that he was arrogant.

- 04/11/2006 Students had to fill in a graph using information taken from a table. The vast majority were completely unable to do this- showing an extreme lack of basic numerical skills.
- 06/11/2006 Listening exercise on Lady Diana and King Henry VIII. The vast majority of students were unaware of the identity of both of these personalities.
- 07/11/2006 Met a group of female students from group 5/C downstairs in the photocopying room. They complained about J saying she was 'hopeless at teaching grammar. They referenced her degree, in mathematics, as proof that she was no good at teaching English.
- 07/11/2006 Despite having studied Theme three and having encountered the word before the students were unable to understand the word '**website**'.
- 08/11/06 N is a new teacher from India. When I met her for the first time she looked and sounded very nervous. She commented to me that she felt 'that everything I have learnt counts for nothing'.
- She told me that in her first lesson she was asked by the students if she spoke Arabic, to which she replied positively. On hearing this, the students asked her to teach in Arabic 'as X teacher does'. She refused.
- 08/11/06 Returning to my office after class I ran into student X (one of the brightest students in group 5/C). He told me that they had just had a lesson with N and understood nothing as a result of her poor language. He wanted to complain but I asked him to be patient. He agreed saying 'it's only because of you that I agree'!
- 11/11/2006 One student (group 6/C) comments on the book that 'this is information only' after which students launch into a long diatribe against the level of the book.

- 12/11/2006 Working on the simple future with group 8/C. There was an exercise about the simple future and one of the students complained said he refused to do it because 'we don't know the future, only Allah does'
- 13/11/2006 Group 6/C. We were covering a section on life expectancy. There was a table showing the life expectancy of people over the ages. One of the students took umbrage to the fact that in the book the life expectancy of man in the period 'pre-history' was 20 years. He said this is wrong and I asked him, already aware of the answer, as to why. He said the life expectancy was hundreds of years. I asked him, again knowing the answer, how he knew this and he replied 'because it's in the Qur'an'. I replied that this was our belief and non-Muslims did not accept this.
- 14/11/2006 Cordial but frank exchange of views with the HOD. He asked me to consider giving the students supplementary material, specifically my writing students should be given composition for homework. I disagreed, based on the fact that the textbooks are for false beginners, and are based around a deductive methodology. The author of the books, Terry Phillips mentions in the introduction to the teachers book that these books are for 'false beginners' who he defines as being unresponsive to inductive teaching. Yet composition is intuitively inductive unless built into the text in such a way as to make it deductive.
- In the same discussion Ibrahim commented about my earlier unfavourable views about CLT. He appeared to strongly disagree with my assertion that CLT was dead.
- 15/11/2006 G/C/7 Groups doing work on geography. The maps in the Terry Phillip's books do not contain maps of the Middle East. Every other part of the world is there but not the ME.
- 16/11/2006 G/C/6 Working with the students on a very interactive task (pg 41). Students had to complete a table by surveying the opinions of friends in the same class. The exercise worked well. My experience was that spending a long time prior to the task explaining in Arabic facilitated this. Despite the general good feeling, there was a tendency to

concentrate more on filling in the table than on practicing the language. I have done this type of exercise four times now and each time it works fairly well but the same problem of students spending more time on filling the table than practicing the language exists.

- 18/11/2006 Group 8/C and 6/C. I was teaching a unit on art and civilization. I found it very difficult since many of the exercises have built in assumptions about general knowledge. For example, what a bestseller is, the different types of novel etc. I asked the students from G6/C if they had heard of Amazon.com and the answer was a resounding no.
- 18/11/2006 Long conversation with M about the issue of supplementary writing the HOD has asked me to set the students. She didn't agree with me that there was a contradiction between the methodology of the book and that of setting paragraph writing.
- 19/11/2006 Met with the HOD in his office. We talked about Ms AD's visit and he told me that she didn't discuss the English program with him at all.
- 19/11/2006 Continuing to teach a theme about Art and Civilization. I spend about one and a half hours teaching one exercise (pg 34, exercise D) because there was so much vocabulary that was new and unfamiliar to students. They had no idea about novels, about bookstores, about bestsellers lists. I played the tape several times for them and only a few were able to complete the exercise because the context was so unfamiliar.
- 02/12/2006 G/C/8 Theme 9- Sports and Leisure. Students unable to recognize countries from their shapes and outlines. Oftentimes translating a concept, like DIY, does not help because it's totally foreign. People here just don't do DIY.
- 02/12/2006 G/C/6 One student raised the issue of the pictures being unsuitable. He showed me a picture from his reading textbook which showed a couple kissing and said this is not suitable for Muslims to study. He is though in the minority, not in carrying those feelings, but in expressing

them. Many of the other students are always excited when female students walk past the class.

- 04/12/2006 G/C/5 The dynamics of the classroom (co-education) is interesting. Students sit apart, separated by at least one empty row, but its unclear whether students prefer mixed classes to single sex. The females are always more vocal in the mixed class. Perhaps the boys are worried about showing themselves up in front of the girls, but they (boys) always appear reticent. They often comment that 'I (the teacher) am busy with the girls' [and hence don't give them the attention they want].
- 04/12/2006 Conversation with M (Omani teacher). She said that after completing the writing textbooks with her level one students she gave them a short writing assignment and found that none of her students were capable. She laments that the books do not appear to be preparing the students for academic writing at all.
- 04/12/2006 G/C/8 Students have to fill a table and work out simple percentages, for example $1/10=10\%$. I asked them the following question, what is $2/5$ in percentage. After several minutes only one student was able to answer correctly and that after I spent a long time explaining in Arabic the concept.
- 05/12/2006 One of the British teachers has consistently having trouble with one of her students. I teach the same class and had trouble with the same student. At first, I agreed with the British teacher, that the student was problematic, but as the term wore on I realized that I was missing behavioural clues. He was finding the classes difficult and hence his apparent disinterest in the course.
- 09/12/2006 G/C/6 In an exercise from the textbook, pg 41, students were asked to gain the television programme preferences of ten fellow students from the class. The exercise involved filling in a table, ranking results and calculating the percentage of times a particular type of programme was given by a student as the most preferred. As in a previous exercise, identical in nature, students were more concerned about filling in the

table than practicing speaking, the purpose of the lesson. As in the previous exercise, there were major literacy issues, with students unable to compute percentage from a basic fraction such as $1/10=10\%$.

10/12/2006 In a conversation with both N and the HOD I was able to ascertain that they take attendance at 9:30. I had been doing it at 8:05 and the HOD had received a number of complaints from students about this. I expect that most teachers take attendance at the end of the lesson, but one is only able to ascertain this via small talk with teachers as it can never be officially acknowledged as it is against college policy.

11/12/2006 **Staff Meeting with the Dean (All English teachers present together with HOD and the Dean).**

The Dean emphasized the difference between western and eastern educational norms. Giving the example of people turning up for meetings without an appointment as a typical occurrence in the eastern world but unacceptable in the western world. His idea was to stress that he personally was in favour of adopting western norms and he made people who turned up to his office without an appointment wait.

Later in the meeting he made the point that tribal elders had complained to him that he was 'guilty of spreading western propaganda and culture' (his words). He said that they were not happy about the ethnocentricity of the course and that mixing between the sexes had caused consternation amongst tribal leaders. They told him these things were 'not suitable for the Omani culture and religion [Islam]' (his words). The dean did not offer us any insight as to how he dealt with these specific allegations but he did say that it was the result of re-streaming classes which resulted in a small number of female students being put into a class of predominantly male students.

The issue of the Hajj vacation was raised. Students will not be allowed to travel for Hajj. M intervened and said that it would not be possible for the college to do this because the tribes would intervene. The dean said he would not allow anyone to travel for Hajj and if they did so

they would fall outside of the permissible absence limits and hence would be excluded and would be required to repeat the whole year. He did suggest in extremely opaque language that teachers could overlook absences.

The Dean mentioned that D delivered a paper for the department at a symposium last year on behalf of the English department. He thanked him for this. I thought this was a paper on Applied Linguistics or TESOL or something similar. The HOD told me later that the symposium was in fact on the Environment and that D's paper was on the environment. I was amazed and asked how he could deliver a paper outside his field, to which the HOD replied 'these Native speakers are experts in everything' (with heavy scorn).

17/12/2006 G/C/6 Studying unit 10 on Nutrition and Health. Pg 42, Table 1. Some of the examples are so ethnocentric that even I am unable to understand them. What for example is the difference between soft and hard cheese?

17/12/2006 All Groups- As a result of complaints I have started to take attendance at the end of the lesson. The net result of this is no complaints from students but tardy attendance. They arrive in dribs and drabs, which makes giving a cohesive lesson very difficult.

17/12/2006 I noticed that as female students walk past the corridor outside the classroom, during a class hour, a student would get up and close the classroom door and thus obstruct the view of their female peers. The idea is to stop themselves and other students from gaping at the female students as they walk past. This has happened on more than one occasion and it always surprises me.

18/11/2006 **Staff Meeting with HOD**

The bulk of the meeting was taken up by a lengthy discussion on the issue of cheating. One of the faculty, DA had written a lengthy letter to the dean explaining how she had caught a large group of students in

the act of cheating, red handed. The general gist of the meeting was that more help was needed from the management to ensure teachers could deal with the problem effectively. P raised the point that this discussion occurs every year with no resolution. Several teachers raised the same issues, of students unwilling to hand over exam papers at the end of the exam without a struggle. More than one teacher expressed the idea that the college was not serious about tackling the issue of cheating. This was evidenced when the topic changed to exam location. The usual classrooms were too small to conduct exams since students could easily copy from one another. To rectify this, D proposed that the exam be held in the large sports hall. The HOD responded that this had been raised with the Dean but the problem was that there were no desks in the hall. D responded by saying we could move tables from the classrooms to the hall. DE and J both offered to help in shifting the desks! The fact that the dean himself or the admin generally did not raise this issue is strange.

18/12/2006 G/C/5 Students find any exercise that requires any form of lateral thinking to be very difficult. Today we did an exercise on placing verbs into their correct forms in a given structured paragraph (a form filling exercise). Not one of the students was comfortable doing the exercise.

Received homework back from students. They had basically just copied from the book despite the fact that I had told them there was no point in doing this. I explained that this homework did not count towards their final grade and that the only way they could benefit was by doing it themselves, not by copying it.

19/12/2006 Walked into the meeting room to see several group 5 students milling around in the process of taking a practice exam. The whole exercise was clearly pointless, but DE was doing it anyway. I approached him (he was sitting next door in his office) and told him they were cheating. He replied with a shrug of the shoulders.

20/12/2006 Administered exam: G/C/6 and G/C/8. These students were given the option of doing or not doing the exam. Many of the students had already left Salalah to return home. Those that came in did so for the exam only. Despite this, there was rampant cheating taking place.

Because of the nature of the test, and the fact that it carried no weighting for final marks, I was not overly concerned about this. But it was surprising that students who asked for a test, then went onto cheat. Cheating took the form of open discussion of questions and students shouting out answers during the speaking component.

20/12/2006 **Meeting of English staff with Ms AD**

Several issues were raised. The main areas of discussion were students' assignments. Students in level 1 are currently being asked to write an assignment for the English department of between 250-500 words. By consensus in the meeting they are finding this impossible to do. At the same time they are being asked to write assignments of between 1500-2000 words by their specialization teacher. The consensus in the meeting was that this was sheer madness, how could they be asked to write 1500 words for a business lecture, in English, whilst they are incapable of writing 250 words for the general English teacher.

Attendance was raised by me. I suggested that students be given the choice of whether or not to attend classes i.e. attendance rules should be relaxed. The general feeling, as expressed by P, was that 'these are children', so should be treated as such. Joan did appreciate the idea, but said the ministry would not approve it.

Colleges are being asked to select textbooks for next semester. I asked Ms AD if she could give us a copy of the needs/means analysis that her university must have done. She replied they had no such analysis and that she would be attending a conference in January about this. She said she would consider drawing up a document for me.

Other points raised were plagiarism. This is a global problem and no solution was proffered. Teachers accepted that students were plagiarizing from the internet but we were powerless to stop it.

23/12/2006 Received a Christmas card from CfBT. I thought it odd that they give me a card on Christmas and not on Eid. I had a very long discussion

with D about the British occupation of India. He said the positives of that outweigh the negatives. I differed and we discussed for some time..

24/12/2006 Christian staff are given the day off for Christmas. The HOD told me he collapsed outside as a result of the excessive stress he's been under as a result of the tensions in the department.

27/12/2006 In NW's office discussing EFL/ESL and he remarked about how difficult it must be for Theo (a female teacher in the English department of Indian origin) to stand in front of the class and teach since the students would find it very difficult to accept having an Indian in a position of authority.

28/12/2006 In a conversation with S, who has been asked to teach Communication Skills, even though she is totally unqualified to do so, by her own admission, said that she had been told in meetings that the University of Wellington had been paid large sums to design a syllabus for the Communication Skills course and she had received nothing from them but a list of recommended websites.

04/01/2007 Discussion with D. D used to bring in his guitar and sing in the last five minutes of each lesson. He told me that he would allow any student who felt uncomfortable about this to leave and some students would leave. He said that when they would leave the rest of the class would cheer loudly their departing. He also commented that usually the students with beards would leave, and asked me if there was any link between the religiosity and the beard. The HOD had earlier told me that the students had complained and D had been ordered by the administration to stop singing in class.

09/01/2007 In the listening exam AJ, one of the best students from foundation year group 5 said in the interview/exam I conducted with her that 'I want my English to be excellent like yours'. I got the impression that she thought English was my second language so I corrected her and told her that English was my first language.

10/01/2007 **Speaking Exam Notes**

I have come to find that personal interviews are a great way of finding things out about the students, information which normally would be difficult to ascertain, especially with the female students. The following information was gathered from the interviews:

One of the participants approached me and said that in the writing exam they had been asked to write about someone they admire. He said he had written about Osama bin Laden and that one student had done this last year and the teacher grading the paper was an American who raised the issue with the dean and it caused that student no-end of difficulty.

Several of the female students said they mourned deeply the death of Saddam Hussein. This information came in reply to the question 'what did you do over the Eid vacation?' to which several students replied that they did nothing over the Eid vacation because they were sad. When I inquired as to the cause of their sadness, interestingly all of the students who took this line said something to the effect of 'you know', 'every Muslim was sad on that day'.

Quotes [paraphrased] These were written down straight after each interview :

I don't like the non-Muslim teachers because they don't understand us and say bad things about us. They say we act in a certain way in front of the male students and this is wrong. (Female Student).

I've never been to the library, not once (Female Student).

The mixing of the boys and girls is not good (two female students).

I want to study [my major] in Arabic but can't (Female student).

I want to get a job where there is no mixing between men and women, since this [mixing] is not good (two female students).

I want to travel to Europe and explore different cultures, and explain our culture and religion to them.

14/01/2007 Listening exam for the foundation students. One of the questions related to vowel sounds, students being asked to identify a particular vowel sound, even when occurring mid-word. This was an extremely difficult question. When marking with D, M, T and myself; DA raised the issue and said she didn't know the answer to some of these 'vowel sound' questions to which there was a murmur of agreement amongst all the teachers.

15/01/2007 I was in N's office when two students walked in wearing heavy rucksacks. It very much looked like they were off on a camping trip. One of the students handed N an assignment. As he did so, N asked him if he was travelling, to which the student replied yes. N then asked him about an exam he was due to sit on Wednesday. There followed a few moments of misunderstanding, as N in an informal manner, and laughing all the time, tried to ascertain whether or not the student was going to sit the exam on in two days time. The student replied 'Of course I'm going to sit the exam and then in Arabic added 'I haven't got a bomb in this bag' in a very flippant manner. I was taken aback by what he said and the tone because it appeared from the outset as though he and N had a good relationship.

28/01/2007 Discussion with SS, the head of administration. In a conversation about changing my contract from CfBT to the ministry, he told me to call the concerned person in Muscat. He then told me to speak to him in English before adding that I should speak English in the college, with the dean and the students. He said that if I were to speak Arabic then the feeling would be that why have we brought this guy from England when we could have brought a Syrian [for half the money]?

He said to avoid this feeling amongst senior staff and students I should speak English only around the college.

04/02/2007 Staff Meeting with HOD

IELTS- D said that last year's IELTS 'like' test was 'fudged', i.e. it was much easier than the actual IELTS test.

06/02/2007 Lengthy discussion with M about the questionnaire. It's unclear whether the dean will agree to allow me to distribute the questionnaire so I thought I'd get M to assist with this. She's very unsure and is worried about the implications if my research is critical of the rulers or the country.

07/02/2007 Discussion with M in her office about the questionnaire. She has been very unsure about whether or not to assist me in this. Today she met with the HOD and said she was unsure if she could cooperate with me because she was concerned I may criticize the Omani system in my questionnaire.

10/02/2007 Very lengthy discussion with SS. I raised the issue of us sending a letter to Ms AD who would raise the issue of the 15% increase in salaries with the ministry. He said that this would be disastrous for the ministry to agree. Then he said that CfBT had a contract and they had effectively broken it by employing people like me, since the original tender was for native speaker providers. There followed a lengthy discussion whereby I tried to convince him that I was indeed a native speaker of English. He agreed to this but said that English was not my mother tongue and that the original tender was for people whose mother tongue was English. I asked how he would know this, for example if White people from the USA applied, whose background was Polish or Swedish, how would he know their mother tongue. It would become a racial issue.

12/02/2007 Chance meeting with a parent out on the street. He asked me if I taught his daughter, and related questions of this nature. He then told

me that the college was teaching ‘wrong things, against Islam and Omani culture’. I made no comment, simply nodding in appreciation of his forthright comment.

12/02/2007 **Meeting of staff with HOD**

In the year one meeting, the staff were discussing the various problems of administering the assignments when NS raised the issue of research skills. He said that students had no capacity to sift through material on the internet in English, that to teach them how to do this was a separate skill that required teaching, and that we as English teachers should not be expected to do this. One of the teachers remarked that research skills was a full subject, that simply picking material, any material, off the internet was ‘not research’. Research requires ensuring, amongst other things the validity and reliability of the information presented. This met with approval from the HOD but not from the majority of staff. It goes back to the point that English teachers are thought capable of teaching anything

14/02/2007 G/1/3- Two female students arrived to the class shortly after it started. They were waiting outside, whilst I was teaching so I went outside to speak to them. They told me that they could not enter, being only two girls in a room full of boys. The rest of the female students were absent, this was the cause of the problem. I didn’t see my job description as including forcing students to do something they were religiously or culturally uncomfortable with, so I left them to go on their way.

20/02/2007 Many of the female students walking around the college between classes etc place a book in front of their face when they pass by a male teacher such as myself and male students. This is as a result of the niqab being banned in the college. Discussion with some of the students in G/1/3 about their computer book. I saw it lying on their desks in my class and picked up a copy and asked them how much they thought it cost. I told them I thought it cost in the region of 30 dinars and there were lucky to get it for free. They told the book was good but it was in English and this was a major problem since they ‘spend most’ of their time translating it into English and don’t get much time to spend understanding the text itself.

- 21/02/2007 Mr CF is in town. He is going to take H, the new Moroccan teacher to get some blood tests for her residence papers. She is married to J, my new officemate. As a practicing, orthodox Muslim he feels it is incorrect for his wife to travel alone with Mr CF to get the blood tests. If she were an Omani, Mr CF would never suggest to go alone. J bemoans the fact that staff come to the Middle East with no orientation on Islamic norms. It's odd that Mr CF, the country manager of CfBT is unaware of Islamic norms to this degree.
- 24/02/2007 Met two students wondering around outside the classrooms. They were utterly lost, and approached me. I asked them what was wrong and they said JO had sent them to get some books from somewhere but they had not understood what she had said, it being in English.
- 25/02/2007 G/C/8- I have two female students in this class. They do not turn up to class frequently and when they do they rarely participate. This issue was raised with other teachers of this group in a staff meeting, we were instructed by the HOD that there was nothing we could do about this. The issue is that they are only two girls in a class of fourteen boys and feel extremely shy about coming to class. Later in my office another female students confides to me that these two girls are the talk of the college amongst other female students. Apparently it is viewed as somewhat scandalous that this should be happening.
- 26/02/2007 Staff meeting with HOD: Discussing the difficulty that students have with learning English in the lower groups the discussion focused in on group 9 who are taught primarily by Dr Ib (a NNST). She was explaining how she tries every technique to teach her students including singing, miming and drawing and then she finished off her comments by saying 'I even sometimes teach in Arabic'. This stuck in the mind due to its defensive tone, as if singing etc was fine as a pedagogical tool but using Arabic was something sinister and unlawful not worthy of the language classroom.
- 27/02/2007 G/C/9- This group is unbelievably weak. They've been taught for one full semester, and had 10 years of schooling under their belt, yet they can't produce a single sentence correctly.

- 27/02/2007 G/1/3 (First Year) Exercise from the Skills in English books, pg 27. The passage relates to the issue of decision making. In Islam there is the concept of Istikhara which the text does not mention at all.
- 04/02/2007 G/C/8 Issue of paraphrasing. Teachers have been doing this in Nizwa, where they are basically giving them the material and asking them to paraphrase it in class. I told my students that this was the same as teaching and they shouldn't do it. Question for Ms AD questionnaire is what are you teaching when you allow paraphrasing.
- 10/03/2007 G/C/7 Students were asked to go the learning resource centre (LRC) and search for information on the topic of their choice. On arrival there I find a complete mess, they were unable to search on even the most basic level. I had to show them the Wikipedia website, open it for them, and instruct them how to search. Yet these students have studied computing for a whole semester before.
- 10/03/2007 Staff Meeting first year: S made the comment that students have been complaining that some of the lecturers are giving lectures in English. I find this very hard to believe. I will check this out, but need to include this in my questionnaire. An issue was raised about the remedial classes for year one. These are voluntary classes that students are not turning up for. This has caused consternation in the department since teachers assigned these classes are basically free whilst others are heavily timetabled.
- 11/03/2007 I asked M to approach the Dean and ask him if it's fine for me to run the questionnaire, since I'm not sure he'll agree with my own personal request.
- 25/03/2007 Assignments: The assignments are crazy. You have several issues. The first of these is that several teachers have clearly been assisting students with corrections which makes the system totally unfair. The other issue is mass plagiarism from the internet. We have no tools to

detect this, only a very slow internet connection and Google. It simply does not work.

- 26/03/2007 Meeting with HOD: We discussed which textbooks to use for the forthcoming academic year which again appeared like a blind exercise, given that we have been given no idea as to what the learning objectives/outcomes are. We also discussed the issue of attendance. Students will have an official break next Saturday and probably Sunday as well. The foundation level students have taken a week holiday themselves, without permission. This raises the vexed question of whether students should be marked absence. The problem is that if they are marked absence then a large number will be barred from the exam. This unlikely to happen, so what is the point of then taking attendance? I raise again, for the umpteenth time the question of personal responsibility of students. One teacher (DA) refers to them as Children. This, I think, is the original error.
- 27/03/2007 Marking the assignments has turned into somewhat of a farce. There is large scale plagiarism from the internet taking place and it's clear that most students are unable to complete the assignment as described. In fact the assignment appears to be way out of the league of these students. I think some in depth interviews with some students is required.
- 07/004/2007 Pilot tested the questionnaire for the second time on a Group 7 student from foundation year. The student raised several issues about the clarity of the questionnaire which have subsequently been changed. He also made a comment about N saying that he had no problem with some of the non-native speakers but that N was not good. He said the students didn't understand her. I wonder how much of that is racism related and how much of it is related to the fact that her English pronunciation is not good. Plus she visibly lacks confidence and the students breed off such a lack of confidence.
- 08/04/2007 Met a student on the way to class and I asked him why he hadn't handed in his assignment. He replied 'my father is a big man. So I don't need to study. When I finish I will join his company'. How do I get this student to stop disturbing others in class?

- 09/04/2007 I ran the first questionnaire with group 1 and it went well. The HOD was the teacher in the class and he assisted me well in the procedure. Students were made aware of the nature of the questionnaire and all students were given the option of not completing the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire was carried out at the beginning then the students were very willing to assist.
- 14/08/2007 I'm sitting in a class with only 13 students, the rest have gone 'north' for an unofficial break after the exams. I've set a writing exercise and as I look around the classroom I see that the six girls are writing away whilst the seven boys sit doing nothing. This appears to capture the scenario in the college, and country, quite well!
- 18/04/2007 Conference at Sultan Qaboos University on ELT Materials and Design. In the plenary Dr Robert Kleinsasser talk about how we need to challenge 'our politicians'. Didn't he know where he was, this is the Middle East I thought. Challenging politicians lands one in prison. Comment from one chap in the audience during one session that at Nizwa college he manages to quite successfully keep politics and religion outside of the classroom.
- 30/04/2007 Discussion with JJ. He told me of an even which occurred the day before with DA. He was discussing, sitting at his desk, with some female students who were standing in the doorway. DA burst into the room and then invited the girls into the room. JA said to her the girls were fine where they were but Dana insisted and said that it was rude for people to stand in doorways in Western culture. JA became slightly irritated and retorted that as a Muslim and a Westerner (He's Canadian) he was able to see the matter from both an Islamic and Western perspective. The girls didn't want to come into the room whilst he was alone in their and so they stood in the doorway.
- 02/05/2007 G/1/3 (First Year). Today we were sitting in class doing some work from the Skills book. There was a section on marriage. As we were completing the reading section we reached the feedback stage of myself. I fully expected the girls to play a leading role here, since I thought it would be a topic they would be interested in. The students

were asked to make sentences using these words:
bride/ceremony/engagement/groom/marriage/married/wedding. To my surprise the usually boisterous girls were extremely quiet and as I asked students to make students the female students refused to participate. I could feel the tension in the class between the male and female students like I had not before.

05/05/2007 Very interesting discussion with M. He said of the meeting with AJ that the links between her and the people here appear 'tenuous'. He also said that there 'was a big gap, between what they [the consortium of New Zealand universities] thought constituted a university standard and what we have here [at the colleges of applied sciences]. He said that they 'gave speeches and presentations about their view of colleges, without having visited them'. One interesting view M had was that he believed that they [the consortium of New Zealand universities] 'were being paid to prepare examination material and other course material'. M said that all of the colleges complained that they were not receiving 'enough support from the consortium of New Zealand universities.

07/05/2007 The deputy director-general for the Colleges of Applied Science was down for a meeting with staff and students. The meeting with the students turned into a complete farce. He sat up front with two of the programme co-coordinators from New Zealand and the Dean of the college. When I entered the IT coordinator was giving some form of presentation, from the noise and my questions to students, it became clear that students could not understand what he was saying; he was speaking in English. After his presentation the Dean and deputy director general both solicited questions from students. At first they were encouraged to ask in English but there were none forthcoming. So students were asked to speak in Arabic or English where-upon the floodgates literally opened with angry exchanges between the students and both the dean and the deputy director-general. Most of the exchanges were in Arabic but there were some questions in English. Interestingly the questions in English came exclusively from the female students.

13/05/2007 Speaking exam. I was speaking to one student about the college, what he likes and what he dislikes about the place. So I decided to ask him about the textbook he was using for IT. I asked him how much of it he understood. He replied, 'about 10%'. I asked him whether he

preferred to study in English or Arabic and replied 'in English because it is the language of science'. I asked him what the point of studying in English was if he didn't understand the textbook. To this he just shrugged his shoulders.

- 14/05/2007 Speaking exam. D asked about the weather and one girl said it rains a lot in Salalah. D asked 'where does the rain come from/', she replied, 'from Allah'. He asked again, 'ok, but where from?', again she replied 'from Allah?', it took several attempts to get her to explain the science behind it!
- 20/05/2007 Comment from JA that the faculty from different departments really dislike the English department.
- 20/05/2007 Comment from TH: 'We have here Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor. We have here everything, white skinned teachers with some TESOL certificate.
- 20/05/2007 Conversation with TH. She told me that when she first started teaching in the college some of her students told her that their friends said they felt sorry for them because they had an Indian teacher. TH said her students retorted that she is a good teacher!

Appendix K

Statistical Analysis

		English programme level (First or Foundation)						Chi ² test	P value
		Foundation		First Year		Total			
		n (194)	Column N %	n (176)	Column N %	n (370)	Column N %		
Who is best at teaching grammar	Don't know	20	10.40%	8	4.60%	28	7.60%	4.406	0.11
	Non-Native Speaker	125	64.80%	122	69.70%	247	67.10%		
	Native Speaker	48	24.90%	45	25.70%	93	25.30%		
Who is best at teaching reading	Don't know	33	17.10%	19	10.80%	52	14.10%	5.139	0.077
	Non-Native Speaker	46	23.80%	34	19.30%	80	21.70%		
	Native Speaker	114	59.10%	123	69.90%	237	64.20%		
Who is best at teaching Listening	Don't know	39	20.10%	34	19.30%	73	19.70%	18.436	.000(*)
	Non-Native Speaker	78	40.20%	37	21.00%	115	31.10%		
	Native Speaker	77	39.70%	105	59.70%	182	49.20%		
Who is best at teaching Speaking	Don't know	19	9.80%	5	2.80%	24	6.50%	9.451	.009(*)
	Non-Native Speaker	53	27.30%	40	22.70%	93	25.10%		
	Native Speaker	122	62.90%	131	74.40%	253	68.40%		
Who is best at teaching Writing	Don't know	38	19.60%	43	24.40%	81	21.90%	3.129	0.209
	Non-Native Speaker	98	50.50%	73	41.50%	171	46.20%		
	Native Speaker	58	29.90%	60	34.10%	118	31.90%		

Who is more professional	Don't know	43	22.20%	37	21.40%	80	21.80%	0.498	0.779
	Non-Native Speaker	86	44.30%	72	41.60%	158	43.10%		
	Native Speaker	65	33.50%	64	37.00%	129	35.10%		
Who understands learner needs more	Don't know	19	9.90%	20	11.40%	39	10.60%	2.663	0.264
	Non-Native Speaker	157	81.80%	132	75.40%	289	78.70%		
	Native Speaker	16	8.30%	23	13.10%	39	10.60%		
Who makes learning easier	Don't know	32	16.60%	30	17.20%	62	16.90%	0.72	0.698
	Non-Native Speaker	121	62.70%	114	65.50%	235	64.00%		
	Native Speaker	40	20.70%	30	17.20%	70	19.10%		
Who is an all round better teacher	Don't know	64	33.00%	54	31.00%	118	32.10%	0.168	0.919
	Non-Native Speaker	83	42.80%	76	43.70%	159	43.20%		
	Native Speaker	47	24.20%	44	25.30%	91	24.70%		
Is it important that the ELT can speak Arabic	Important	108	56.50%	90	52.30%	198	54.50%	0.886	0.642
	Not Important	60	31.40%	62	36.00%	122	33.60%		
	Don't know	23	12.00%	20	11.60%	43	11.80%		
Should a teacher sometimes explain some things in Arabic	Yes	176	91.70%	146	84.90%	322	88.50%	6.461	.040(*)
	No	14	7.30%	17	9.90%	31	8.50%		
	Don't know	2	1.00%	9	5.20%	11	3.00%		
Would you prefer the teaching in the specializations to be in:	English	41	21.20%	27	15.60%	68	18.60%	2.956	0.398
	Arabic	30	15.50%	27	15.60%	57	15.60%		
	Both	116	60.10%	116	67.10%	232	63.40%		
	Don't know	6	3.10%	3	1.70%	9	2.50%		
Total		193	100%	173	100%	366	100%	-	-

* The Chi-square statistic is significant at the 0.05 level.